John Tiedemann
writ 1133, spring 2020

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"Office" hours: 12–4 p.m., on M & W. Email me at least 24 hours in advance to make an appointment.

• writ 1133: Writing, Research, and Virtual Realities

THE CLASS

As illustrated by this class itself — an online class, conducted not in person, but via laptops, iPads, and iPhones — the internet and the technologies associated with it have transformed many, perhaps most, maybe even *all* aspects of the human experience. Indeed, many contemporary scholars and commentators have begun to wonder whether the very meaning of "the human" has changed as a result: they speculate that humans are in fact "cyborgs" now, and that our reality is now a technologically "augmented" or "virtual" reality. In this class, we'll explore this "virtual reality" as we learn about and practice one of the oldest and most powerful technologies of all: *writing*.

Some of our time will be spent discussing readings and viewings about how internet technologies are changing who we are and how we live, but the majority of our time will be devoted to researching and writing about this topic ourselves. Our research and writing will culminate in the creation of what I'm calling a "homegrown TED talk," i.e., an online presentation of the insights into virtual reality that you discovered as you pursued a research question of your own design. Here are some of the kinds of research and writing you'll do as you create your final project:

- **Library research:** You'll learn how to find, evaluate, and use scholarly books and journals, using the DU library's online interface.
- **Participant observation:** You'll practice "cyber-ethnography," i.e., the art of learning about an online culture by taking part in it and, at the same time, thinking critically about your experience.
- **Interviewing:** You'll learn interviewing strategies that elicit not only information, but, more importantly, insight.
- **Auto-ethnography:** You'll learn how to analyze your own experience as an object of scholarly inquiry and reflection.

TEXTS

Links to all our readings and viewings will be posted on Canvas.

Your own texts are also a central element of this class. You'll share them with me and, from time to time, with one another.

We'll also use the Canvas discussion board from time to time for group discussions.

GOALS AND FORMAT

- **Goals**

In WRIT 1133, students practice academic research of various kinds; rhetorical strategies for diverse academic and civic audiences and purposes; and critical reading and analytic skills. By the end, students are expected to demonstrate, through their writing, a practical knowledge of multiple research traditions, the rhetorical/conventional differences among them, and the rhetorical differences between writing for academic audiences and writing for popular audiences. Students are also expected to demonstrate proficiency in finding, evaluating, synthesizing, critiquing, and documenting published sources in ways appropriate to given rhetorical situations. Students will receive sustained practice in writing, with systematic instructor feedback, resulting in at least 20 pages of revised and polished writing, in multiple assignments, as well as numerous additional exercises, in projects requiring library-based research as well as other types.

- **Learning online**

This course will be taught online, using Canvas. This where you'll find assignments, writing prompts, lectures, readings, viewings, and all other materials for the course. Class will "meet" there twice a week: Each Monday and Wednesday at the time assigned for the course in the Class Schedule Listing (noon if you signed up for section 55, and 2:00 p.m. if you enrolled in section 52), I'll post a new assignment; your response to the assignment will be due to me via Canvas at the start of class the following Monday or Wednesday.

What is more, there will be up to four face-to-face, real time meetings: the two one-on-one conferences you'll have with me on Zoom, as well as up to two Zoom workshops you'll have with your classmates. See the calendar below. We'll schedule the one-on-one conferences closer to the date. But please be sure to be free during class hours for the two scheduled workshops.

The online learning experience differs from face-to-face learning in important ways: chief among them, you must take a greater degree of personal responsibility for keeping up with the work and completing your assignments on time. That said, the work that you do for this class will be just as interactive as it would be if we were meeting together in classroom. You will receive feedback from me on your work; you'll respond to work by your classmates; and from time to time we'll conduct group conversations on the Canvas discussion board. As a result, **it is vitally important that you share your work on time.** You will receive neither credit nor feedback for work that's shared late.

POLICIES

- **Participation**

I expect you to be active, engaged learners and thoughtful, helpful collaborators, committed to the material, your own writing, and your peers' learning. Your level of engagement is made manifest in a number of ways, including participation in online discussions, in peer review feedback, and in your efforts to improve your own learning experience but the learning experience of the entire class. I will assess your engagement as follows:

➢ "Superior" engagement means that the student is always prepared, always eager to reflect upon their writing, always ready to revise extensively, and often adds additional insights to group discussions and provides thoughtful feedback to others' writing. They demonstrate active learning via consistently perceptive and energetic engagement with the material, their peers, and me.

➢ "Average" engagement means that the student generally seems prepared and is game to reflect and revise. On the whole, their participation in online discussion and feedback on writing seem to encourage and support others in the class. The student's presence is productive.

➢ "Weak" engagement means that the student's engagement with their own writing, the course materials, their peers, and me is listless, lackluster, or only intermittent.

- **Late Work**

Assignments are due when they are due. Assignments that come in late, that aren't shared correctly, or that are incorrectly labeled will not receive credit or feedback from me.

- **"Office" hours**

I won't be on campus this term, nor will you. But if you'd like to chat virtually, I plan to be here at the computer on Mondays and Wednesdays between noon and 4 p.m. So email me to make an appointment during those hours (preferably at least 24 hours in advance), and I'll set up a Zoom meeting.

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The Writing Program will provide reasonable accommodations to every student who has a disability that has been documented by The University of Denver Disability Services Program (http://www.du.edu/studentlife/disability/ or 303.871.2455).

- **Civility and Tolerance**

The Writing Program affirms DU's Code of Student Conduct (http://www.du.edu/ccs/code.html), which in part "expects students to recognize the strength of personal differences while respecting institutional values." Because writing courses rely heavily on interactions between all members of the class, students and faculty must act in a manner respectful of different positions and perspectives. A student who behaves in an uncivil or intolerant manner will be asked to stop and/or formally repri- manded and/or subject to action by the Office of Citizenship and Community Standards.

Becoming educated requires encountering new ideas and information, some of which may conflict with an individual's existing knowledge or perspectives. I expect students to engage such materials thoughtfully, in ways that reflect the values and mission of the University of Denver.

- **Plagiarism**

The Writing Program follows the Council of Writing Program Administrators policy "Defining and Avoid- ing Plagiarism," which states, "In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source" (http://wpacouncil.org/node/9). DU's Honor Code also maintains that all members of the University must responsibly use the work of others. Students who have plagiarized a project will receive an F on that project, and the professor will inform the Director of Writing and the Office of Community and Citizenship Standards, which may take further action. Any documented acts of plagiarism after the first may be subject to more severe actions.

- **Contacting me**

Each of you will meet with me individually for two required Zoom conferences (see the course calendar below). I'll send around a sign-up sheet the week before the conferences take place. These conferences are required, and there are no makeups. You'll receive a grade for the preparation you do beforehand. Each conference is worth 50 points toward your final grade.

My email address is John.Tiedemann@du.edu. I usually respond to email within a day or two. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you about your writing and research. However, if you have a question about technical matters (like, "How do I post a video to YouTube?"), then you'll likely get the answer much faster by just Googling the question. And the quickest way to find answers to questions about the nuts and bolts of the course (like, "When's the final project due?") is to look at this syllabus and Canvas.

GRADES

Here's the breakdown for final grades:

Daily assignments	(20 points per assignment x 10)	200 points
Final project		400 points
Reflective essay		200 points
Conferences	(50 points x 2)	100 points
Participation		100 points
TOTAL		**1000 points**

Here's the scale I'll use to calculate your final grade for the course:

A	930-1000
A-	900-929
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	630-669
D-	600-629
F	0–599

CALENDAR

W1	M Mar. 30	Introductions.
	W Apr. 1	Online discussion: Everything you wanted to know about questioning but were afraid to ask (← See What I Did There?)
W2	M Apr. 6	Online discussion: The internet and intelligence.
	W Apr. 8	Online discussion: The internet and activism.
W3	M Apr. 13	First draft of project proposal due.
	W Apr. 15	First draft of annotated bibliography due.
W4	M Apr. 20	**REVISION WORKSHOP.**
	W Apr. 22	Revised project proposal and annotated bibliography due.
W5	M Apr. 27	**ONLINE CONFERENCES.**
	W Apr. 29	**ONLINE CONFERENCES.**
W6	M May 4	First entries in auto-ethnography log due.
	W May 6	First entries in cyber-ethnographic field notes due.
W7	M May 11	First draft of interview due.
	W May 13	**INVENTION WORKSHOP.**
W8	M May 18	Draft of first half of TED Talk script due.
	W May 20	Draft of second half of TED Talk script due.
W9	M May 25	**ONLINE CONFERENCES.**
	W May 27	**ONLINE CONFERENCES.**
W10	M June 1	Revisions and reflections.
	W June 3	Revisions and reflections.

FINAL WORK DUE ON CANVAS BY 4:00 P.M. ON MONDAY, JUNE 8.