**SPANISH 4460 / 6460: HISPANIC DIGITAL CULTURES**

Osvaldo Cleger

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In this course students will learn about recent developments in the fields of New Media and Digital Culture within the context of Latin American and Spanish cultures and societies. Throughout the semester, students will be offered and overview of several of the most influential trends in New Media in the region, and will explore in depth the impact of new information and communications technologies on Hispanic Cultural traditions. Among the manifestations of digital culture that will be studied are: hypertext narrative, interactive narrative, digital poetry, literature for the iPad and mobile technology, blog-fictions, twitter literature, digital photography, and video games. In addition to learning about these recent cultural trends, students will be able to develop skills for both the analysis of computational media in a variety of formats and the production of digital artifacts using appropriate software and design principles.

The main components of this course are: 1) an introduction to the main concepts and analytic tools that will be used throughout the semester; 2) an approximation to some pre-computational literary and artistic trends that helped pave the way for the emergence of a new media culture (comic culture, experimental and avant-garde arts, hypertexts in print format, etc.); 3) a detailed study of the main manifestations of digital culture in the Hispanic context and 4) the acquisition of technical vocabulary for the analysis of texts and works in multimedia format. Classroom activities will include: discussions in pairs and groups, as well as different formal and informal presentations, and practical exercises to learn how to produce a variety of simple digital artifacts. Students are expected to have an advanced to superior level of proficiency in Spanish.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

• Understand the development of digital culture in contemporary Hispanic societies

• Critically analyze an electronic hypertext

• Analyze and evaluate the interactive component of a digital work

• Extract relevant cultural information from the reading of different digital products

• Produce simple digital projects using adequate software

• Plan, design and produce a work in multimedia format

• Analyze, critique, and compare new media across cultures, formats, and modes to communicate complex issues in culture, media, and technology to a variety of constituents

• Use Spanish grammar correctly showing an Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate-High level of proficiency in the language for undergraduate students and an Advanced to Superior level of proficiency for graduate students.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

This is a course based largely on material available on the Internet. Theoretical and critical readings will be available in T-square and Course Packet.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**

* Landow, George. *Hypertext 3.0: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.
* Hayles, Katherine. *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

**EVALUATION:**

Projects (2) 40%

Oral Presentations and Participation 30%

Exam, Quizzes and Homework 30%

### Grading Scale:

A: 90-100 B: 80-89.9 C: 70-79.9 D: 60-69.9 F: 0-59.9

**Note**: if you are taking this class Pass/ Fail, you must earn a grade of 60 or above (D) in order to get a Pass grade.

**Participation:** Active participation in this class is essential. The student is responsible for reading each assigned reading, watch assigned audiovisual materials and review their notes before each class. Students will participate in group, individual, oral and written activities. The final grade for participation will be based on substantive contributions made in Spanish by each student in every class. The grade will take into account the following aspects: 1) the frequency of communication; 2) the amount of Spanish that is used in class; 3) the ability to communicate showing at least an advanced level of proficiency (according to ACTFL standards); 4) respectful attitude towards the class, peers and instructor. Student participation grades will be updated daily on T-Square.

**Oral presentations:** Students will prepare and deliver several formal and informal presentations during the semester. Typical formal presentations include: 1) a topic master presentation, 2) a position paper and 3) the presentation of the final project.

1) **TOPIC MASTER**. At the beginning of the semester each student will choose one of the topics to be discussed throughout the course (Instructor will provide with a list of available topics), and will work on preparing a presentation on the selected topic. The day of discussion of the assigned topic, the student will be responsible for providing an introduction (about 15 minutes long) as well as presenting to the class a series of questions to discuss at the end of his/her presentation. To prepare this activity, students will follow the written instructions given by the instructor. If necessary, students can make an appointment with the instructor to get help with the preparation of the activity.

2) **POSITION PAPER**. At least once during the semester each student will write a position paper (2 to 4 pages long for undergrads and 6-8 for graduate students) in response to the ideas presented in a class reading or topic of discussion. Position papers will be often based on controversial or debatable issues, and the student presenting is expected to take a clear stance regarding this issue and offer a rationale to explain his/her position. The content of such paper will be presented to the class for about 5-10 minutes, and immediately after that there will be a period of questions and answers (Q & A) in reaction to the position and perspective offered by the student. Position papers will be graded both as a written and oral assignment, and students are expected to demonstrate at least an Intermediate-High level of proficiency in the language for undergraduate students and an Advanced to Superior level of proficiency for graduate students (according to the ACTFL standards) to receive a passing grade for this assignment.

3) **PRESENTATION OF FINAL PROJECT**. During the last week, each student will prepare a presentation about his/her final project. This presentation will be based on the research they have conducted during the semester on an approved topic of their choice. It is important that students make appropriate use of audiovisual materials and are able to generate some interaction with the class. It is not allow to read the content of the presentation, and students are expected to demonstrate at least an Intermediate-High level of proficiency in the language for undergraduate students and an Advanced to Superior level for graduate students (according to the ACTFL standards) to receive a passing grade for this assignment.

**FINAL PROJECT:** As a final class project, student will write an essay that should be 6-8 pages long for undergrads and 12-15 for graduate students. In this essay, student should demonstrate their ability to produce a more in depth analysis about one of the topics discussed in class. The selection of the topic should be discussed and approved by the instructor several weeks before the end of the semester. The preparation of this essay will be divided into several smaller assignments such as: 1) the preparation of a brief summary of the topic to be discussed; this should include a clear formulation of a thesis and an outline of the main arguments to support it; 2) the creation of an annotated bibliography on the subject; 3) the preparation of a first draft; 4) the peer-editing of the draft by another student and the instructor; 5) the submission of the final version of the essay. Graduate students are expected to formulate more original thesis and offer a more in-depth analysis of the subject to receive a passing grade for this assignment..

**EXAMS AND QUIZZES:** There will be 2 exams and several quizzes during the semester. Please check the syllabus and mark your calendars. No make-up exams are allowed. Keep this in mind when making travel plans. Exams and quizzes will be usually structured in 3 sections: one section with multiple choice questions aimed at evaluating the way students have understood some basic concepts and definitions; a section with brief questions about the readings and main topics of discussion; and a section with open-ended questions where students should demonstrate their ability to elaborate on a topic. Students are encouraged to study every day and keep a log of important key concepts as they read and learn.

**OTHER Course Requirements:**

**Attendance.** Students are required to attend all classes. **The School of Modern Languages allows a maximum of 3 hours of unexcused absences during the semester**, which you should reserve for short illnesses, emergencies, religious holidays, or any other personal business. For each additional absence, you will lose one point from your final grade. Students who are absent because of participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips, professional conferences, and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences. Approval of such activities will be granted by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate, and statements of the approved absence may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar. <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>. Any planned absence on a quiz/special project day should be discussed with your instructor in advance, and emergency absences should be reported as soon as possible afterwards. You are responsible for all material covered on days that you are absent. Arriving more than 15 minutes late counts as a full absence.

**Disability Services**. The Office of Disability Services offers self-identified students with permanent or temporary disabilities assistance with registration, accessibility, transportation, parking, housing, counseling, note taking, recorded textbooks, advocacy, test proctoring, referral services, and other needs. Disability Services promotes disability awareness programs for departmental faculty and staff, as well as the Georgia Tech community. Students and prospective students who wish to learn more about accommodations for students with disabilities should contact: Office of Disability Services Suite 221 Smithgall Student Services Building Georgia Institute of Technology Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0285 call 404.894.2563 (voice) or 404.894.1664 (TTY) visit <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu> email [dsinfo@gatech.edu](mailto:dsinfo@gatech.edu).

**No late work will be accepted**. All assigned work must be completed on time. No assigned work should be submitted via e-mail unless your instructor indicates so. If you will not make it to class on the day assignments are to be handed in, it is your responsibility to make sure your instructor receives them on time.

**Academic Integrity**

In some of the classroom activities in this course, you will be asked to work with other classmates; in addition, you are encouraged to study with others in order to help yourself and others in the class understand the information presented by the professor. However, **any written/oral work graded by the instructor MUST be your (or your group’s) own original work.** This includes all exams and assignments. Any and all indications of academic dishonesty will be reported to Dean of Students office. Should you have questions regarding what constitutes "academic dishonesty", please see clear examples and definitions at <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/intro/index.htm>. See also: <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>

**TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR**

**Weeks 1 - 3 –** Introduction to the Course. What is Media? What is *New* Media? What is Digital Literature? How has the History of Media influenced literary production in western societies? Ong’s distinction between Orality and Literacy, Primary Orality and Secondary Orality. Grusin’s and Bolter’s concept of “Remediation”. From paper to the screen: the debate around the end of books. Robert Coover’s and Yellowlees Douglas’ perspectives on this subject. Henry Jenkins and the notion of convergence culture.

**Readings:** - Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. *Remediation*, p. 2-84.

- Ong, Walter. “Some Psychodynamics of Orality,” and “Writing Restructures

Consciousness.” In *Course Packet*.

- Coover, Robert. “The End of Books.” In *Course Packet*.

- Douglas, Yellowlees. “The Book is Dead, Long Live the Book.” In *Course Packet*.

**Weeks 4 - 6 –** Non-Linear and interactive narrative in both print and electronic format. Print antecedents of Hypertext: from Sterne’s *Tristan Shandy* to Cortazar’s *Hopscotch*. Jorge Luis Borges’ *The Garden of Forking Paths* and the borgesian metaphor of a “labyrinthine garden”. Espen Aarseth’s notion of ergodic literature. The advent of electronic hyperfiction: *afternoon, a story* (1987) by Michael Joyce. Other examples of hyperfiction. Hypertext fiction in Latin America: *Condiciones extremas*.

Readings: - Borges, Jorge Luis. “The Garden of Forking Paths.” In *Course Packet*.

- Bush, Vannevar. “As We May Think.” In *Course Packet*.

- Aarseth, Espen. “Introduction: Ergodic Literature.” In *Course Packet*.

- Landow, George. *Hypertext 3.0*, p. 1-52.

- Gutiérrez, Juan: *Condiciones extremas*.

**Weeks 7 - 8** – Hyperfiction and the reconfiguration of traditional narrative. The notions of collective author and *wreader*. Textuality beyond the printed word. Marie-Laure Ryan’s typology of hypertextual architectures and interactive plots: the network, the tree, the maze, the flowchart, the sea-anemone. Janet Murray on Immersion and Agency. Latin American examples: Analysis of *Gabriella Infinita*.

Readings: - Landow, George. *Hypertext 3.0*, p. 69-264.

- Ryan, Marie-Laure. “Toward an Interactive Narratology.” In *Course Packet*.

- Murray, Janet. ***Hamlet*, p.97-182.**

- Rodríguez, Jaime Alejandro: *Gabriela Infinita*

**Weeks 9 - 11** – From Hyperfictions to other forms of Web-based Narratives. The growing importance of the *World Wide Web* and its literary impact. MUDs as literary phenomenon. Aarseth’s take on this subject. Blogs and Wikis. Blognovels and Wikinovels in Spanish. The cellphone novel.

Readings: - Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. *Remediation*, p. 196-210.

- Ryan, Marie-Laure. “Web-Based Narrative, Multimedia, and Interactive

Drama.” In *Course Packet*.

- Aarseth, Espen. “Songs from the MUD: Multiuser Discourse.” In *Course*

*Packet*.

- Casciari, Hernán. “La ficción *on line*: un espectáculo en directo”. In *Course*

*Packet*.

- Casciari, Hernán. *Más respeto que soy tu madre*.

- Suárez, Patricia. Switch! (excerpts). In *Course Packet*.

**Week 12 - 13** – Computer games as narrative: the debate. Aarseth’s, Ryan’s and Murray’s take on this subject.

Readings: - Ryan, Marie-Laure. “Computer Games as Narrative.” In *Course Packet*.

* Aarseth, Espen. “The Adventure Game.” In *Course Packet*.
* Aventuras conversacionales españolas.

**Week 14 - 15** – Final Projects and Presentations.

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| **ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #1: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION** | |
| **ML Learning Outcome 1:** Demonstrate oral and aural proficiency in the target language | Students will demonstrate oral proficiency at the Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate-High level of proficiency in the language for undergraduate students and an Advanced to Superior level for graduate learners on the ACTFL scale. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 2:** Demonstrate effective presentation skills in the target language | Students will demonstrate the ability to prepare and deliver an oral presentation in class for 10 minutes (for undergrads) and 15 minutes (for graduates), without notes on a topic related to Digital Culture in the Hispanic context. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 3:** Demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language | Students will produce written essays (6-8 pages long for undergrads and 12-15 for graduate students) and digital artifacts at the Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate-High level of proficiency in the language for undergraduate students and an Advanced to Superior level for graduate learners on the ACTFL scale. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 4:**  Demonstrate proficiency in comprehension of authentic written texts in the target language | Students will demonstrate comprehension of authentic texts and a variety of multimedia artifacts (including hypertext narratives, interactive stories, blog narratives, videogames, digital photo-essays and digital poems) and will make connections with the context of Network and Information Society. |
| **ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #2: INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE** | |
| **ML Learning Outcome 5:** Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a *specific* target-language country or region | Students will engage in an in-depth exploration of several digital culture trends from different countries (such as Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia and Cuba) and will also learn about the participation of these countries in the emerging Network Society. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 6:**  Demonstrate the ability to analyze an issue from target-culture perspective(s) | Students will display the ability to understand different digital culture trends from both the US and the Hispanic perspectives. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 7:**  Demonstrate critical reflection on cultural complexity and context | Through the analysis of a wide array of digital culture artifacts (such as hypertext, videogames and blogs), students will be exposed to the complexity of contemporary Hispanic Culture and will become more proficient in the interpretation of such artistic and cultural manifestations. |

**NOTE: *This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate instructional and/or student needs.***