

## English 708: Teaching Writing in a Digital Age

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Spring 2010  
Section: 1  
Course Meets: Tuesday 4:10-6:55  
Location: Humanities 200  
Course Web Site: <http://moodle.learningbox.org>

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### :: Course Description

This graduate-level seminar has two inter-related goals: the first is to explore the ways in which new and emerging technologies are shaping the practices of writing, both in relation to college composition and in society more generally. Writing is happening seemingly everywhere now: on blogs, on cell phones, on social networking sites, on online discussion boards, on wikis, and even in video games. Part of our work this semester will be to come to grips with these changes, and what they might mean for the future of writing and literacy.

The second goal is to prepare current and future teachers of writing to respond to the changing literacy landscape with effective and coherent instruction. Some of this preparation will involve exploring the complex roles technology and literacy have in our own lives. It will also mean becoming more comfortable with using various technologies, as well as experimenting with alternative kinds of composition assignments. We will learn how (and why) one might adopt and adapt technologies for classroom use, and we will even consider the potential for teaching writing entirely online.

### :: Required Course Texts

Richardson, Will. *Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms*. 2nd ed. Corwin Press, 2008. Print.

Warnock, Scott. *Teaching Writing Online: How and Why*. National Council of Teachers of English, 2009. Print.

Wysocki, Anne. *Writing New Media: Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition*. 1st ed. Utah State University Press, 2004. Print.

Electronic Course Texts and Links (Online)

### :: Writings and Assignments

**Course Blog Posts:** This semester, we will be posting to a collaborative course blog, at <http://twinada.wordpress.com>. The main purpose of this blog will be to discuss our weekly readings (or “viewings,” in the case of online video). Each of you will be responsible for composing a post for three separate weeks over the course of the semester. These posts should be more than simple summary or paraphrase; instead, you should strive for “connective writing” (see Richardson) that forges links among that week’s texts, with other course texts, and with other outside sources. You will sign up to write posts for specific weeks, and each post will be due online by noon on the Monday before class.

**Course Blog Comments:** Since a blog is also a place for interaction, you will also need to comment on the posts of other students at least five times over the course of the semester. You need not determine in advance which posts you will comment on; however, only comments posted within a week of the original post will count toward this requirement. In other words, you will have a one-week window during which to comment on a particular post.

**Techno-Literacy Biography:** For this assignment, your task will be to interview one of your classmates about their technological literacy practices and values and to write up the results in a short (3-5 page)

biographical essay. The point will be to explore how technology, literacy, and identity are bound up with one another.

**New Media Project:** It's often a good idea for teachers to have some experience doing the kinds of composing that they ask students to do, and the same is true for new media texts. To this end, each of you will work on a "new media" project to turn in at the end of the semester. This project can take any number of forms: a blog, a wiki, a podcast, a YouTube video, a web site, a Flickr photo stream, etc. It doesn't necessarily have to be done using modern technology, either, as long as there is some attention to the "materiality" of the text (as Wysocki discusses in *WNM*). In addition to doing the project, you will need to write and submit a cover letter that explains how the project is a "new media" one, and reflects on your experience of composing it.

**Research Project:** In addition to the aforementioned assignments, you will also work on an independent research project of your own choosing over the course of the semester. You will have considerable latitude in determining what you would like to work on, but this 10-12 page project should be related in some significant way to the themes and content of the course, and it should draw both on course texts and outside research. You should try to settle on a topic fairly early, in consultation with your instructor, so that you can research it over the semester. Sometime during the last three weeks of class, you will give a short, in-class presentation on your topic.

**Bibliographic Annotations:** As you do the research for your independent project, you will be asked to compose short annotations for some of the outside sources you are working with. These annotations, which you will post and tag on the course blog throughout the semester (see schedule below), will serve as a resource for other students (both current and future) in this course. You will need to post a minimum of five annotations.

## :: Evaluation

|                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Course Blog Posts .....             | 15% |
| Course Blog Comments .....          | 5%  |
| New Media Project .....             | 10% |
| Techno-Literacy Biography .....     | 10% |
| Research Project.....               | 30% |
| Research Project Presentation ..... | 10% |
| Bibliographic Annotations .....     | 10% |
| Participation .....                 | 10% |

Weekly attendance is expected and required. Incomplete grades are strongly discouraged.

## :: Online Resources

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|---|---|
| CompPile: an inventory database of publications in composition studies  | <a href="http://comppile.org/">http://comppile.org/</a>                               |
| The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing (6th ed., 2003)  | <a href="http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/bb/">http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/bb/</a> |
| <i>College Composition &amp; Communication, Composition Studies, Research in the Teaching of English, Rhetoric Review, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Written Communication, Computers and Composition</i> | Full text journals available through SFSU library.                                    |
| <i>Computers and Composition Online</i>   | <a href="http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/">http://www.bgsu.edu/cconline/</a>             |
| <i>Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy</i>  | <a href="http://english.ttu.edu/Kairos/">http://english.ttu.edu/Kairos/</a>           |
| Rebecca Moore Howard's bibliography on "Technologies, Networks, Blogging, and Teaching Online"  | <a href="http://tinyurl.com/yje9937">http://tinyurl.com/yje9937</a>                   |

## :: Schedule

*This schedule is tentative, and may implode at any moment.*

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|---------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b> | <b>1/26</b> | <b>Introductions / Course Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ CCCC's "Position Statement on Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments" (Online)</li><li>▪ Michael Wesch, "The Machine is Us/ing Us" (YouTube)</li></ul>  |
| <b>Week 2</b> | <b>2/2</b>  | <b>Writing as a Technology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Selection from Plato, <i>Phaedrus</i> (PDF)</li><li>▪ Walter Ong, "Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought" (PDF)</li><li>▪ Dennis Baron, "From Pencils to Pixels" (PDF)</li><li>▪ Selection from Alexander Reid, <i>The Two Virtuals: New Media and Composition</i> (PDF)</li><li>▪ <i>Assign Bibliographic Annotations</i></li></ul>   |
| <b>Week 3</b> | <b>2/9</b>  | <b>New Literacies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Lankshear &amp; Knobel, "New Literacies" (Online)</li><li>▪ Lankshear &amp; Knobel, "Sampling the 'New' in New Literacies" (Online)</li><li>▪ Choose one article to read from the <i>New Literacies Sampler</i> (Online)</li><li>▪ <i>First Bibliographic Annotation Due</i></li></ul>  |
| <b>Week 4</b> | <b>2/16</b> | <b>Technology and Identity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ David Buckingham, "Introducing Identity" (PDF)</li><li>▪ Gail Hawisher &amp; Cynthia Selfe, "Becoming Literate in the Information Age" (PDF)</li><li>▪ Cynthia Selfe, "Students Who Teach Us: A Case Study of a New Media Text Designer" (<i>WNM 2</i>)</li><li>▪ Choose one article to read on technology and identity (Online)</li><li>▪ <i>Assign Techno-Literacy Biography</i></li></ul> |
| <b>Week 5</b> | <b>2/23</b> | <b>New Media and Composition Studies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Richard Miller, "This is How We Dream Part 1" and "Part 2" (YouTube)</li><li>▪ Kathleen Blake Yancey, "Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key" (PDF)</li><li>▪ Anne Frances Wysocki, "Opening New Media to Writing: Openings and Justifications" (<i>WNM 1</i>)</li><li>▪ <i>Bibliographic Annotation #2 Due</i></li></ul>   |
| <b>Week 6</b> | <b>3/2</b>  | <b>New Media Texts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Cynthia Selfe, "Toward New Media Texts" (<i>WNM 3</i>)</li><li>▪ Anne Frances Wysocki, "The Sticky Embrace of Beauty" (<i>WNM 5</i>)</li><li>▪ Daniel Anderson, "The Low Bridge to High Benefits: Entry-Level Multimedia, Literacies, and Motivation" (PDF)</li><li>▪ <i>Assign New Media Project</i></li></ul>  |
| <b>Week 7</b> | <b>3/9</b>  | <b>Read/Write Culture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Jonathan Alexander, "Media Convergence: Creating Content, Questioning Relationships" (PDF)</li><li>▪ Lawrence Lessig on "Laws that Choke Creativity" (TED talk online)</li><li>▪ Will Richardson, "The Read/Write Web" (<i>BWP 1</i>)</li><li>▪ <i>Bibliographic Annotation #3 Due</i></li></ul>  |

- Week 8 3/16 No Class (CCCC)**
- *Techno-Literacy Biography Due*
- Week 9 3/23 Manipulating Text(s)**
- Johndan Johnson-Eilola, “The Database and the Essay: Understanding Composition as Articulation” (*WNM* 6)
  - Danielle DeVoss and Annette C. Rosati, “‘It wasn’t me, was it?’ Plagiarism and the Web” (PDF)
  - Amber Buck, “The Invisible Interface: MS Word in the Writing Center” (PDF)
  - Tim McGee and Patricia Ericsson, “The Politics of the Program: MS WORD as the Invisible Grammarian” (PDF)
  - *Bibliographic Annotation #4 Due*
- Week 10 4/6 Blogs & Wikis**
- Will Richardson, *BWP*, chs. 2-5
  - Jared Stein, “Defining ‘Creepy Treehouse’” (Online)
  - Charles Tryon, “Writing and Citizenship: Using Blogs to Teach First-Year Composition”
  - Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody*, ch. 5
- Week 11 4/13 Social Networking & User-Generated Content**
- Richardson, *BWP*, chs. 6, 8, & 9
  - Michael Wesch, “An anthropological introduction to YouTube”
  - danah boyd, “Why Youth ♥ Social Network Sites”
  - *Bibliographic Annotation #5 Due*
- Week 12 4/20 Games & Writing**
- Gee, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*, chs. 1 & 2 (PDF)
  - Choose one article to read from the “Reading Games” special issue of *Computers and Composition* (Online)
- Week 13 4/27 Teaching Writing Online/Presentations**
- Scott Warnock, *Teaching Writing Online*, chs. 1-9
  - *Research Project Presentations*
- Week 14 5/4 Teaching Writing Online/Presentations**
- Scott Warnock, *Teaching Writing Online*, chs. 10-18
  - *Research Project Presentations*
- Week 15 5/11 Presentations/Conclusions**
- *Research Project Presentations*
- Finals 5/18 [No Class]**
- *Research Project and New Media Project Due*

*WNM = Writing New Media*

*BWP = Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Tools for Classrooms*