

Texas A&M University-Central Texas
ENGK 530: Rhetoric of New Media
Fall 2016
Thursday 6-9 PM

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Kirchoff

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Office Hours: M/W 1:00-2:00; R 4:00-5:00. Other times are available by appointment.

UNILERT (The Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University–Central Texas) UNILERT is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in UNILERT through their myCT email account. Connect at www.TAMUCT.edu/UNILERT to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in UNILERT, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

Course Overview and Description

Official Catalog Description

A study of written language theories. Course contents include readings from a wide spectrum including classical Greece and Rome, the European enlightenment, nineteenth century America, and modern and post-modern periods. May be retaken for credit when topics vary.

Dr. Kirchoff's Description

This graduate seminar will examine new media from a variety of theoretical perspectives and lenses in an effort a) to determine what, exactly, new media is and what it encompasses b) to determine how we can make meaning from new media texts and c) to understand why new media theory is relevant and imperative to rhetorical studies today. This discussion-driven course will help students not only understand the major new media theories of yesterday and today, but will also provide hands-on practice applying those theories by analyzing a wide range of new media texts.

Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course should be able to...

- Understand and define the term “new media”
- Become familiar with several competing (and complementary) theories of new media
- Appreciate the historical foundations of new media studies
- Analyze texts using new media theory as a framework

Required Textbooks

The Language of New Media by Lev Manovich [ISBN 0262632551]

New Media: The Key Concepts by Nicholas Gane and David Beer [ISBN 978184520133]

The New Media Reader (abbreviated *NMR*) edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort [ISBN 0262232278]

Other Required Materials

Other readings will be available on our course site [eng530newmedia.blogspot.com].

Course Requirements

Graded Work

Weekly Discussion Board Posts—30% of Final Grade

- We will be covering a different new media concept each week and as such, we'll be reading multiple articles and chapters in any given week. To ensure student comprehension, each student is expected to write short (think the equivalent of 1-2 typed pages) synthesized responses to that week's readings. Most often, there will be a prompt for students to respond to (found on the tentative daily agenda). As you reply to the question, try to put the texts in conversation with one another. Students should attempt to isolate the major ideas presented in all the articles that week and, when appropriate, interrogate or explore specific aspects of a text. These responses can be exploratory, but they must attempt to make connections between the readings covered in the week. One should be able to tell the student spent thoughtful time with each reading assigned. These will be assessed on a ✓+, ✓, ✓-, or unsatisfactory scale. I advise you to craft your responses in a word document before copying and pasting your written responses to the discussion board on our course site. Responses are due **Wednesdays by Noon**.

You should also craft a very short response to at least two of your peers' discussion board posts. If you fail to do this, you will not earn a "grade" for that particular week.

Note that if you fail to turn in a response or turn one in late, you will receive an "unsatisfactory" grade for that particular response (akin to a D for a response turned in late; equivalent to an F for one not turned in at all).

Book Review—15% of Final Grade

- Students will select a book on new media (a suggested list will be provided by Kirchoff) and write a short book review. A full assignment sheet will be distributed with further details.

Final Research Paper—20% of Final Grade

- Students can expect to write a 15-20 page term paper at the end of the semester that explores some aspect of new media and/or new media theory. A full assignment sheet will be distributed with further details.

Final Presentation—15% of Final Grade

- Students will make a 15-minute presentation based on their final research paper at the end of the semester. A full assignment sheet will be distributed with further details.

Participation—20% of Final Grade

- Participation is expected of all of us. Please come to class ready to ask questions, share ideas, and provide feedback to others. After each class period, through questions asked and ideas shared with others, I should be able to clearly tell that students completed the assigned reading. In-class discussions, free-writing exercises, take-home work, and so forth are all part of participation as well. Attendance is discussed at length in the “course policies” section; simply put, showing up to class on a regular basis is key to your success in this course. When you are not here, you cannot participate meaningfully and thus you lose out on some interaction that can facilitate your new media education.

Recap of Grading Breakdown:

Weekly Responses: 30%

Book Review: 15%

Final Research Project: 20%

Presentation: 15%

Participation: 20%

Note: All assignments must be completed to earn a passing mark in the class.

Grading Scale

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

59 and below = F

Grading Standards

A work goes well beyond the minimum expectations for the assignment. It is akin to publishable work. As such, it shows an advanced knowledge of course material. The ideas are original and innovative while still responding to the prompt.

B work exceeds the minimum expectations for the assignment. This is well-above average work and shows command of course material. The ideas are perhaps less developed than “A” work or perhaps the writing is less fluent and cohesive. There may be places where the analysis or argument is missing support or explanation.

C work meets the minimum expectations for the assignment. The work responds to the prompt meaningfully and appropriately, but does not show the same grasp or nuance as A or B work. As such, this work clearly responds to the prompt, but there may be a number of gaps in analysis or argument. The writing might not read as clearly, forcing the reader to pause and re-read.

D work does not meet the minimum expectations for the assignment. Major parts of the project could be missing, underdeveloped, or confusing.

F work fails to address the needs of the assignment.

Course Policies

Attendance: Because so much of the learning process takes place in the classroom, attendance is an integral part of this class; we're covering a lot of terrain in a short semester, so missing any class time will be detrimental to your success in this class. Additionally, I value all voices in the classroom and enjoy the dynamic a full class offers. That said, I understand emergencies do occur and that individuals have a life beyond academia. Thus, students are one free absence; please note I do not need to know about the nature of your absence—just let me know ahead of time if you will miss class (a 24 hour notice is appreciated). For each absence after the first, the offending student's grade will be lowered a full letter grade. Please note that any student who misses more than four class periods cannot earn a passing mark.

Tardiness: Try to be on time. I'm a punctual sort of fellow, and I tend to get class started at the scheduled time. When people come in late, it disrupts the flow of class and more importantly, the late individual will miss key information from the beginning of class. If tardiness becomes a problem for a particular student, I will talk with that person individually.

Late Assignments: I do not accept late work unless prior arrangements have been made. This is a non-negotiable policy; however, if you have questions or are worried about completing an assignment on time, talk to me well before the due date and we can come up with a plan of action. Note: "well before the due date" does not mean 24 hours before the assignment is due. I generally like to hold these sorts of conferences a week ahead of the due date. If someone contacts me 24 hours before a project is due, my response may not be very favorable. This policy extends to daily work as well.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when one person presents another person's words or ideas as her/his own. It is a serious offense that can result in an F for the course. Please see me if you have any questions concerning plagiarism.

Respect: My goal is for everyone to feel welcome and comfortable in the classroom, so please treat everyone in this class with respect. This should be a friendly, positive environment open to discussion and feedback. To that end, there is no tolerance for individuals who intentionally disrupt class or contribute to a hostile learning environment. Examples of disruptive behavior include (but are not limited to) talking or texting on a cell phone, speaking out of turn, facebooking, emailing, checking fantasy sport teams, swearing excessively, sleeping, attacking individuals verbally or physically, talking to friends while others are talking/working, or staunchly refusing to participate. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, let me know and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Food is permissible, as long as it does not become a distraction.

Email is a great tool for communication. However, I ask that when you send me an email to use a proper salutation (e.g. Hi Dr. Kirchoff), complete sentences, and identifying

information. This is a matter of common courtesy. As I mention above, I will make a good faith effort in responding to email queries within 24 hours.

Sending documents as *attachments* to an email is a perfectly valid way to get feedback on a project. To ensure readability, please save your documents as a .rtf, .docx, or .pdf.

Lastly, I prefer to be addressed as “Dr. Kirchoff,” “Professor Kirchoff,” or “Jeff”—whichever you are most comfortable with. I will not respond to nicknames, Mr. Kirchoff, or other variations of my name.

University Policies

Drop Policy: If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must go to the Records Office and ask for the necessary paperwork. Professors **cannot** drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The record’s office will provide a deadline for which the form must be returned, completed and signed. Once you return the signed form to the records office and wait 24 hours, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. Should you still be enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the records office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course.

Academic Integrity: Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student’s academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student’s work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university’s Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university’s standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Access & Inclusion: At Texas A&M University – Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to an education that is barrier-free. The Office of Access & Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability enjoy equal access to the University’s programs, services and activities. Some aspects of this course or the way the course is taught may present barriers to learning due to a disability. If you feel this is the case, please contact Access & Inclusion at (254) 501-5831 in Warrior Hall, Ste. 212. For more information, please visit their website at <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/disabilitysupport/index.php> Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

Tutoring: Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored include Accounting, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111. Visit www.tamuct.edu/AcademicSupport and click "Tutoring Support" for tutor schedules and contact information. If you have questions, need to schedule a tutoring session, or if you are interested in becoming a tutor, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-501-5830/5836, or by emailing Cecilia.morales@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Spanish, Calculus, and Statistics. To access Tutor.com, click on <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/academicsupport/tutoring.php>.

University Writing Center: The University Writing Center at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students. The UWC is located in 416 Warrior Hall. The center is open 11am-6pm Monday-Thursday during the spring semester. Students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Students may also arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor. Tutorials can be arranged by visiting the UWC. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. Sessions typically last between 20-30 minutes. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will help students develop more effective invention and revision strategies.

University Library: The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders. Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our homepage: <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>

Technology Requirements and Support: This course will use the TAMUCT Blackboard Learn learning management system. To access this course, log-on to

<https://tamuct.blackboard.com>.

Username: Your MyCT username

(xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT e-mail address)

Initial password: Your MyCT password

Check browser and computer compatibility by using the "Test Your Browser" button, found in the "Check Your Browser" module on your Blackboard dashboard, once you have logged in.

For technology issues, students should contact Help Desk Central.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

Web Chat: <http://hdc.tamu.edu>

When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student. For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Course Delivery

Classes will be a mix of instructor lecture, small group conversation, and large group conversation. On occasion, a "guest star" may offer insights or facilitate discussion. Regardless of which format we're using on a given day, students are expected to be engaged with the course material. Questions are encouraged, and can be a great way to organize a discussion day.

Tentative Weekly Schedule (Subject to Change)

8.25

- Introductions
- Overview of Syllabus
- Discussion: What is New Media?

Reading for 9.1

The "Godfather" of New Media: Marshall McLuhan

Marshall McLuhan [*NMR* 193]

- "The Medium is the Message" (from *Understanding Media*)
- "The Galaxy Reconfigured or the Plight of Mass Man in an Individualist Society" (from *The Gutenberg Galaxy*)

Responses to McLuhan (available on Course Site):

Florian Brody

- "The Medium is the Memory"

Jeff Rice

- "I am McLuhan"

Writing for 9.1

Discussion Board Post: Post a reading response to the four readings. Try to make connections. What is your understanding of McLuhan? How do Brody's and Rice's interpretation of McLuhan differ from your own? What questions do you have? How do you see McLuhan's ideas of "New Media" in textual production today? Don't forget to respond to at least two other posts.

9.1

- *Annie Hall* clip
- Interview with McLuhan
- Discussion of McLuhan
- Activity: Is the Medium the Message?

Reading for 9.8

Simulation: Enzensberger vs Baudrillard

Hans Magnus Enzensberger [*NMR* 259]

- "Constituents of a Theory of the Media"

Jean Baudrillard [*NMR* 277]

- "Requiem for the Media"

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 7 "Simulation"

Writing for 9.8

Discussion Board Post: Post a reading response to the three readings. Do you agree with Baudrillard's critique of McLuhan and Enzensberger? What relationships can be made between Enzensberger, Baudrillard, and McLuhan? How does your interpretation of the readings compare to Gane and Beer's interpretation of simulation? How would you define simulation? Don't forget to respond to at least two other posts.

9.8

- *Matrix* clip
- Interview with Baudrillard clip
- Discussion of Readings
- Simulation analysis/demo

Reading for 9.15

Network(s)

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari [*NMR* 405]

- Excerpt from *A Thousand Plateaus*

Manuel Castells [on Course Site]

- "The Space of Flows" from *The Rise of the Network Society*

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 2 "Network"

Writing for 9.15

Discussion Board Post: Post a reading response to the three readings. How do you think the concept of network can be applied to read texts? How do you see the concept of network applying to the notions of "simulacra" or "the medium as the message"? What networked texts do you regularly interact with? Don't forget to respond to at least two other posts.

9.15

- Delueze and Guattari overview
- Discussion of readings
- Analysis of Social Networking Sites
- Introduce Book Review Project

Reading for 9.22

Materiality

Donna Haraway [NMR 515]

- “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century”

N. Katherine Hayles [on Course Site]

- “Print is Flat, Code is Deep: The Importance of Media Specific Analysis”

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 3: “Information”

Writing for 9.22

Post a reading response to the three readings. Do you actively think about how information is materialized? What difference do you think material affordances make? Do you consciously think about what material artifacts you use when you create a text? How might materiality work as an analytical tool of new media texts? Of any text? Don't forget to respond to at least two other posts.

9.22

- Discussing cyborgs
- Feminist influences on new media studies
- Discussion of readings
- Analyzing materiality

Reading for 9.29

Interfaces

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* Chapter 2 “The Interface”

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 4: “Interface”

Writing for 9.29

Post a reading response to the two readings. How do you understand Manovich's Cultural Interface? Gane and Beer suggest that interface shifts new media theory in the direction of how connections are made. Do you agree? Discuss the relationship between systems, machines, and bodies as you understand it. Does the notion of interface improve your understanding of the aforementioned relationship(s)? Don't forget to respond to at least two other posts.

9.29

- Introduction to Lev Manovich: Reviewing his first chapter
- Discussion of readings
- Interface analysis

Reading for 10.6

Tools of New Media

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* chapter 5 “The Forms”
Gane and Beer
- Chapter 5 “Archive”
J. David Bolter [*NMR* 679]
- From *Writing Space* “Seeing and Writing”

Writing for 10.6

Post a reading response to the three readings. How have operations of new media advanced since these three writings? Considering what we have read so far this semester, how do you think new media composers determine their mode of communication? How does the notion of “archive” fit in with “tools of new media”? As always, don’t forget to respond to at least two other posts.

10.6

- Exploring different writing spaces
- Relationship between operations and interface
- Discussion of readings
- Analyzing Databases

Reading for 10.13

Book reviews TBD [available on Course Site]

10.13

- Overview of Book Reviews
- Final project proposals and conference abstracts

Readings for 10.20

Interactivity

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* chapter 4 “The Illusions”

Gane and Beer

- Chapter 6 “Interactivity”

Myron W. Krueger [*NMR* 377]

- “Responsive Environments”

Writing for 10.20

Craft your own discussion question and response.

10.20

- Levels of interaction
- Overview of “hot” and “cold” media
- Discussion of readings
- Playing with New Media: Determining Interaction Levels

Readings for 10.27

Lev Manovich

- From *The Language of New Media* chapter 6 “What is Cinema?”

Walter Benjamin [on Course Site]

- “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Third Reading TBD

Writing for 10.27

Like last week, please craft your own discussion question to respond to.

10.27

- The language of cinema and new media
- Discussion of readings
- Viewing and analysis of short film clips

Reading for 11.3

Video Games

Espen J. Aarseth

- “Introduction: Ergodic Literature” from *Cybertext*

Sherry Turkle [NMR 299]

- “Video Games and Computer Holding Power”

Markku Eskelinin

- “Game Ecology and the Classic Game Model” from *Cybertext Poetics*

Writing for 11.3

Post a reading response to the three readings. How are video games new media? Can text-based games and image-driven games both be new media? How so? How can we use earlier new media theories to understand video games? What is your experience with video games?

11.3

- Fun with video games
- Discussion of reading

Readings for 11.10

Hypertext and Digital Literature

Stuart Moulthrop [NMR 691]

- “You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media”

George P. Landow [available on Course Site]

- “Hypertext as Collage Writing”

Read one of the Selected Digital Literature Pieces from our Course Site

Writing for 11.10

Respond to the two readings and whichever digital literature piece you selected. How does our understanding of hypertext influence our reading of literature? How can the language of new media be applied to the so-called “digital humanities”? How would you define the digital humanities?

11.10

- Discussion of readings
- Analysis of hypertext and digital humanities

Reading for 11.17

Remediation

J. David Bolter and Richard Grusin

- Read “Immediacy, Hypermediacy, and Remediation” and “Mediation and Remediation” from *Remediation*. Available on our Course Site

Writing for 11.17

Respond to Bolter and Grusin on the discussion board. We've read about Bolter and Grusin in some of our earlier theory readings. How do you think Bolter and Grusin's theory of remediation adds to the conversation of new media? Compare Manovich and Bolter & Grusin. What similarities are there? Differences? Do you agree that there is no such thing as "new" media?

11.17

- Discussion of readings
- Analysis of *Wikipedia* and *Encyclopedia Britannica*
- Analysis of Comic Book Captions and Silent Film Intertitles
- Analysis of Robin Hood
- **Book Reviews are Due**

11.24—No Class (Thanksgiving)

12.1

- Presentations

12.8 (Finals)

- Final papers due