ENGL 108D: Digital Lives

Course description:

This course examines how digital communication technologies construct and constrain the formation of online identities and social spaces. More specifically, we will explore the technical, cultural, and social forces that make digital lives both familiar and unfamiliar, traditional and subversive.

In addition to studying the *who*, *what*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of "digital lives," this course is focused on helping you develop your skills as an academic reader and writer in the discipline of English. This means a lot of reading about writing, and of course, a lot of writing. And we're going to explicitly address what it means to study at a university, and how best to go about doing this.

Course learning outcomes:

The design of the content and schedule of the course is determined by our goals of scholarly engagement with the idea and practice of 'digital lives,' and of becoming stronger academic writers in a university setting.

Foundational Knowledge—*by the end of the course you should be able to:*
Identify the basic terms by which scholars study and theorize the Internet
Write clear and persuasive short academic papers, supported by evidence
Discuss how and why people engage with one another online

Application—*over the course of the term you will:*
Take notes from textbooks to understand, remember, and apply new ideas
Interpret texts using scholarly methods of analysis
Frame persuasive arguments in writing

Integration—*this course encourages you to:*
Develop a clear, concise, and scholarly 'voice'
Write more professionally: conceive, research, draft, edit, and proofread your work
Connect our reading and writing strategies to the larger project of your degree

This course is **reading intensive**, **writing intensive**, and **participation intensive**: I expect you to do the readings, take careful notes, show up, and take part.

Course meeting times

The course meets twice weekly, Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30–3:50, in Hagey Hall 227.

Feel free to contact me with any concerns or questions you have about the class, the readings, or the assignments. I will be in my office during the hours noted, and I'm

happy to have you drop by during these times, or by appointment at other times. Beyond office hours, contact is best initiated via email.

Email policy: Email is fast, but it is not instant. I will read your emails within 1 business day, and I will respond within 2 business days. I do not address major questions of substance ("Can you explain what the chapter was about, because I missed class?") in emails, but will use it to make appointments with you, or to clear up questions of fact ("Can you meet with me on Wednesday to talk about the chapter?").

Required and Recommended texts

The **following texts are required** for the course. Bring them to class.

Aaron, Jane and Aimée Morrison. *The Little Brown Compact Handbook*. 5th
        Canadian Edition. Toronto: Pearson, 2010.

Flew, Terry and Richard Smith. *New Media: An Introduction*. 1st Canadian ed. Don Mills
        (ON): Oxford UP, 2011.

We have a course website: it is available through UW-LEARN. You must access this site regularly: this is where links to readings not in the textbooks are located, as well as copies of all handouts.

Object Texts

Each week we will examine a different medium in detail via an 'object text'; these digital media artifacts will 1) familiarize you with the medium in question and 2) provide a common ground for in-depth discussions. All of the object texts will be made available through LEARN. Some may require just 5 minutes of your day; others will require active participation for as much as an hour or more.

Assignments and Mark Distribution

The following are the graded components of the course:

Response Paper	15%	June 6
Resp. Paper, edited and resubmitted	15%	June 18
Research Paper		
Topic and Thesis statement	10%	June 27
Annotated Bibliography	15%	July 4
Introductory paragraph	10%	July 11
Draft	(10%)	July 18
Submitted Paper	35%	July 25

Detailed handouts describe what is expected of you from each assignment; please read these carefully *(do not throw them out!)* and refer to them as you complete the assignments.

Absence and Late Policy

Attendance is vital to your success in this course. If you choose not to attend, you will be missing in-class exercises upon which some of your grades will depend. There are no 'makeups' for this work.

Assignments are due as noted on the assignment sheets and on the LEARN calendar; **unless prior arrangements are made** <u>late assignments will lose 10% per day late, counting weekends</u>. Assignments more than three days late will not be accepted without documentation or explanation.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every member of this class—instructor as well as students—has rights and responsibilities to ensure a pleasant and productive experience for all. We are all answerable to University policies governing **ethical behaviour** (Policy 33) and **academic integrity** (Policy 71), as well as to those outlining **grievance or dispute procedures** (Policy 70). Please consult these documents, available from the website of the university secretariat.

Here are some more specific expectations for this course:

You will:

- know the university policies that govern your behaviour
- attend all scheduled classes
- arrive prepared: with assigned reading and writing completed, and with appropriate materials in hand
- participate actively in your own learning, while respecting the rights of others to learn as well: this means active *listening* as well as active *speaking*
- give thoughtful consideration to instructor feedback on written and oral work

I will:

- adhere to the university policies that govern my behaviour
- attend all scheduled classes
- make myself available for consultation in person and over email
- return assignments within 2 weeks
- provide helpful and respectful feedback on your work

On academic dishonesty: it is a serious offense to appropriate the intellectual labour of another to yourself. Plagiarism consists of using the words or ideas of another without proper attribution. I expect that the work you submit in this course will be the product of your own labour, and that your research sources will be scrupulously documented. If you have any concerns or questions about appropriate practice, you are sincerely encouraged to come discuss this with me—I would really like to help.

W	Readings/Medium/Object Text	Assignments
1	**Getting Started/Browsers/Jailbreak the Patriarchy**	
	May 7 -Introductions	
	May 9 - Read: NM introduction and abbreviations (pp xii---xvii) - LBCH Chapters 9 "Study Skills" & 10 "Critical Thinking and Reading" (pp 70---87). - **North, Anna. "Fun Chrome Extension Gender-Swaps The Internet" [LEARN]**	
2	**Introduction to New Media/Internet Radio/CBC Radio**	
	May 14 - NM Chapter 1 "Introduction to New Media," to end of Internet History section - LBCH Chapter 8, "Academic Writing" (pp 65---69)	
	May 16 - Finish NM Chapter 1 "Introduction to New Media" (pp 13---27) - LBCH Chapter 11 "Argument" (pp 83---98)	
3	**Approaches to New Media/Tetrad/Webcomics**	
	May 21 - NM Chapter 3, "Approaches to New Media (pp 51---71) - LBCH Chapters 1 "The Writing Situation" and 2 "Invention" (pp 1---12)	
	May 23 - NM Chapter 2, "The History of New Media," to end Of Telephone section (pp 28---41). - LBCH Chapters 3 "Thesis and Organization" and 4 "Drafting" (pp 13---23)	Draft a thesis statement for response paper
4	**Mobile Networks/Twitter/Tweets From Tahrir**	
	May 28 - Finish NM Chapter 2, "The History of New Media" (pp 41---50) - LBCH Chapters 5 "Revising and Editing" and 6 "Paragraphs" (pp 23---51)	
	May 30 -NM Chapter 4, "Mobile New Media" (pp 72---96) - Ch. 2 from *Tweets From Tahrir* [LEARN]	Draft workshop for response paper
5	**Technology, Industry, Culture /MMO/Dys4ria**	
	June 4 - NM Chapter 6 "Games: Technology, Industry, Culture" (pp 122-140)	
	June 6	Response Paper due
6	**Web Design Tutorial/Websites/Pine**	
	June 11 -Chandler, Daniel. "Personal Home Pages and the Construction of Identities on the Web" - NM Chapter 6 "Games: Technology, Industry, Culture" (pp 122-140)	
	June 13 - LBCH Chapters 52 "Working with Sources," 53 "Avoiding Plagiarism and Documenting Sources" (pp 309---333), and 58 "MLA Documentation and Format" (pp 362---403)	
7	**Writing Workshop**	
	June 18 - LBCH Chapter 56 "Reading and Writing about Literature" (pp 340--351)	Revised Response Paper due
	June 20 - LBCH Chapters 50 "Research Strategy" and 51 "Finding Sources" (pp 287---308)	
8	**Social Networks & Participatory Culture/Blog /Wordpress**	
	June 25 - Brief Introduction to CSS, Javascript, & HTML	
	June 27 - NM Chapter 5, "Social Networks and Participatory Culture" (pp 97--121)	Topic and Thesis Statement due
9	**Creative Industries/Wikis/Kitchener Wiki**	
	July 2 - NM Chapter 7 "Creative Industries" (pp 141---165)	
	July 4 - NM Chapter 8 "The Global Knowledge Economy" (pp 166---191)	Annotated Bibliography due
10	**Internet Law/Networks/Net Neutrality**	
	July 9 - NM Chapter 9 "Internet Law, Policy, and Governance" (pp 192-221)	
	July 11 - LBCH Chapter 54 "Writing the Paper" (pp 333---336) - Anderson, Nate. "How one man tracked down Anonymous—and paid a heavy price" [LEARN]	Introductory Paragraph due
11	**Writing Strategies**	
	July 16 - LBCH Chapter 18, "Appropriate, Exact Words," 19 "Completeness," and 20 "Conciseness" (pp 133---150)	
	July 18 - LBCH Chapter 15 "Emphasis," 16 "Parallelism," and 17 "Variety; Details" (pp 117---132)	Draft Workshop (bring essay drafts to class with you)
12	**Conclusions**	
	July 23 - NM Chapter 10 "Conclusion" (pp 222-238)	
	July 25	Research Paper due, beginning of class