Topics in Critical Theory: Cyberliteracy
Section 001

T/TH 11:00-12:20 | Trimble Hall | Room 216 |

Spring 2018

Instructor…………….. Cedrick May   **English Office**…. 817-272-2692
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Office Hours……….. T/H 12:30-1:30   **Class Dates:** January 16 - May 4

> This course will investigate issues related to cyberliteracy: what it means to read, write, communicate, and make knowledge in a digital world. In particular, the course will consider how computer technologies challenge traditional notions of literacy, identity, and community.

Cyberliteracy is an advanced critical theory and underline practice course. This course will emphasize textual analysis in digital environments and the types of writing and editing they enable. This particular section is ***project-oriented,*** meaning students will theorize, discuss, and create web-based, "born-digital" projects. A major goal in the course is to get all students comfortable working with computers at the level of code, as well as introduce the idea of "design thinking" to the practices related to writing and media production.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Throughout the semester, we will focus on various projects designed to teach students the basics of communication and writing for digital environments. Students will learn the basics of HTML and CSS in order to write and create their own webpages and websites of rich, well designed content. Once students establish a baseline literacy in reading and writing code for the web, we will learn the basics of digital sound editing and integrate audio works created by you and your classmates into the structure of our websites. Cyberliteracy will combine theory, computer coding, and audio editing as an introduction to writing for the Web. Along the way we will read about and discuss theories related to computers, society, and human subjectivity.

Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:

Required eBooks:
* *Program or be Programmed* — by Douglas Rushkoff
* *My Mother Was a Computer* — by N. Katherine Hayles
* *Patchwork Girl* — by Shelley Jackson

Optional Books:
* *HTML5 Pocket Reference* (Robbins)— (Optional)
* *CSS Pocket Reference* (Meyer) — (Optional)

Grade Requirements:
The grades for this course are heavily weighed toward projects and class participation. Students must be in class on time and ready to participate in discussions.

- **Participation= 25%**
- **Projects #1-4= 10% each (for a total of 40 %)**
- **Final Exam=35%**
  Average of Total= Final Grade

  Participation Guidelines: This guideline will help you understand how I assign grades for participation as part of your **In-class Work**:

  A Always Participates—informed and almost always informing

  B Frequently Participates—sometimes uninformed, but always focused

  C Occasionally Participates—tries each week, but may not always be focused

  D Seldom Participates—speaks only once a fortnight, shows little evidence of preparation; may actually be prepared & focused, but perhaps too reticent to reveal that preparation

  F Never Participates—does not contribute to class discussion, does not show preparation

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Many of the projects for this course will require students to gather information from interviews or attend events that they will then write about as part of the content for their assignments. Please make sure that you give yourself adequate time between doing the required fieldwork and the writing/coding/editing you will complete involving that fieldwork.

- It is important that students have a reading device, such as some type of Kindle, an iPad, or some other tablet device for reading the content for the course. I also strongly encourage downloading and installing the Kindle app for laptop and desktop computers, as we will be able to share notes and highlighting much easier between machines.
- Everyone should have an Dropbox account.
- Patience, persistence, and a good sense of humor--There will be a good bit of coding (both reading and writing code) that will constitute the majority of our in and out-of-class activities. When we write or code, we will be designing and creating new artifacts that can only exist within a digital environment.

Technical Requirements:
- Access to a computer running Mac OSX, Windows, or some flavor of Linux
- A laptop

- You will need to purchase a *condenser microphone*, one suitable for getting good, clear sound recordings. The TASCAM TMST1 Condenser Microphone is an excellent mic, but there are many other very economical mics that would work well, too. Please see me to discuss your options.

- A Portable digital recorder. <u>Your smartphone or tablet will work just fine</u>, but if you decide you want a dedicated recorder, please talk to me for suggestions

What you will learn:
- Theories of digital environments and human subjectivity
- HTML & CSS
- Sound Editing (Using Audacity, a sound editing software)
- Using TWINE—Interactive Fiction software

Daily Schedule:

Week 1:
T-Jan 16— Introduction to Course
Th- Aug 18— "The Extent of Our Decline"— by Kyle Beachy

Week 2:
Tu-Jan 23 – "Electronic Literature and The Reader's Deadline"— by Cedrick May
Th- Jan 25 – Discussion of *Program or be Programmed* "Introduction" to end of "Place"

Week 3:
Tu-Jan 30— Discussion of *Program or be Programmed* "Choice" to end of "Fact"
Th-Feb 1 — Discussion of *Program or be Programmed* "Openness" to end of "Purpose"

Week 4:
Tu-Feb 6 – In-class work on "**Analysis of a common software application project**"
Th-Feb 8 – **Project #1 Due (analysis of a common software application)**

Week 5:
Tu-Feb 13 – "How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine"— N. Katherine Hayles

Th-Feb 15 – Discussion of "The .txtual Condition" — by Matthew G. Kirschenbaum

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Week 6:
Tu-Feb 20— In-Class work on Project #2 HTML Website
Th-Feb 22 – HTML--Uploading your site to a web server

Week 7:
Tu-Feb 27 — HTML—Final Editing
Th-Mar 1 – **Project #2 Due (personal themed website) / Presentations**

Week 8:
Tu-Mar 6 – Introduction to Sound and Sound Editing (Listening and Recording)
        (Download the sound editing software, Audacity) —https://www.audacityteam.org/
Th-Mar 8 – Sound and Sound Editing

Week 9:
Tu-Mar 13 – **SPRING BREAK**
Th-Mar 15 – **SPRING BREAK**

Week 10:
Tu-Mar 20— Working with field recordings
Th-Mar 22 – Sound and Sound Editing (Embedding Audio in a webpage)

Week 11:
Tu-Mar 27 – Sound and Sound Editing Workshop
Th-Mar 29 – **Project #3 Due (audio interview/story for the web) / Presentations /**

Week 12:
Tu-Apr 3– Discussion of *My Mother Was a Computer* — by N. Katherine Hayles (Part 1)
Th-Apr 5– Discussion of *My Mother Was a Computer* — ("4 Translating Media")

Week 13:
Tu-Apr 10 – Discussion of Patchwork Girl — by Shelley Jackson
Th-Apr 12 – Discussion of Patchwork Girl — by Shelley Jackson

Week 14:
Tu- Apr 17 – Writing TWINE Narratives
Th-Apr 19 – TWINE Narratives Workshop

Week 15:
Tu-Apr 24 – TWINE Narratives Workshop
Th-Apr 26 – TWINE Narratives Workshop

Week 16:
Tu-May 1— **Project #4 Due --TWINE Narratives / Prep for Final Exam**
Th- May 3— **Last Day of Class**

<u>Final Exam</u>: Tuesday May 8th, 11:00am -1:30pm

<u>Here is a list of useful online resources</u>

Web Design Resources:

HTML and CSS Tutorials……… http://www.w3schools.com/
Color Scheme Designer……… http://colorschemedesigner.com/#
Online Photo Editor…………….. http://www.aviary.com/
Public Domain images…………. http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Open Source Tools:

Audacity ………… http://audacity.sourceforge.net/
              (a powerful audio recorder and editor for Macs and PCs)
Text Wrangler…. http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/
              (a truly great text editor with syntax highlighting for Macs)
Notepad++…….. http://notepad-plus-plus.org/
              (a truly great text editor with syntax highlighting for PCs)
Gimp ……………… http://www.gimp.org/
               (image manipulation program)

OTHER IMPORTANT STUFF

Community and Life of the Mind in the Classroom: I believe that the most valuable asset in the classroom is the sense of community that develops among the group, not any one individual in the class, instructor or student. For this reason, it is vital that an environment exists where all feel welcome to participate. The unique backgrounds from which we come should not be seen as an obstacle, but rather as a resource that will help the class understand the many perspectives in our world. Therefore, it is not acceptable for any member of the class to engage in any behavior that threatens or impairs the ability of any other to be an active participant. However, it is not enough to say that no person shall be mistreated or threatened because of gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnic background, religious belief, and/or mental or physical impairment. Instead, it is necessary that all members of the learning community realize that they have a responsibility to take an active role in creating a welcoming environment.

Attendance Policy: Punctual attendance is mandatory, as there is a lot of work to be done in a short amount of time. However, I understand that emergencies happen, students are allotted **_two_ (2)** absences before any penalties are assigned. On your **third and fourth (3-4)** absences you will lose 5% off your final grade for each absence. **The fifth (5) absence will result in a failure for the course.** Only official university absences are excused. Students representing UTA in a university-mandated activity that requires missing class should provide official documentation of schedules and turn in work in advance, unless you have approved alternate arrangements with me. *Please note that students who show up to class without their books (analog or electronic) will be counted as absent*. Two (2) **tardies** also count as an absence. Absences due to illness, sleeping in, and long weekends are unexcused - they all count toward the absences limit. Since illness is likely at some point during the semester, you are urged to save the unexcused absence for times when you are too sick to come to class. For any absence, it is the student's responsibility to find out what work they missed and have it completed by the next class period.

E-mail: I make sure I am very accessible during office hours, and meeting in person is my preferred way to address questions. However, if you are unable to meet with me in person, please send me an email. But before you press the "Send" button, look over your email and ask yourself whether it is concise, polite, and clearly written; please make sure you leave me adequate time to respond.

Classroom Disruptions: I do my best to create a learning environment that is positive and encouraging; one where students and the instructor may address *tough* and *important* questions related to the literature and our cultural milieu. Disruptions that disturb this environment are therefore frustrating and unnecessary. ***I will not tolerate disruptive behavior.*** *Therefore, do not talk while others are talking. Do not let your cell-phone ring during class or use it for anything other than reading assigned ebooks and essays. No laptops in class, unless I **specifically** grant permission to use them. And, most important, be **respectful** to your classmates during discussions.* It *is perfectly possible and acceptable* to disagree without being rude. This is called civil discourse, conversation engaged with the purpose of enhancing understanding.

Due Dates: Assignments must be submitted prior to or on the specified date and time listed on the syllabus and prompts. Students **_must_** turn their assignments in ahead of time if the due date coincides with an excused university-related absence. *Late work will not be accepted and will be recorded as a zero*.

93-100 A	77-79 C+
90-92 A-	73-76 C
87-89 B+	70-72 C-
83-86 B	67-69 D+
80-82 B-	60-66 D
	59 or less = F

Boilerplate:
While UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of **a letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:
The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)   www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit* www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

> *I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*
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> *I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at https://www.uta.edu/conduct/.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses**,** a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at http://uta.mywconline.com. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services.

The Library's 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library's hours of operation. http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381