

English 391, section 009
Reading & Writing Hypertext & New Media
Fall 2009
Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 to 12:15
Hibbs 329



Instructor

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Course Overview

This course will serve as an introduction to reading and writing hypertext and new media literature. The course will provide a short historical overview of electronic literature that uses links and lexias as means to convey ideas, characterization, and connections before introducing new media poetry and literature that employs movement and image to express meaning and metaphor. Authors such as Michael Joyce and theorists such as Marshall McLuhan will provide contextual support for analyses of electronic literature as well as foundation for writing projects using various technologies, such as Dreamweaver and Flash. Although students will be instructed on basic use of this software (available in the lab/classroom), they are not limited to them or expected to have in-depth understanding of them for the projects that will be assigned.

After participation in this course you will be expected to:

- recognize that “text” means a variety of things, including visuals.
- have a grasp of electronic literature, and in the theoretical pros and cons of the continuing discussion of its parameters and possibilities.
- develop an awareness and control of saying something valuable with more than words.
- analyze multimodal “texts” with regards to design, movement, and interactivity.
- hone academic and creative writing, presentation, and group-work skills.

- complete meaningful textual projects in an electronic format, including proficiency in one or more computer software (including publishing a website).
- participate in formal and informal discussion, workshop, and peer critique

Texts and Materials

All reading will be instructor provide, on public websites, or available online through the course website at: <http://ramsites.net/~whitemm2/hypertext>

Students also will need a VCU email and ramsites account, an electronic storage device (jump, thumb, flash drive), and a blank CD for turning in the final project.

Course Requirements

Reading

Readings are not optional. All course readings will be provided by the instructor or posted to the course website. You are responsible for printing them off and reading them on time. The readings we will be doing will serve as a theoretical and practical overview of electronic literature. You will find them helpful not only for understanding the history and justification for electronic work you will be looking at, but also for your own projects and reflections.

Discussion

Your thoughts and opinions are a vital part of this class. I do not like to lecture and will only do so when absolutely necessary. What I want to know is what you think and what you want to create. Verbal responses to the material in the course are also a vital part of your grade. ☺

Class work

Attendance is important since discussion and workshop are a large part of the course. You will also be doing in-class work in groups and individually, when I am available for consultation. Use this time wisely.

Assignments

There will be four course assignments. Three units (explained in the next section) including a final project of your own choosing. Work must be professional and turned in on time. No excuses. I am available for help, but not on the day a project is due. It is difficult (and never a good idea) to procrastinate work that requires technology. AND ALWAYS BACK UP YOUR FILES.

Assignments

The course will be split into three units and culminate in a final project.

Unit one: introduction & elements

Unit two: reading & analysis

Unit three: remediation & composing for the medium

More detailed assignment descriptions will be provided online and when assignments are introduced. Due dates and percent allocation of course grade are as follows:

Group visual narrative & presentation	Proposal/design plan (by consultation)	Sept. 3 rd	
	Presentation/justification	Sept. 15 th	10%
E-literature review/analysis	Proposal memo	Oct. 1 st	
	Paper & presentation	Oct. 8 th	30%
Remediation project	Proposal/design plan	Oct. 13 th	
	Project & reflective memo	Nov. 5 th	20%
Final individual project	Proposal memo/design plan	Nov. 12 th	
	Final & Reflective memo/analysis	Dec. 10 th	30%
Participation/attendance/compliance with work schedule		ongoing	10%
Total			100%

Paper and project proposal memos, in-class work, reflective memos and presentations will be counted in the final percentage for that specific assignment.

Formatting

Yeah, not so much. But...

- Proposal memos will be presented in a professional font, with normal margins, etc.
- Citations will be made in MLA format for the e-lit review/analysis paper and reflective memos.
- All files for final projects will be easily accessible (and instructions provided if applicable) on a disk.

University and Course Policies

Attendance

You need to come to class every scheduled day. Because this is a workshop style class, your attendance is crucial and will affect your grade. Make the most of your education by being responsible and diligent in your class attendance. Don't be late. Class will always start at the designated time, sometimes with a journal prompt or quiz. If you are late, you will lose points for these in-class assignments. If you are going to be absent from class please let me know in advance. Unless the absence is due to university business (and I receive proper documentation before the absence), you will not be allowed to make up any points for activities done in class on the day you miss. In addition, you must turn in assignments before or on the day that you will be absent.

Because this is a T/TH class, by University policy, if you miss more than 6 scheduled classes, a failing grade may be received for the course.

Students with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require that VCU provide an "academic adjustment" and/or a "reasonable accommodation" to any individual who advises us of a physical and/or mental disability. If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an academic adjustment or accommodation, arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience (preferably within the first week of class). Additionally, if your coursework requires you to work in a lab environment, you should advise the instructor or department chairperson of any concerns

you may have regarding safety issues related to your limitation(s). This statement applies not only to this course but also to every other course in this University.

Class Disruptions

Turn off all cell phones, pagers, or other noise-making items before coming to class. These devices are not to be used in a classroom setting. If your cell phone rings you will be asked to leave class. Instant messaging, e-mail checking, and web-surfing are also not allowed during class time.

Deadlines

All due dates are listed in this syllabus. You will be reminded of due dates well in advance. Assignments are always due at the beginning of class. I do not accept late work. I will return your graded papers/projects within two weeks of receiving them.

E-mail Policy

Electronic mail or "email" is considered an official method for communication at VCU because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, cost effective, and environmentally aware manner. This policy ensures that all students have access to this important form of communication. It ensures students can be reached through a standardized channel by faculty and other staff of the University as needed. Mail sent to the VCU email address may include notification of University-related actions, including disciplinary action. Please read the policy in its entirety: <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/email.htm>

Academic Honesty

The VCU Resource Guide states: "Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education. "Therefore, it must act to maintain these values, even to the point of separating from the University those who violate them. [The VCU honor system policy] describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by

administrative hearings and appeals. All persons enrolled in any course or program offered by VCU, and all persons supervising the learning of any student are responsible for acting in accordance with the provisions of this policy.”

VCU has recently revised its honor policy. Students should review that policy as described in the *VCU Resource Guide*, <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/honor.html>. In this class, because coursework will be at times collaborative, particular issues of integrity arise. Students should not copy or print another student’s work without permission. *Any material from another source must be credited, whether that material is quoted directly, summarized, or paraphrased.* In other words, students should respect the work of others and in no way present it as their own.

You are expected to do your own original work. Whenever you borrow graphics, quote passages, or use ideas from others, you are legally and ethically obliged to acknowledge that use, following appropriate conventions for documenting sources. To borrow someone else’s writing without acknowledging that use is an act of academic as well as professional dishonesty, whether you borrow an entire report or a single sentence. An act of plagiarism will usually result in an F for the course and be reported to the proper university administrators.

In addition to following the basic principles of fair use of others’ work and honesty and forthrightness in crediting the contribution of others to your work, you are expected to adhere to this basic professional principle: treat others with the respect that you would wish them to grant you. "Others" includes the people you work for and with (classmates, instructors, corporations, clients); the people you write to (audiences); and the people you write about.

Classroom Conduct

According to the *VCU Resource Guide*, “The instructional program at VCU is based upon the premise that students enrolled in a class are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other students. Accordingly, in classrooms, laboratories, studies, and other learning areas, students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner so that the faculty member can proceed with their [sic] customary instruction. Faculty members (including graduate teaching assistants) may set reasonable standards for classroom behavior in order to serve these objectives. If a student believes that the behavior of another student is disruptive, the instructor should be informed.” Among other things, cell phones and beepers should be turned off while in the classroom. Also, the University

Rules and Procedures prohibit anyone from having "...in his possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive, regardless of whether a license to possess the same has been issued, without the written authorization of the President of the university..."

See the Faculty Guide for Student Conduct for more information

[<http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/conductguide.html>]. Certainly the expectation in this course is that students will attend class with punctuality, proper decorum, required course materials, and studious involvement. *The VCU Resource Guide* contains additional important information about a number of other policies with which students should be familiar, including Guidelines on Prohibition of Sexual Harassment, Grade Review Procedure, and Ethics Policy on Computing. It also contains maps, phone numbers, and information about resources available to VCU students. *The VCU Resource Guide* is available online or through the Division of Student Affairs.

Participation

Be advised that 10% of your grade is dependent upon on your attendance, participation, and compliance with work schedule. Reading and discussions are what make an interesting learning environment. Your thoughts and opinions are a large part of this course. Also, most projects will be worked on and workshopped during class time. That means that you must be present every day in both body and mind.

Resources

Online tutorials will be posted to the course website, but you will be expected to research and learn some software for your particular needs by finding tutorials and resources on the web. Books will also be made available to you by the instructor if applicable. You may also make appointments for individual or group conferences for any project or software concern.

Also, under student-use, images and/or text found on the web is available to you without copyright restrictions. Be aware, however, that this does not hold true if you want your work published outside an academic environment. Creative Commons also has resources available for fair use.

Also, located on the first floor of the Hibbs building is the University Writing Center. I encourage each of you to visit at least once during the semester to obtain help or advice with anything from brainstorming topics to grammar and punctuation. Appointments are preferred and can be made by telephone or in person.

Emergencies

What to Know and Do To Be Prepared for Emergencies at VCU:

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify>). You're your information up-to-date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>).
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

And...

I am dedicated to your learning, but you must be dedicated as well. Come to class prepared, complete your assignments, participate in class discussions and group work, be respectful to your peers and their ideas and you will succeed academically. Discriminatory behavior based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or age will not be tolerated. I am committed to your success and hope this class helps you to become a better writer, thinker and academic.

I will be available in class, during office hours, and by appointment to answer any questions that you may have. Although I welcome your visits any time, I especially encourage every student to visit me at least once during the first two weeks of class. Please feel free to e-mail me or to call me to arrange an appointment.

As a general rule, please allow me at least 24 hours to acknowledge and/or respond to your queries.

Schedule

The following schedule is tentative and subject to changes depending on class dynamics and instructor mood. ☺ Readings are not optional and will be discussed during class time. Remember, class participation is a part of your grade and keeps us from having things like pop quizzes.

Week 1 August 20th

Introduction to each other, course and syllabus.

(Note: Add/drop continues until August 26th)

Week 2 August 25th & 27th

Introduction to electronic literature

The medium, the message, and the end of books

From e.e. cummings to dear e.e. & other examples of e-lit

Elements of visual narrative and design

Read: theory intro., poemsthatgo and ELO collection

Week 3 September 1st & 3rd

Introduction to visual rhetoric and narrative

Design & Photoshop, PowerPoint, Windows Moviemaker tutorials

Read: *Ways of Seeing* & *Picturing Texts* (& Scott McCloud)

Due: Proposal/design plan for group projects (in class) Sept. 3rd

Week 4 September 8th & 10th

Work week

Week 5 September 15th & 17th

Due: Group presentations & discussion

Week 6 September 22nd & 24th

Reading Hypertext: *Afternoon, a story* and *Patchwork Girl*

Memos

Week 7 September 29th & October 1st

Reading new media: all other e-lit readings (see website)

Terms of analysis for print vs. visual text discussion

Analyzing hypertext & new media class work

Due: proposal memo for e-lit. review/analysis Oct. 1st

Week 8 October 6th & 8th

Remediation: *Briar Rose* & *The Garden of Forking Paths* (& *Writing Space* Chapter 3)

Introduction to remediation assignment

Presentations

Due: e-lit. review/analysis October 8th

Week 9 October 13th (no classes Oct. 15th)

Presentations

Web design, Dreamweaver tutorial

Due: remediation proposal/design plan

Week 10 October 20th & 22nd

Class work and technological assistance

(Note: For the 2009 Fall semester, Friday, October 30th, is the last day to withdraw from a course with a grade of "W.")

Week 11 October 27th & 29th

class work and workshop

Websites & FTP

Week 12 November 3rd & 5th

introduction/ discussion of final projects

Flash tutorial

Due: Remediation projects

Week 13 November 10th & 12th

Flash tutorial

Due: Final project proposals/design plan

Week 14 November 17th & 19th

Class work and workshops

Week 15 November 24th (Happy Thanksgiving!)

Workshop/usability testing

Revisions

Week 16 December 1st & 3rd

Final Concerns, FTP

Due: Final projects and reflective memo (on disc and links e-mailed) by Thursday

December 10th!