Digital Rhetorics and the Modern Dialectic

Instructor Information
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Course Information
Number: ENC 4415 – 0001 (20868)
Semester: Spring 2022
Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisite: ENC 1102
Meeting Location: CB1-O212
Meeting Times: MoWe 3-4:15pm
Modality: In-person

Zoom:
Passcode:

Course Description:

Digital media increasingly mediates more and more areas of our lives, blurring personal and professional communication, influencing commerce, education, music, and even romance. The internet and technology generally simultaneously reflect and change our culture. Understanding digital rhetoric is crucial in both the "public" and "private" spheres.

This course helps students think critically about the rhetorical effects of their decisions in the digital realm. While rhetoric has historically been defined as "the available means of persuasion," scholars today understand rhetoric as "epistemic," by which they mean that rhetoric participates in the creation of knowledge. Thus, in this course, we will explore how rhetoric, as a meaning-making practice, shapes knowledge through digital technologies. We will investigate the ways that our digital and online communicative acts and technologies influence perceptions of the world and are embedded with values. We will focus mostly on Web 2.0 content. Broadly, we will not learn to create websites or other internet content. Instead, we will learn about ways to think about digital media and rhetoric in a cultural and theoretical sense. In the first half of this class, we will rhetorically analyze existing digital content. In the second half of this class, we will shift into thinking critically about the effects of our own rhetorical choices when we make digital content.

You should be prepared to read and write both critically and frequently to be successful in this course. I expect your assignments to reflect an academic encounter between you, as the reader, and the texts. I ask that you respond, reflect, evaluate, interpret, and critique texts.

Course Objectives:

By the conclusion of this course, students will:
- Understand the rhetorical conventions of new digital genres in everyday discourse
- Learn critical theory relevant to the digital realm
- Understand the influence of public rhetoric in electronic networks
- Demonstrate the ability to rhetorically analyze or interpret new media
- Interrogate digital media with the tenets of classical rhetoric

Required Texts (All readings available through the UCF Library):

- All reading material will be available through UCF's library or PDFs through Canvas. Permalinks for library materials all embedded below and in Canvas

Other Required Materials:
- Computer and Internet access
- A word processing program (e.g., Microsoft Word)
- A PDF reader (e.g., Adobe Reader)
- All papers must use MLA formatting (See the Purdue OWL site http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/.)

Grade Breakdown:

Academic Verification: Initial Reflection, 6%   6 points
      Due January 14
Rhetorical Concepts Abstract and Presentations* 7%   7 points
      Due throughout the first half of the semester
Claims summaries for course readings*   18 points
      (19 available, 18 Due x 1 point each; see below), 18%
Draft and Peer Review for Rhetorical Concept Paper, 6%   6 points
      Due February 23 (class time for initial draft. 11:59PM for peer review)
Rhetorical Concept Paper*, 18%   18 points
      Due March 2
Proposal for Final Project, 7%   7 points
      Due March 14
Peer Review for Paper Portion of Final Project, 6%   6 points
      Due March 30 (class time for initial draft. 11:59PM for peer review)
Peer Review for Digital Portion of Final Project, 6%   6 points
      Due April 6 (class time for initial draft. 11:59PM for peer review)
Final Project*, 20%   20 points
      Due April 20
Final Reflection, 6%
      Due April 27 at 1:00pm   6 points

Final Grade out of 100 points

Final reflection paper due during our final exam period: https://exams.sdes.ucf.edu/2022/spring
(GR) indicates Gordon Rule Assignment. GR assignments are 63% of the total grade. 37% is process work.

Grading Scale and Incompletes:

A	94-100	B-	80-83	D+	67-69
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D	64-66
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63
B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	59 and below

No Incompletes will be given in this course. If the grades are between cutoff percentages at the end of the semester, I will round the final grade up or down. If the grade is a 93.45%, I round that down to 93% for an A-. If the grade is 93.55%, I round that up to 94% for an A.

Gordon Rule:

The asterisks above indicate Gordon Rule Assignments. This course is a [Gordon Rule course](#), which means that four assignments and 60% of your graded writing for this course must demonstrate "college-level writing," UCF defines college level writing as having the following characteristics:

1. The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
2. It will provide adequate support for that idea
3. It will be organized clearly and logically
4. It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
5. It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way.

As an upper-division English course within the Gordon Rule requirement, the grading standards are what is normal for an English course of this level. The conventions of standard academic English grammar, syntax, vocabulary, exposition, and clarity of thought and writing are assumed and so will not be taught of themselves in this course. However, I have included some brief handouts in our Canvas that we will go over to make sure my expectations are clear. In your papers, you will need to make your points clearly in a well-organized, coherent, and well-supported document of length specified in the assignment. All papers must use MLA formatting.

In addition, Gordon Rule courses require that I give you revise according to my feedback on at least one assignment. I will give you feedback on one draft of your papers, so I suggest that you have them as complete as possible.

This course requires 6,000 words of evaluated writing per English Department requirements.

Assignment Descriptions:

This is a writing class that adheres to the [Gordon Rule Writing Requirement for UCF](#); thus, there is a lot of writing in this class. This course requires 6,000 words of evaluated writing per English Department requirements. Furthermore, this is a junior/senior-level course in the Department of English, and so the grading standards are what is normal for an English course of this level. The conventions of standard academic English grammar, syntax, vocabulary, exposition, and clarity of thought and writing are assumed and so will not be taught of themselves in this course. The papers will need to make points clearly in a well-organized, coherent, and well-supported document of length specified in the assignment. All papers must use MLA formatting.

Participation and Attendance: I will keep track of attendance in Webcourses in accordance with UCF policies. However, I recognize that "participation" assumes norms of interaction that may not apply to everyone. Not everyone is comfortable speaking in class, and not all forms of participation are necessarily visible to me (active listening, for instance). Since I do not want you to come to class if you feel ill, I recognize that participation looks different for different people, and I recognize that emergencies happen, I do not have a set number of courses for you to miss after which your grade will drop. You are not required to come to class. However, this is an in-person class. Thus, ***you are responsible for the information that we cover in class***. I will post to Webcourses, but that does not necessarily cover everything we talk about in discussions. Please plan accordingly. If you are going to miss a class, you should email me as soon as possible to let me know so that I can make alternative arrangements to work with you to get you the information which we will cover in class.

Academic Verification/Initial Reflection: This assignment is meant to orient us to the course, set expectations. It is 200-300 words long and uses paragraphs to answer (1) what students expect to learn from the course based on the course objectives, (2) define the term "digital rhetoric" in their own words, and (3) brainstorm about how we use digital rhetoric in our everyday lives.

Rhetorical Concepts Abstract and Presentation: In this project, student groups read a short reading about basic rhetorical concepts and/or some of the rhetorical conventions of digital genres. Collectively, the groups (1) write brief abstracts/definitions on their rhetorical concepts (200-300 words), and (2) give 5-10 minute presentations with a visual aid on their rhetorical concepts. I will post these abstracts to Canvas. The purpose of this assignment is to collectively build and share definitions with peers, so that everyone has something to which to refer back when we get closer to the major papers. We will build a course dictionary of rhetorical terms. ***You may complete this assignment and work with your group remotely. I encourage this option for people who are immunocompromised***.

Claims Summaries for Course Readings (19 available, 18 due, 1 point each): These are about 150-200-word summaries that you will turn in to Canvas by class time. ***You can (and should!) use these as "pre-writing" or scaffolding activities to build toward your major assignments.*** They should include five things. (1) In the first paragraph, they should include the overall argument and claim of the reading. (2) Within this first paragraph, you should include any key terms the author introduces. (3) In the second paragraph, they should include how you can use this source for your major assignments and/or how this source would "talk" to another source. (4) They should include a word count in parentheses. (5) They should include a citation in MLA format.
Since I recognize that this course has a lot of reading and writing and that things happen unexpectedly, I built some flexibility into these assignments to give you some agency in determining your own schedule. There are 19 claims summaries for course readings available to you throughout the course. The first two of them are required (Chapter 1 in *Digital Rhetoric,* and "Toward a Digital Cultural Rhetoric"). Though you are still responsible for the content in the readings, you may choose to skip one of the other ones that are not required. I suggest looking at your other course schedules and when you will complete your Rhetorical Concepts Abstract and Presentation and planning around that. The lowest grade for the claims summaries will be dropped. You may complete all of the reading responses for extra credit points.

Peer Reviews: Drafts of papers must be submitted in Canvas by class time. I will give everyone feedback on their papers, but peers will also review the papers. Peer reviews are completed during class time, but I leave the assignment portal open until 11:59PM on the day they are due for people who are ill or take longer to complete their peer reviews. Peer reviews are completed in the comments section of Canvas. Peers list the rubric requirements and then answer if the paper met those requirements, and if not, how the paper did not meet the requirements. Next, peers list what they believe the thesis statement of the paper is, what they like most about the paper, and what could help them understand the paper more effectively. For clarity on grading, turning in a draft on time accounts for 2 points, and fully completing the peer review accounts for 4 points of the grade.

Digital Rhetorical Concepts Paper: This 1,100-1,300 word paper consists of selecting an ethical and appropriate digital text to analyze an existing piece of digital content. The paper should include a clear and specific claim backed up by evidence from the digital text and from at least four scholarly readings from this class. It should focus on one or two of the digital rhetorical concepts that we have talked about at this point in the semester.

Proposal for Final Project: This project will be largely completed in class, though it can also be completed virtually. It is meant to scaffold us into the final major assignment. It is 300-350 words, and consists of five parts: (1) a proposal for a digital text for the final project (2) an outline of the arguments the digital text will make, (3) what digital rhetorical concepts the final project will focus on, (4) what evidence the final project will use from the digital text, and (5) two possible scholarly and peer-reviewed sources from the library databases in MLA format. The purpose of this assignment is for me to give students feedback about if their ideas for the final project are feasible.

Final Project: Since digital rhetoric is epistemic, the final project is both creative and analytic and it consists of two parts. First, there is a short digital text that makes an argument. This text can be in any medium, but it should be appropriate for the class, feasible for our timeline, and it should be something that can be submitted via Canvas. The second part of the assignment is a 1,700-2,000 word paper that uses at least six peer-reviewed scholarly sources (three from this class and three found from the library databases). The paper makes a claim about how the digital text uses specific digital rhetorical concepts, and why that matters for digital rhetoric.

Final Course Reflection: This assignment is meant to reorient us to the concept of digital rhetoric and to reflect on the course. It is 400-500 words long and uses paragraphs to answer (1) if students think that they met the course objectives, and why or why not, (2) to return to their initial definition of "digital rhetoric" and to think about if their definitions have remained the same, been broadened, or changed, and why, and (3) to think about why digital rhetoric matters and how we can use it in our everyday lives.

Institution-Specific Policies and Statements

Course Schedule:
This syllabus may be amended or modified in any way upon notice; most such changes will affect the Course Itinerary, so be sure that you know if any due dates change.

Dates	Tentative Schedule/Guiding Questions	Readings/Assignments (Due by class time unless otherwise noted)
Week 1: Monday January 10	**Introduction (to each other and to class)** **Quick Write:** What are the outcomes of this course? What is Digital Rhetoric? (for Academic Verification)	**Academic Verification:** Initial Reflection (Completed in-class, but Due Friday by 5:00)

	Pick out groups for presentations/abstracts **Convergence Rhetoric** What are claims? (**Handout in Canvas**)	
Week 1: Wednesday January 12	**What does Eyman say that digital rhetoric is?** Looking ahead to Major Assignment 1 Looking ahead to Presentation/Abstract Assignments What is evidence? (**Handout in Canvas**) How do I use quotes in papers? (**Handout in Canvas**) What are the types of questions I can ask in a rhetorical analysis? How can we alter these questions for a digital environment through Eyman's arguments? Talk about how the presentation/abstract assignments and readings can serve as "frameworks" and about the CARS model.	**Academic Verification:** Initial Reflection (Due Friday by 5:00PM) **Claims Summary:** Chapter 1 *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, and Practice*. Due in Canvas by **class time**
Week 2: Monday January 17	**No Class: Martin Luther King Jr. Day**	
Week 2: Wednesday January 19	**Logos, Ethos, Pathos, and Kairos Abstract and Presentation (handout in Canvas + Eyman's definitions in Chapter 1 and 2, especially pages 62-68)** What is digital cultural rhetoric and why are relationalities important? What is autoethnography and how does Haas say it is useful for digital rhetoricians? Talk about internet research ethics.	**Claims Summary**: "Towards a Digital Cultural Rhetoric" by Angela Haas Association of Internet Researcher's (AOIR) Internet Research Ethics (IRE) 2.0. (You are also welcome to look over IRE 1.0 and IRE 3.0, but you are not required to read those) Since there are two readings this week, I am only asking that you read the "Key Guiding Principles" section (starting on page 4) and the "Major Tensions/Considerations" section (starting on page 6).

Week 3: Monday January 24	[**Rhetorical Situation**](#) **and ecologies Abstract and Presentation (Handout in Canvas + Eyman on ecologies on page 75-77)** Why does surveillance matter online?	**Claims Summary**: "[The Invisible Digital Identity](#)" by Estee Beck
Week 3: Wednesday January 26	[**Circulation**](#) **Abstract and Presentation (Handout in Canvas + Eyman on "circulation analysis" on page 84)** What is remix?	**Claims Summary**: "[Framing Remix Rhetorically](#)" by Dustin Edwards.
Week 4: Monday January 31	**Procedural rhetoric/Games Abstract and Presentation** (Preface for *Persuasive Games* by Ian Bogost + Eyman pages 33-35) How can we think about audiences online? Even though we imbue texts with our meanings, does that mean other people will always also take away the same message? Why or why not? Defining "[context collapse](#)." How do we balance forming community and connections with risk?	**Claims Summary:** "Encoding/Decoding" by Stuart Hall (Accessible Reading in Canvas under "Files"-> "Readings")
Week 4: Wednesday February 2	[**Hypermediacy, Transparency, Immediacy, and Remediation**](#) **Abstract and Presentation (two [Handouts](#) in Canvas)**	**Claims Summary:** "[Community Enclaves](#)" by Lihn Dich
Week 5: Monday February 7	[**Technological Determinism**](#) **Abstract and Presentation ([two handouts](#))** Are people shaped by technology and algorithms or do people shape technology and algorithms? Both?	**Claims Summary** "A Society, Searching" in *Algorithms of Oppression* by Safiya Noble.
Week 5: Wednesday February 9	[**Visual Rhetoric Abstract and Presentation**](#) **(Handout in Canvas + Eyman Page 49-51)** What are hyperlinks and how are they rhetorical? Who controls how we move through texts?	**Claims Summary:** "[Temptation and Its Discontents: Digital Rhetoric, Flow, and the Possible](#)" by Joshua Reeves.

Week 6: Monday February 14	**In-Class practice:** Who is represented on a site and how can they be represented? How can we apply visual rhetoric to websites and avatars?	**Claims Summary:** " 'Ramadan Is Almoast Here!' The Visual Culture of AIM Buddies, Race,Gender, and Nation on the Internet" in *Digitizing Race* by Lisa Nakamura
Week 6: Wednesday February 16	Identity and representation **In-class Practice**: Stakes Worksheet	**Claims Summary**: "The Gender Binary will not be deprogrammed" by Rena Bivens
Week 7: Monday February 21	Define Affordances and constraints. **In-class practice** of autoethnography using affordances and constraints	**Claims Summary**: "Affordance, Conventions, and Design" by Donald Norman
Week 7: Wednesday February 23	**Peer Review for Major Assignment 1: Digital Rhetorical Concepts Paper** (due by class time) Peer Reviews done during class time, but can be completed virtually (due by 11:59pm)	**Peer Review for Major Assignment 1: Digital Rhetorical Concepts Paper** (due by class time) Peer Reviews done during class (due by 11:59pm)
Week 8: Monday February 28	Drafting Day Have you defined key terms before you use them? Talk about Proposal For Final Projects Talk about how to use the library databases and scholarly sources	**Reverse Outlining (UNC Link)**
Week 8: Wednesday March 2	Looking ahead to Major Assignment-Final Project. Complete on Proposal for Final Projects in class Talk about how to use the library databases and scholarly sources	**Digital Rhetorical Concepts Paper Due by class time** **Proposal for Final Project due in-class OR online by 11:59pm on Canvas for people who feel ill**
Week 9: March 6-13 Spring Break	Spring Break!	

Monday March 7		
Week 9: Wednesday March 9	Spring Break!	
Week 10: Monday March 14	Recall that rhetoric is epistemic (so you can *create* things too!). First half of the class: Making Flyers or other digital content Second half of the class: Playing through Interactive Fictions	**Claims Summary:** "Document Design and Social Justice" Natasha Jones and Stephanie Wheeler (Accessible Reading in Canvas under "Files"-> "Readings") **Proposal for Final Project due (completed in class before Spring break)**
Week 10: Wednesday March 16	First half of the class: Making Interfaces Second half of the class: Playing through Interactive Fictions	**Claims Summary:** "Indigenous Interfaces" Kristen Arola
Week 11: Monday March 21	Making Interactive Fiction Guest Lecturer on how to make Interactive Fictions!	**Claims Summary:** *Video Games for Humans: Twine Authors in Conversation* edited by merit kopas. Pp. 5-11 (Accessible Reading in Canvas under "Files"-> "Readings")
Week 11: Wednesday March 23	Making Memes Whose content are you remixing and using in your memes? What is the impact on the community in which the media originated? How do you know it is available for appropriation?	**Claims Summary:** "Why it matters that Black Men and Queer Women Invented Digital Remix Culture" by Abigail DeKosnik
Week 12: Monday March 28	Making Online Content for Social Media Can you compose thinking about how something can circulate?	**Claims Summary:** "Composing for Recomposition: Rhetorical Velocity and Delivery" by Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss

Week 12: Wednesday March 30	**Draft for Peer Review for Paper portion of Major Assignment-Final Project** (due by class time) Peer Reviews done during class time, but can be completed virtually (due by 11:59pm)	**Draft for Peer Review for Paper portion of Major Assignment-Final Project** (due by class time) Peer Reviews done during class (due by 11:59pm)
Week 13: Monday April 4	When you make digital content, how do you navigate privacy and publicity?	**Claims Summary:** "Socially Mediated Publicness" by Baym and boyd **Alternate Reading**: "Default Publicness: Queer youth of color, social media, and being outed by the machine" by Alexander Cho
Week 13: Wednesday April 6	**Draft for Peer Review for digital text portion of Major Assignment-Final Project** (due by class time) Peer Reviews done during class time, but can be completed virtually (due by 11:59pm)	**Draft for Peer Review for digital text portion of Major Assignment-Final Project** (due by class time) Peer Reviews done during class (due by 11:59pm)
Week 14: Monday April 11	What are the effects of what we make on the environment? Is "digital" also material? What are data infrastructures?	**Claims Summary:** "Critical Infrastructure Literacies and/as ways of relating in big data" by Dustin Edwards
Week 14: Wednesday April 13	Is the digital also material? What does digital historiography look like?/ How do we tell the story of technology?	**Claims Summary:** Wampum as hypertext" by Angela Haas OR Chapter 2 in *Rhetorical Code Studies* by Kevin Brock
Week 15: Monday April 18	Talk about Final Reflection	Reverse Outline Day and work on final problems with Digital Texts

Week 15: Wednesday April 20	Talk about Final Reflection	**<u>Final Project Due</u>**
Week 16: Monday April 26	No class (Study Day/Finals Week)	Final Reflection Due by Finals Date April 27, 2022 (1:00-3:50)
Week 16: Wednesday April 28	No Class (Finals Week)	
May 6 (noon)	Grades Due in my.ucf	
May 8 (9:00 AM)	Grades available in my.ucf	