

Digital Rhetorics: Final Project

Due in Canvas
20 points

Throughout the semester, we discussed how to analyze and critique the changing mediums of our communication and the rhetoric in and surrounding digital technologies. However, Eyman also talks about how rhetoric is epistemic and creative. Thus, the final project is an opportunity to apply what you learned by *creating* a project. For people who want to publish their work, I encourage you to use this final project as a place to develop a project for UCF's peer-reviewed undergraduate journal, [Convergence Rhetoric](#)! Please reach out to me if you are interested!

The final project will have two parts:

- 1) The multimodal digital text you create that makes an argument.**
- 2) A short paper explaining your text and how you used digital rhetorical concepts in the digital text.**
 - a. Because digital rhetoric is a broad area of study, the paper should **clearly define and narrow the scope of the project**.
 - b. You will support your claim(s) with evidence from a variety of scholarly and internet sources in an accompanying paper.

The Digital Text

The first part of the project is the digital text that you create. Though this assignment prompt goes over the digital text first to give context to the paper portion below, I suggest working on the digital at the same time as the paper portion of the assignment. When deciding what type of digital text to make, consider your own interests, what kind of argument you want to make, and what technical skills you possess. (Don't propose to build an entire website if you cannot use basic HTML, for instance).

Requirements

- The digital text should be something that you *create for this class*. *Please do not use a pre-existing digital text and retroactively explain those choices.*
- It should make an original argument.
- The digital text should be formatted to make the argument meet the demands of the digital rhetorical situation and ecology around the digital text.
- It should use some of the digital rhetorical principles that we have talked about in this class. These will be explained in the accompanying paper, so be thoughtful about how and why you apply these digital rhetorical concepts.
- It should be something that the author is comfortable sharing with the instructor and peers, and it should be publicly available. I will need to be able to see this digital text in some capacity on my computer. In general, publicly available links, word documents screen shots as PDF files, and HTML files are a good bet. Please ask if you are unsure. **Please make sure any links are publicly available to me.**
- The digital text should be appropriate. It will not be about things that could hurt people, are unproven, untrue, or things for which you cannot back up your claims with evidence. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in a 0 for the assignment. If you are unsure about if something falls within these guidelines, you should ask me.

The Paper Requirements

The second part of the assignment is the paper explaining what argument the digital text makes, what digital rhetorical concepts it uses to make those arguments, and why that matters for digital rhetoric. It will be **1,700-2,000 words** long and it will use at **least six scholarly sources**. **Three should be from this class and three should be scholarly, peer-reviewed sources from the library.**

- The Final Paper should have a **clear central argument or claim about digital rhetoric that focuses on the digital content** that you made and the arguments that it makes. I suggest using clear language like “I claim...” The claims should be **specific** and **make well-supported arguments** about A) What argument the digital text makes, B) How your digital text makes digital rhetorical concepts, and C) Why that matters for digital rhetoric. As with the previous paper, please think about the limits of the claim (see Claims Handout in Canvas).
 - The claim will be about your digital text, what it is arguing, how it makes that argument, and why that matters for digital rhetoric. One way to approach the claim would be to rephrase the question and/or answer: “What argument does the digital text that I created make, and what rhetorical principles did I use to make this argument? Why is it effective (or ineffective), and why does that matter for digital rhetoric?”
 - The conclusion will point to the wider implications of your digital text for digital rhetoric. This can be as simple as “This is important for digital rhetoric because it demonstrates a complication of [X digital rhetorical concept] in [Y ways]”
 - As with the digital text, the claim should be appropriate. It will not be about things that could hurt people, are unproven, untrue, or things for which you cannot back up your claims with evidence. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in a 0 for the assignment. If you are unsure about if something falls within these guidelines, you should ask me.
- The paper will need strong and credible **evidence** to **support** the main claim. The paper should clearly connect the evidence to the argument. This means both using readings from the class (secondary sources) and pointing to specific features of the digital text (primary source). (See Evidence Handout in Canvas). The paper does **not** need to tell the audience what type of evidence is used (e.g., Do not say ‘This is testimonial...’), but it can use clear phrasing to signal to the reader why the evidence is important. Phrases like “[this piece of evidence] is important because...” can be helpful. Think about what the reader should be taking away from that piece of evidence as they move forward reading the paper and clearly state that connection.
- The paper should still be **unified and focused** (though the digital text may *not* be unified if you are demonstrating how digital rhetoric is non-linear!). In the last paper, I asked you to pick just **one** main framework to analyze the digital text. As there is some overlap between digital rhetorical principles, it is likely that you may use more than one in this paper. However, the paper should still be **unified** and **connect back to your claim** (every paragraph should directly support the claim). To unify and focus the claim, think about

the specific argument that the digital text is making, and the overall takeaway for digital rhetoric.

- As with the last paper, the final project should still be **organized** in a way that your instructor and peers can follow. I will be looking for the following sections (you can change the heading titles and add subheadings as you see fit).
 - **Introduction:** The introductory section should provide context for the topic you selected for your final project and set up your argument. Use the [Creating a Research Space \(CARS\) model](#). The introduction should include the **claim**, and briefly describe the rhetorical approach. It should tell readers which element of digital rhetoric the paper is talking about, and why the digital text is important and adds to existing scholarship.
 - The introduction should provide a preview of the evidence you will use to support your claims.
 - **The Digital Text:** This is the longest portion of the paper. This is the portion of the paper is where you explain the performance of the digital text and the context around it.
 - Describe the overall goal and argument of your project. What is the argument or point that your digital text makes or performs? Why? For what audiences?
 - Explain how the project meets the context, makes the overall argument, and meets (or does not meet) the goal that you just described.
 - Explain to the reader *one or two* of the aspects of digital rhetoric that we discussed in this class. *Essentially, you are pointing to the digital text and saying, “I used these rhetorical concepts in this digital text to make this argument. Here is how.”*
 - You will use evidence from your digital text and from your **scholarly sources** to support this argument. This means pointing to **specific** evidence and examples from your digital text.
 - Each paragraph should discuss one of the main ideas relating to your project’s argument and explain how/why the evidence supports your claim(s). Include transitions between paragraphs to show how the different aspects of your argument connect together
 - **Conclusion:** To conclude, restate your thesis/claim. Then, describe the wider implications of your project for the field of digital rhetoric. This might include suggesting an aspect of the topic you are still uncertain about and that someone else may wish to research.
- The paper should support your project’s argument with **at least six sources, which include a minimum of three sources from this class and three scholarly sources from the library**. Scholarly sources mean those that are from peer-reviewed journals. These can be accessed through the [library website](#).

Examples Examples of Digital Texts

Look at some of the examples from course readings and below for the kinds of texts that you can make. Here are some examples of digital texts to give you some inspiration, but you are not

limited to these ideas. (If you are unsure about what kind of digital text to make for your final project or have questions, please contact me.)

- **A flyer or advertisement** that uses elements of digital rhetoric to persuade a specific target audience to do something. You will need to create your own images and slogans; do not use copyrighted material. You can easily make flyers through:
 - Canva (<https://www.canva.com/create/flyers/>)
 - PiktoChart (<https://piktochart.com/>)
 - PowerPoint (through institutional access)
- **An interactive story.** You can turn in an HTML file or host the story in a link that you turn in. You can try using:
 - Twine (<https://twinery.org/>) This one is supposed to be very beginner friendly!
 - Bitsy (<https://bitsy.org/>) This one is supposed to be very beginner friendly!
 - Inklewriter (<https://www.inklestudios.com/inklewriter/>)
 - Typeform (<https://www.typeform.com/templates/t/interactive-fiction/>)
- **Memes.** Your own memes created by using a meme generator or photoshop. If you chose to make memes, make sure they make a thoughtful argument and that you make enough images to be comparable to the other types of digital texts (**a minimum of 5 memes**). Easy meme generators include:
 - <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>
 - <https://memegenerator.net/>
 - Since we have talked about the importance of the cultural context of digital content, you can also look up the history of the meme at <https://knowyourmeme.com/>.
- **Buddy Icons/ Avatars:** Like with the memes, create 2-3 Buddy Icons or something similar, like from Nakamura's reading, or other characters through the platform of your choice. Alternatively, you can compare icon capacities on several different platforms. You might think about the elements of identity that we covered in class and think about how you can either push the limits of what is possible to represent, or how you are constrained. *As with the last assignment, you will not use other people's icons.*
- **A Website:** A website that makes an argument by linking, arranging, and commenting on an issue. Consider the style and layout of the site and what types of images/videos you may want to include. You can also consider how you use hyperlinks to persuade readers to do certain things, go certain places, stay on your website, or even leave your website. For people graduating soon, you can also think about making an online portfolio. For big projects, you can make just a couple of pages of the website and then plan on continuing the project after the class. You can make free websites through things like:
 - <https://www.wix.com/>
 - <https://www.weebly.com/>
- **A blog:** You can use the sites above or another pre-existing site to make a blog that makes an argument too. The blog should have at least 3 entries of about 150 words. Think about things like why you chose that particular blog platform, how the posts hang together, how the author uses things like logos, ethos, pathos, and kairos, who the imagined audience is, and how the author can control the circulation or visibility of the blog and why.
- **A video or other digital art:** Some of you may have video editing and other digital art experience. If you would like to use this space to create some digital art, please feel free

to do so. While I recognize that there are debates about whether art should have an “argument,” for the purposes of a digital rhetorics class, the digital text should have an argument. Again, think about the audiences and how the video or art would circulate. For instance, why is a video received and circulated differently on YouTube than on Vimeo?

- **A social media account.** As we have discussed in this class, people use social media to do a variety of different things; people use social media to tell stories for themselves, develop collective stories with others, to perform and construct their identities, and to make public arguments. You can create a social media account where the posts create the argument for your project. Like with the memes, the social media account should have **at least 5 posts**. You can also make the same post on different sites and compare how you had to make different rhetorical decisions, depending on the site. Think about how you can use the affordances of each platform to create arguments that differ from traditional oral or written arguments. You can also think about audiences and the rhetorical situation. Of course, please weigh the risks and benefits for yourself in terms of how publicity will affect you, and in terms of online surveillance, etc. To turn in the assignment, the sites will need to be a) public, or b) you will need to include screenshots of the posts in a single PDF file.
- **A Taroko Gorge:** This is an e-poetry generator where the code generates a poem (you can see an example and get the code here: <http://iloveepoetry.org/?p=465>). Open the poem and then click “View Source Code”). You will need to be able to turn this in as an HTML file or a publicly available link.

Examples of Papers about Digital Texts:

Here are some example project topics, but feel free to come up with your own topics:

- If you create an interactive fiction that performs a specific lived experience, use the paper to tell me how the interactive fiction does or does not build empathy with different readers in different ways than novels.
- If you create an argument or text on social media, consider how the affordances of that specific platform enable you to do or perform something differently. You might also consider how the constraints of that platform limit that argument or text.
- If you create a blog, website, or flyer, how does the way that you arrange that site or use hyperlinks rhetorically function differently than if you were giving a speech or writing a paper. You might think about the different ways you can share a digital flyer. You might also outline a plan to circulate that flyer, etc.
- If you create a Taroko Gorge or other automated form of art poetry, the paper could explore what it means that art can be made by machines or code, since we traditionally think of art as a “human” endeavor.

Format

- The paper portion of this assignment should be **1,700-2,000 words** long.
- Use at least **six** scholarly sources. Three should be from this class and three should be scholarly, peer-reviewed sources from the library.
- Papers should be submitted in Word documents or PDF documents (ends with “doc.” “.docx” or “pdf”). They should **not** be submitted as “Pages” files.
- If the digital text is an image, such as memes or an advertisement, also submit those either in a Word document or PDF file. If the digital text lives online, such as a website, interactive story, or social media account, please include the URL in the introduction of your paper. Some files may be submitted as HTML files, but please check with me first.

- Use the appropriate headings in the paper.
- Adhere to [MLA format](#):
 - This means in-text citations and a Works Cited page; all of the sources discussed in the paper, including the digital text that the paper analyzes should be cited both in-text and in a Works Cited Page.
 - OWL Purdue shows you how to cite online and electronic sources (including social media posts like YouTube videos) and you should follow those guidelines.
 - If your digital text has a link, please include that link with your Works Cited reference for that source so that I can also view the text.
 - Make sure those quotes are necessary, relevant, and formatted correctly. Introduce your quotes with introductory phrases, cite them, and explain why they are relevant (see Quotes Handout in Canvas). Quotes should not take up more than 5 percent of your paper word-count.
 - Double spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font in Times New Roman or another accessible font.
 - Put your name, course number, course instructor, and due date in the top left corner of the first page
 - All subsequent pages should have a header in the top right corner that includes your last name and the page number
- For the purposes of the Gordon Rule Requirement, writing should follow MLA rules of grammar, punctuation, usage, spelling, and style. If you choose to deviate from academic conventions for rhetorical effect, please talk to me about this choice first. Especially if you are writing for non-academic public audiences on the internet, your language in the digital text may change!
- If you use images or video, you will need to create that content or find copyright free material using Creative Commons. (<https://creativecommons.org/>)

* Rhetoric is about how context matters and affects the meaning of texts. Thus, for clarity of context, this assignment is written to meet the requirements of this course as outlined in the syllabus and by the university. I (the instructor) am the primary audience, while student peers are the secondary audiences of this text.

*This paper fulfills the one of the [Gordon Rule Requirements](#) for this course. This paper also aligns with course objectives because it also enables students to: (1) demonstrate how they both understand and apply rhetorical conventions in digital genres, (2) demonstrate how they both understand and apply critical theory relevant to the digital realm, (3) demonstrate how they both understand and apply their understanding of public rhetoric in electronic networks, (4) demonstrate how they both understand and apply the ability to rhetorically analyze or interpret new media, and (5) demonstrate how they both understand and apply how they interrogate digital media using classical rhetoric.