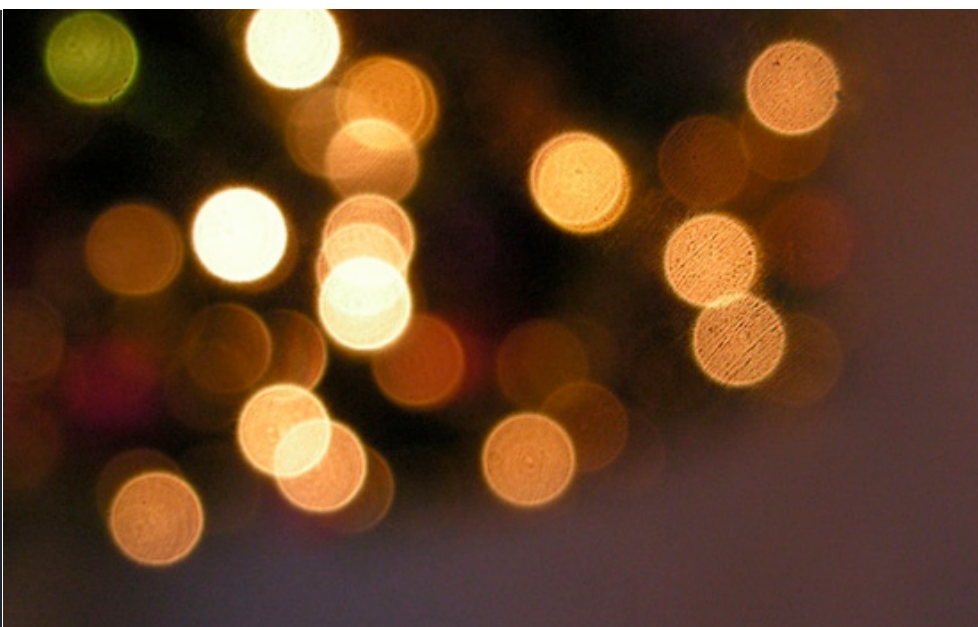


508

digital rhetorics



professor

Melanie Yergeau
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office hours

W 1:10-2:30 & by
appointment

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Course description & objectives.

During our time together, we will examine the whatness and whyness of digital rhetorics, plural: as a field, as a diffuse body of work, and as a series of methodologies, practices, and ways of knowing and being in the world. In particular, we will consider what digital rhetorics afford as well as what and who they elide. If rhetoric, as Jay Dolmage describes, represents the circulation of power through discourse, then how might we ethically direct our attention within digital communities and spaces?

Our conversations will draw from rhetoric scholarship on relationality and materiality, and we will work together to interrogate how mediated forms, including mediated scholarship, frame access, oppression, identity, and knowledge. As a means of working through these questions, we will work with code and a number of digital composing tools, including HTML, CSS, and blogging platforms.

This class does not require any background in rhetoric, digital studies, or multimodal composing. We will learn together! While rhetoric is our organizing topic, this class will be of interest to anyone who is digital-curious (or rhetoric-curious!), especially those looking to learn more about digital studies and/or multimedia composing.





Required materials

Materials:

- Wordpress.com account (free)
- Web hosting (through UM or paid hosting)
- Headphones
- Thumb drive or external hard drive

Course texts:

- *Updating to Remain the Same*, Wendy Chun
- *Digital Rhetoric*, Doug Eyman
- *Coding Literacy*, Annette Vee

Assignments

BLOG + FINGER EXERCISES (20%)

Each of you will be responsible for contributing to and curating our class blog. Outside of class, you will be expected to compose **at least six blog posts** and comment on your peers' blogs over the course of the semester. Your posts can be in response to course readings, class discussions, or technology-related topics of interest to the class.

Other than our first blog post, all post deadlines are rolling: you can write them at any point before semester's end. **Your blog posts can be composed in multimedia form, if you'd like**—ideally, you'll use these posts to stretch yourself a little bit, to become acquainted with forms of composing that go outside your comfort zone. Think of your blog posts as low-stakes composing: It's the place where you can wrestle with ideas and new media.

At times, we will use the blog in class for production-oriented activities and other classroom exercises. We will refer to these in-class activities as **finger exercises** so that we can easily distinguish these tasks from blog response posts. You will have class time to work on these activities, which will typically involve playing with different media or code, and we will use our blog as a space to share these works. Occasionally, you might want to continue working on a finger exercise outside of class. The goal of these exercises isn't to create polished products, but rather to experiment and learn.

LEADING CLASS DISCUSSION (15%)

In groups of 2-3, you will be tasked with leading discussion for part of a class period. This is *not* an assignment that involves lecture or PowerPoint; rather, this project is an opportunity to *actively* engage the class on topics that are important to you and/or to lead us in collaborative activities.

PROFESSIONAL WEB PRESENCE (20%)

For this project, I am asking you to design a professional web portfolio that communicates your work and interests to a broad audience. In other words, this portfolio should speak both to people within and outside of your home discipline. You will host this project either through UM web space or your own personal web space.

MULTIMODAL PROJECT (45%)

This final project is a rather flexible one. Essentially, the only requirements are that you 1) compose multimodally and 2) compose something that both interests and challenges you. For instance, your project could take form as a digital syllabus, scholarly webtext, hypertext narrative, video documentary, etc.

Midway through the semester, I will ask you to submit a short, informal proposal (really, just a paragraph). During our last two weeks of class, you will have opportunity to share your work-in-progress and receive class feedback.



You do not need technological experience in order to complete class projects; you will receive necessary instruction and practice over the semester. Though you're free to use software that we do not explore in class together, I won't be able to assist you with other programs.

a note on technology

Course policies

Participation // Participation is a loaded word. We all have different needs, experiences, and challenges when it comes to discussing and engaging with class material. In our class, we will collaborate to create spaces, both virtual and physical, that enable everyone to contribute meaningfully through the mediums that work best for them.

Copyright and fair use // Working in digital environments poses all sorts of questions regarding copyright and intellectual property, and we will discuss these issues during our time together. While it is important to respect others' intellectual property, it is equally important to assert the right to fair use granted you by law. If you have any questions about intellectual property issues, please don't hesitate to ask.

Technological mishaps // Technology failures aren't a matter of *if*—they're a matter of *when*. Save early and save often, and be sure to back up your work. I recommend that you save your work in two separate locations (e.g., your external hard drive, your home computer, flash drive, and/or the cloud).

Resources

Accessibility & accommodations // Services for Students with Disabilities, located in G-664 Haven Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. Regardless of whether or not you are registered with SSD, please let me know what we can do to maximize your learning potential, participation, and general access in this course. You can contact SSD at (734) 763-3000 or <http://ssd.umich.edu/>.

LSA Instructional Support Services // [ISS](#) provides equipment and technical support to students enrolled in LSA classes. You will be using ISS's resources extensively throughout the semester. ISS operates three centers where UM students may check out AV equipment for classroom use and for short-term loans. You can contact ISS at (734) 615-0100 or email them at lsa-iss-reservations@umich.edu.

SCHEDULE

	Topics/Activities	Reading Due	Assignments Due
Week 1			
M 1/8	Introductions Design & access Technology setup	Eyman et al., " Access/ibility: Access and Usability for Digital Publishing " Perry, " Are Internet Standards Standing in the Way of Digital Accessibility? " Reilly, "alt: Accessible Web Design or Token Gesture?" Zappen, "Digital Rhetoric: Toward an Integrated Theory"	
Week 2			
M 1/15	NO CLASS! Learning goals survey due I encourage you to attend one of the many MLK Symposium events taking place during the month of January. You can write about one of these events and receive credit for a blog response!		
Week 3			
M 1/22	Doing digital rhetoric	Eyman, <i>Digital Rhetoric</i> , Intro, chs. 1 & 2 Haas, "Wampum as Hypertext" Watch Wesch, The Machine is Us/ing Us	First blog post due
Week 4			

M 1/29	Rhetorics and/of coding	Paul Ford, " What Is Code? " Lauren Klein, " Code " Skim/play: TransCoder: Queer Programming Anti-Language Skim/play: Twine	Locate three professional web portfolios from people in your field / people who share similar interests
Week 5			
M 2/5	Literacy crises	Vee, <i>Coding Literacy</i> , Intro, chs. 1 & 2 Skim/play: Code Academy	Content sketches for professional web presence due (analog or digital!)
Week 6			
M 2/12	Digital materiality	Vee, <i>Coding Literacy</i> , chs. 3 & 4, conclusion Watch Medieval Helpdesk	Rough draft of (digital) web portfolio due
Week 7			
M 2/19	Visual rhetoric	Eyman, <i>Digital Rhetoric</i> , chs. 3 & 4 Skim/play: Delagrange, " Wunderkammer, Cornell, and the Visual Canon of Arrangement "	Second draft of web portfolio due
SPRING BREAK			
M 2/26	NO CLASS!		
Week 8			
M 3/5	Mapping, finding, habituating	Chun, <i>Updating to Remain the Same</i>	Final project proposal due
Week 9			

M 3/12	Hactivism & protest	<p>Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement”</p> <p>Hawkins, “Exhuming Transgenre Ties”</p> <p>McPherson, “Why Are the Digital Humanities So White? or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation”</p> <p>Losh, “Hactivism and the Humanities”</p>	
Week 10			
M 3/19	Algorithms, AI, & power	<p>Estee Beck, “A Theory of Persuasive Computer Algorithms for Rhetorical Code Studies”</p> <p>Noble, “Google Search: Hyper-visibility as a Means of Rendering Black Women and Girls Invisible”</p> <p>Grasso, “Facebook’s AI suicide prevention tool raises concerns for people with mental illness, disabilities”</p>	
Week 11			
M 3/26	Rhetorics and/of story	<p>Schwartzberg, “An Oral History of the Poop Emoji”</p> <p>Branch, “Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek”</p> <p>Ridolfo, “Delivering Textual Diaspora”</p> <p>Skim/play: Rhodes, “Rhizomes,” from <i>Techne</i></p>	
Week 12			

M 4/2	Authenticity & identity	Nakamura, "Race and Identity in Digital Media" Ellcessor, "Cyborg Hoaxes" Walls, " Authentic Design "	
Week 13			
M 4/9	Sharing works in progress		Rough drafts of final projects due
Week 14			
M 4/16	Sharing works in progress		Rough drafts of final projects due
			Final projects due Friday, April 20 by 5pm