

EMAC 4325: Digital Writing
Fall 2013

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.

Course Information

Class No. 20358
Meets: T 1:00 pm – 3:45 pm
Location: TBD
Credit Hours: 3

Contact Information

Instructor: Kim Knight
Email (preferred method of contact): kim.knight@utdallas.edu
Phone: 972-883-4346 (no voicemail please)
Office Hours:

- Drop In (no appointment necessary) : Tuesdays 4:30pm – 5:30pm.
- Schedule appointments via <http://doodle.com/purplekimchi>

Contact policies:

- I respond to email M-F within 24 hours.
 - If I do not respond within that timeframe, check my email address and re-send it.
- Use official UTD email only.
- I will not respond to
 - Emails that request information found on the syllabus or assignment sheets.
 - Twitter direct messages.

Kim's website: <http://kimknight.com>
Course wiki: digitaltextuality.pbworks.com
Twitter tag: #digitaltext
Twitter archive:

Course Description

If we drill down far enough into any form of digital “writing,” we arrive at the level of binary code: 1s and 0s. The same goes for digital images, sound files, animations, videos, etc. This material commonality draws our attention to the fact that any digital object has multiple layers – from the surface representation to the source code, down to those 1s and 0s. In addition to this kind of fundamental multi-mediality, it is very rare to encounter a digital text that is composed on the surface of only one type of media object. In other words, in digital writing, words almost always co-exist with images, links, sound, and video, all built atop a foundation of code. This course takes these types of multi-mediality as its starting point and asks students to reconceive “digital writing” as a more broad form of textuality that can occur in multiple media formats and that explores the unique affordances of different kinds of text objects.

Through this production-intensive course, students will explore the theoretical and material connections between analog and digital textuality, centered on text, image, sound, and moving image. Students will apply their theoretical understanding of digital textuality to the production of a portfolio, composed of four separate digital text objects and a short paper, each of which foregrounds certain modes of making meaning.

Prerequisite: RHET 1302.

Course Goals

In this course, students will:

- ✓ Become familiar with theoretical and material connections between analog and digital forms of text, image, sound, and moving image.
- ✓ Investigate the social and cultural implications of new forms of text, image, sound, and moving image.
- ✓ Investigate a variety of tools of digital production and utilize these tools to communicate ideas.
- ✓ Explore new models of digital production, including short forms and collaboration.
- ✓ Engage in processes of feedback and revision to improve their work.

Required Textbooks and Materials

- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. ISBN-10: 006097625X

Various chapters and essays, available online or through course reserve. The username for protected downloads on kimknight.com is “emac4325” and the password is “”. The username for protected downloads on course reserves is “” and the password is “”.

You will also need the following: a UTD email account (that you check frequently), a **public** Twitter account, a PBWiki account, and an account at <http://quizstar.4teachers.org>.

Course Policies

Attendance: Some of the most valuable take-away from this course will come out of our class discussions. We have only 15 meetings for this class. Every one of them counts. Your participation in each class is necessary for our success. It is important that you come to every class prepared and on time. To be “prepared” means that you have thoughtfully engaged with the reading and are prepared to discuss it in class, and that you have done any homework or creative work necessary. Bring questions, comments, observations, disagreements, examples, etc.

Because your presence in class is important, more than one absence (i.e. missing more than 1 week of class) will negatively affect your participation grade. In most cases, more than four absences (i.e. missing more than 1 month of class) will result in a failing grade. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Use that one freebie wisely. If you need to miss class for religious reasons, please speak to me ahead of time. Absences for religious purposes do not count against the permitted number (as long as prior notification is given).

Lateness is also unacceptable; if you arrive more than thirty minutes late to class you will be marked as absent. If you leave more than 30 minutes early, you will be marked absent. In addition, please try to be as fully present and engaged as possible – silence cell phones, don't send or receive texts or emails, etc. Excessive distraction may be counted as an absence.

Accommodation: If you would like to request accommodation due to a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. The disability must be documented with the Office of Student Accessibility at UTD.

Online Due Dates:

- Homework and media objects are due before class begins.
- Reading responses are due at 11:59 pm Monday evenings.

Late work:

You should make a concerted effort to turn in all work on-time, in the format outlined on the assignment sheets. Work submitted in formats other than that listed on the assignment sheet will not be accepted.

- **Reading responses**: Weekly reading responses will not be accepted late.
- **Tool reviews**: Work associated with in-class presentations will not be accepted late.
- **Media objects**: Late first versions of written/image/video/acoustic work will not receive instructor feedback and each instance of late work will result in a loss of 1/3 of a grade on the final portfolio. If you are not in class for the workshop, the media object is considered late.
- **Final Portfolio**: Final portfolios will be marked down one letter grade for each day (or fraction thereof) that they are late.

It is your responsibility to complete your work early enough to allow time for any technical difficulties. Work that is turned in late due to technical difficulties is subject to late penalties.

Online Etiquette: Our many online assignments will require vigilance to ensure that we are always preserving an atmosphere of mutual respect. Disagreements may arise and consensus may not be possible. We can, however, respect each person's right to an opinion. Name calling, aggressive, or threatening behavior will not be tolerated.

Academic Honesty: From the UT-D Handbook of Operating Procedures: "The university expects from its students a high level of responsibility with respect to academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends on the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student maintain a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. The dean may initiate disciplinary proceedings under subchapter C against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty upon complaint by a faculty member or a student." (<http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean/gspolDishonesty.htm>)

Plagiarism will be referred to the Dean of Students and may result in a failing grade on the plagiarized assignment and/or possible disciplinary action by the university. If you have any

questions regarding the proper use of outside sources or the distinction between sampling and plagiarism, I encourage you to meet with me.

University Policies: Please visit <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for the University's policies regarding all courses.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

Grading Scale:

A Range: Excellent A, A-	B Range: Good B+, B, B-	C Range: Satisfactory C+, C, C-	D Range: Needs Improvement D+, D, D-	F Range: Failing F
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Assignments:

Participation – 40%

Participation includes participation in discussion, both in class and online (twitter, the wiki, etc.), reading responses, homework exercises, and attendance. To receive full participation credit, you should visit me during office hours at least once no later than October 15, 2013.

In order for participation to be meaningful, it has to happen on time. As such, reading responses and the work surrounding in-class participation will not be accepted late.

Tool Review Presentation 10%

One of the ongoing public benefits of this class is that we have been building a publicly available repository of reviews in which students evaluate various tools used in the production of digital textuality. Each student will write one new review on a tool that has not already been reviewed and will edit one previously-existing tool review. On the day that your reviews are due, you will conduct a 10 – 15 minute presentation/demo in which you share both tools with the class.

Portfolio – 50%

Each student will produce a multimedia portfolio in which the same idea/story/argument is made in different media formats. The portfolio will be composed of four media object – text, image, sound and moving image – and one short research paper. Each media object will be completed as a first version at various due dates throughout the semester. First versions will receive peer and instructor feedback and will be revised for the final portfolio.

General Requirements: This class involves a lot of theoretical reading. My hope is that you will apply the ideas from that reading to your offline and online experiences. You will be most successful in this class if you are able to have an open mind and take a critical approach to our topics. Please note that being “critical” does not necessarily mean being negative, but it does mean that you are willing to question assumptions and explore the implications of the seemingly mundane and minute aspects of contemporary media culture. Openness to experimentation and play and a willingness to try and fail are critical to the study of emerging media. In short, in this

class we will be enacting some of the very changes we are studying – collaborative learning, alternative models of scholarship, etc.

Academic Calendar

Since we only meet once per week, that means we do 2 – 3 times as much reading and homework for that one meeting. Plan accordingly.

August 27: Introduction

- Syllabus overview
- Reading Response assignment criteria
- Tool Review overview & date assignment

September 3: Signification Across Media

- Reading
 - McCloud, *Understanding Comics*, pages 170 - 182
 - Saussure, “The Nature of the Linguistic Sign” from *Course in General Linguistics*
 - <http://faculty.smu.edu/nschwart/seminar/Saussure.htm>
 - Ryan, Marie-Laure, “Introduction” from *Narrative Across Media*
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/ryan-narrativeacrossmedia-intro.pdf>
- Homework
 - Take Online Syllabus Quiz
 - sign up for QuizStar
 - <http://quizstar.4teachers.org>
 - Search for “F13 EMAC 4325” and register for the class.
 - Take “Syllabus Quiz”
 - Bring one or more magazines that you have lying around. If you have zero magazines, don't go out and buy one.

September 10: Text

- Reading
 - Lethem, “The Ecstasy of Influence”
 - <http://harpers.org/archive/2007/02/the-ecstasy-of-influence/>
 - Barthes, “Death of the Author”
 - <http://evans-experientialism.freewebspace.com/barthes06.htm>
- Tool Reviews

September 17: Text

- Reading
 - Paul, “The Database as System and Cultural Form” from *Database Aesthetics* (15 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/vesna-databaseaesthetics.pdf>

- Stefans, “Language as Gameplay” at *electronic book review* (15 pps)
 - <http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/gameplay>
- Homework
 - Browse Electronic Literature Collection, Volume II
 - <http://collection.eliterature.org/2/>
 - identify one to discuss in class.
 - Complete 15 – 20 lessons in any course on Codecademy.com
 - Post screenshot of completed lessons to the homework section on the wiki.
- Tool Reviews

September 24: Portfolio Workshop – Text Object

- Bring to class
 - **Text object, version 1**

October 1: Still Image

- Reading
 - McCloud, *Understanding Comics*
- Homework
 - Bring your favorite comic book or graphic novel
- Tool Reviews

October 8: Still Image

- Reading
 - Gaviria, “When is Information Visualization Art? Determining the Critical Criteria” in *Leonardo* Vol. 41, No. 5, pp. 479–482, 2008 (use library database to access) (5 pps)
 - <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20206665>
 - Hochman and Schwartz, “Visualizing Instagram: Tracing Cultural Visual Rhythms” from *Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence Technical Report WS-12-03: Social Media Visualization* (4 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/hochman-schwartz-visualizinginstagram.pdf>
 - Cruz & Meyer, “Creation and Control in the Photographic Process: iPhones and the emerging fifth moment of photography” from *Photographies*. (16 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/cruz-meyer-creationcontrolphotographicprocess.pdf>
- Tool Reviews

October 15: Portfolio Workshop – Image Object

- Bring to class
 - **Still image object, version 1**

October 22: Sound

- Reading
 - Chion, trans Brewster, “Quiet Revolution...and Rigid Stagnation” from *October* (12

- pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/chion-quietrevolutionrigidstagnation.pdf>
- Waksman, “California Noise: Tinkering with Hardcore and Heavy Metal in Southern California” in *Social Studies of Science* (28 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/waksman-californianoise.pdf>
- Eddie Van Halen, Eruption Guitar Solo
 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_lwocmL9dQ
- Raymond Scott – Portifino
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy77ioKI4IQ>
- Tool Reviews

October 29: Sound

- Reading
 - Sobchack, “When the Ear Dreams: Dolby Digital and the Imagination of Sound” in *Film Studies Quarterly* (13 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/sobchack-whentheeardreams.pdf>
 - Behrendt “Playing the iPhone” In: Snickars, Pelle and Vonderau, Patrick, eds. *Moving Data: The iPhone and the Future of Media*. (9 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/behrendt-playingtheiphone.pdf>
 - Dialtones: A Telesymphony
 - Levin, et al, “Dialtones (A Telesymphony): Final Report” essay (12+ pps + video)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/levin-et-al-dialtones-finalreport.pdf>
 - http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=g1G-YesiBB8#!
 - Sonic Memorial Project
 - <http://www.sonicmemorial.org/sonic/public/index.html>
 - Daniel & Loyer, “Public Secrets”
 - http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/daniel_public_secrets.html
- Tool Reviews

November 5: Portfolio Workshop – Sound Object

- Bring to class
 - **Sound object, version 1**

November 12: Moving Image

- Readings
 - Eisenstein, “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form” (16 pps)
 - http://interactive2.usc.edu/blog-old/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/film_form.pdf
 - Hilderbrand, “Grainy Days and Mondays: Superstar and Bootleg Aesthetics” from *Camera Obscura* 19.3 2004 (36 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/hilderbrand-grainydaysandmondays.pdf>
 - Haynes, “Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story” (trigger warning: eating disorder and body image issues)
 - <http://youtu.be/UobR9pvRJRE>
- Tool Reviews

November 19: Moving Image

- Readings
 - Muller, “Where Quality Matters: Discourses on the Art of Making a YouTube Video” from *The YouTube Reader* (13 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/muller-wherequalitymatters.pdf>
 - Horwatt, “A Taxonomy of Digital Video Remixing: Contemporary Found Footage Practice on the Internet” from *Cultural Borrowings*, ed. Iain Robert Smith (16 pps + videos)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/smith-ed-culturalborrowings.pdf>
 - Recycled Cinema Playlist
 - http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=D52BD242C8855525
 - (watch 3 – 5 selections of your choice)
 - Nideffer, “Game Engines as Creative Frameworks” from *Context Providers* (24 pps)
 - <http://kimknight.com/readings/nideffer-game-engines-creative-frameworks.pdf>
- Tool Reviews

November 26: Fall Break: No Class

December 3: Portfolio Workshop - Moving Image Object

- **Moving image object, version 1 due**

December 10: Course Wrap Up

- Course wrap up
- Final questions, feedback, etc.
- Homework
 - Online course evaluations

Final Exam period TBD

- Portfolio due
- 5 minutes Presentations