

# ATCM 3301.502 | Digital Content Design | Summer 2019

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## **Course Information**

Class Number: 3301.5U1  
Meets: MW 5:30 – 7:45p  
Location: ATC Building room 1.406  
Credit Hours: 3

## **Contact Information**

David Rheams, PhD  
Email: davidc.rheams@utdallas.edu  
Website: drheams.com  
Office Hours by Appointment

## **Course Description**

This course explores the interaction between the internet, creating digital content, and communication. This is a required course in the school of Arts, Technology, and Emerging communication that fulfills your writing requirement.

This course is designed to ask the question: “what is the internet and how do I create content for it?” The internet contains the collision of culture, technology, and content -- which all come together with unexpected consequences when billions of people are networked together. This class is an opportunity to poke at the internet and explore some of the oddities that make up one of the most significant technological advances in the last century.

We'll learn how to create things for the internet through a (relatively) simple webpage. My hope is that students will leave this class with the ability to create digital content and develop a website (blog) they can show potential employers, friends, or some other yet-to-be-determined audience. Mostly what I'd like students to develop is a healthy sense of curiosity about the internet and express that curiosity through writing, design, video, and audio content.

### **Student Learning Objectives & Outcomes**

Digital content design is a class about writing at its core. But it's also a class about how to write for the internet and think critically about the tools, entertainment, and communities we encounter online. The objective for this course is to help students improve their writing and critical thinking skills while working in a digital medium. Students will also learn some of the basics of design and how to use a common blogging platform, Medium.

### **ATEC students gain competency in four areas:**

- Writing
- Design and User Experience
- Digital Marketing
- Working as a team
- Editing

### **Textbooks and Materials (reading will be provided)**

- Handley, Ann. Everybody Writes: Your Go-To Guide to Creating Ridiculously Good Content. John Wiley & Sons, 2014. ISBN: 9781118905555 ([ebook](#))
- Krug, Steve. Don't Make Me Think. New Riders, 2014. ISBN: 9780321965516 (ebook)
- Other materials posted on eLearning.

## Assignments

You will write early and often in this class. The only way to improve writing is to practice and read quality material, so we'll do quite a bit of both. The class is 30% lecture, 40% lab (workshop), and 30% discussion. Come ready to discuss the readings, your work, and help out your peers.

**Attendance/Participation (4% the total grade):** Participation includes attendance, homework activities, participation in discussion, and peer review. Participation has two main sections:

- Editing and Peer Review (20 Points)
- Attendance and Discussion Participation (20 Points)

**Reading Response (6% of the total grade):** Short written responses posted to your course participant page on the course workspace prior class. The responses will address a question or problem posed for that day's assigned readings.

**Persona (Audience) and Usability Analysis (10% of the total grade):** Critical analysis of a website's usability and audience marketability.

**Content Proposal (20%):** A proposal for your website, including audience analysis plus the creation of a detailed marketing persona who is representative of someone in your blog's niche.

**Individual blogs (5 blogs posts) (25% of the total grade):** Blog posts featuring different types of content for your website. The link to each post will be submitted to your participant page on the course workspace. You will complete seven different blogs that include one short-form content piece, one infographic content piece, one long-form content piece, one audio piece, and one video piece.

**Retrospective and Final Submission (35% of the total grade):** The website in which you publish your work for the semester will be graded on design, content, and usability. Prior to turning in your final website, you will be asked to write a retrospective on the projects, describing the decisions you made in the creation of your site as well as addressing the revisions you made to your work along the way.

### **Note on equipment:**

If students need equipment to capture images, video, or sounds, ATEC has equipment available to borrow. Borrowing can be arranged through the ATEC equipment inventory. The UTD Library will also loan equipment.

- To borrow equipment in the ATEC building, visit room ATC 2.405 M-F 8am - 10pm. You will need your net-id number and some form of photo id.

Be sure to allow plenty of time during the drafting process and before the final due date for technical difficulties.

## Grades

Course grades are based on a 100-point scale. Grades are standard letter to point (94-100 = A), (90-93 = A-), (87-89 = B+), (84-86 = B), (80-83 = B-) and so on. There is no curve. Grades are assigned on the following scale:

| A: Excellent   | B: Good  | C: Fair  | D: Incomplete  | F: Failing*   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Original, exceptional work, excellent performance, demonstrates mastery of material, surpasses expectations, inventive | Strong, above-average work, achieves goals of assignment, solid grasp of course materials and concepts | Satisfactory, meets assignment requirements and demonstrates adequate grasp of course materials and concepts | Assignment requirements and expectations not met, below average, demonstrates misunderstanding of material | F-grades are given to students who fail to meet the expectations and requirements of an assignment course |
| A, A-  | B+, B, B-  | C+, C  | D  | F   |

\*Students who submit plagiarized work will be issued a failing grade (see below) or who have missed more than five classes.

## Course Policies

### Attendance

Digital Content Design is a lecture and lab class. We will do things in class that cannot be made up. Nor will my Google Slides give a clear indication of what was covered in class (they are vague at best). Therefore, I ask that you show up to class regularly. Of course, I understand that life happens. Please, communicate with me (via email) if you are unable to attend a class. Typically three unexcused absences will impact your grade, but hopefully that will not be an issue.

A quick note about being late: it's rude and distracting to your peers. If you are a few minutes late, please slip into class quietly. Please don't bother coming into class a half hour or more late, just go get a cup of coffee and make sure you're up-to-date on your readings and assignments. You have three unexcused absences.

In short, be polite, professional, and on time.

### Classroom and Online Etiquette

Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on behalf of the student and the instructor. The instructor, as well as the fellow students, should not be subjected to any student's behavior that is in any way disruptive, rude, or challenging to the instructor's authority in the classroom. A student should not feel intimidated or demeaned by his/her instructor and students must remember that the instructor has primary responsibility for control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity.

The instructor can order the temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct or conduct violating the general rules and regulations of the institution (see <https://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/>). Online participation requires the same atmosphere of respect. Name calling, harassing, flaming, trolling, etc. is antithetical to the course goals and will not be tolerated.

### **Lecture and Technology Policy**

All mobile devices and personal media devices must be turned off before class begins and left off and out of sight for the duration of each session. Violation of this policy will result in either surrendering the device until the end of class or a request to leave the lecture. While students may use laptops to take notes, other activities during lectures is strictly forbidden.

### **Due Dates and Late Work**

All work will be submitted through eLearning. While late work will not be accepted, I will provide ample time to ask questions from both the instructor and your peers.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, all coursework is still due online by the posted times. Students are responsible for checking their email for instructions regarding activities that may be scheduled during the regular class meeting time.

### **Email**

I attempt to answer all emails within two business days (though usually faster). Please use my UTD email (davidc.rheams@utdallas.edu). Also, I apologize in advance for glaring typos on my end. I answer most emails from my phone and I tend to be all thumbs. I send out emails to communicate with the class. Please be sure to check your UTD email regularly.

### **Office Hours**

Office hours are available by appointment; please email me to setup a time. I am generally available after class.

### **Student Services and Support**

Students with disabilities who believe they may need formal accommodations in this class are encouraged to register with the [Office of Access Ability](#) within the first week of class. The office is located in SSB 3.200 and can be contacted at 972-883-2098 or [studentaccess@utdallas.edu](mailto:studentaccess@utdallas.edu).

### **Academic Honesty**

A failing grade will automatically be assigned to any student who violates the academic integrity policy of the University of Texas, Dallas. All work submitted must represent your own, individual effort. Use of sources or others' ideas must be acknowledged with proper citations. Please familiarize yourself with the UT Dallas' policy on Academic Honesty at <http://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/manage-dishonesty/>.

### **Comet Creed**

*This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."*

**Disclaimer:** The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.

## Schedule\*

\* An updated version of the schedule will be kept on drheams.com (see ATCM Spring 19)

**5/29/2019:** Introductions

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**6/3/2019:** What is the Internet? I

- Watch: [WordPress Introduction](#)
- Due: Create a WordPress & Pick a website topic. Submit link to eLearning

**6/5/2019:** What is the Internet? II

- Read: [The Moral Economy of Web 2.0 \(Part 1\)](#) & [How Much of the Internet is Fake?](#)
  - Assignment Due: Reading Response – Publish link to eLearning and your site.
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**6/10/2019:** Personas

- In Class: Create a persona for your site
- Read: TBD

**6/12/2019:** Written Content + WordPress

- In Class: Writing Practice + Choosing a Theme
  - Read: Handley part I
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**6/17/2019:** Project Planning

- In Class: Plan your Project with Trello
- Read: Handley Part II

**6/19/2019:** Digital Content

- Read: Handley Part III
  - In Class: Explore digital content
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**6/24/2019:** Long Form Content

- Read: [Long Form Example from The Atlantic](#)
- In Class: Practice Methods of Writing

**6/26/2019:** No Class

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**7/1/2019:** Introduction to Editing

- In Class: Peer review of long form using MS Word

**7/3/2019:** Short Form Content

- In Class: Plan, Design, Write and Edit a short post
- Due: Final Long form assignment due (on eLearning)

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**7/8/2019: Data (Visualization)**

- Read: TBD
- In Class: Finding and analyzing data in prep for Visual Assignment

**7/10/2019: The Audible Web (Podcast)**

- Due: Draft of Visual Assignment
- In Class: Peer Review Visual Assignment

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**7/15/2019: No Class**

**7/17/2019: Internet Marketing I (Google)**

- Due: Visual Assignment Final (eLearning)

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**7/22/2019: YouTube**

- Due: Audio Draft
- In Class: Peer Review Audio Assignment

**7/24/2019: Internet Marketing II (Facebook)**

- Due: Final Audio Post (eLearning)

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**7/29/2019: Finalizing your design**

- In Class: Video Peer Review

**7/31/2019: Retrospective**

- Read: [How to run a retrospective meeting](#)
- In Class: Class retrospective
- Due: Video Assignment

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**8/5/2019: Wrapping up**

- In Class: Peer Review of Websites
- Due: Retrospective

**8/7/2019: No class. Turn in final blog.**