

English 605: Computers in Language and Rhetoric

Fall 2011

meets: Wednesdays 11:30-2:20, Heavilon 206

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Courseweb: <http://sites.google.com/site/digitalrhetoric605>

On Histories

this course:

This course inhabits a course number created for a programming course that used SNOBOL to study authorship issues—for example, who authored the various Federalist Papers or which Shakespearean plays might have been written by Francis Bacon. When I claimed “Computers in Language and Literature” in Spring 1993 and retitled it to its current name, I intended it to be an introduction to the computers and writing as an emerging field, and I expected it would be an introductory seminar for rhetorical and literary theory that would direct students toward cyberspace and CmC research, computers in writing pedagogy, or literary hypertext theory. A highlight of that first semester was to be a collaborative venture called CYBER-U [described in the syllabus as venture among Illinois (Hawisher), Michigan Tech (C. Selfe), and Purdue (me)]. Well, certain dreams were left unfulfilled as no literature students enrolled, most of the students in the class wanted to do professional writing (and not literary hypertext or even computers and writing pedagogy), and technology limitations sunk the synchronous dreams for Cyber-U (which functioned only with a LISTSERV and GOPHER site).

Although I restarted the course, I've been sort of a drop in teacher for it. Johndan Johnson-Eilola taught 605 in the 1990s until he left Purdue, and Samantha Blackmon has taught it regularly since 2001. Both Johndan and Sam kept the core of presenting articles necessary for a person to claim a C+W identity, and Johndan focused on hypertext while Sam has focused on virtual worlds. I continued to teach other technology-rich courses in the 1990s: Distance Education and Rhetoric (which Johndan then taught), Cybercultures and Rhetoric, Professional Writing Theory, and Visual Rhetoric on the WWW. But, in the 2000s, our core needs (as well as faculty interests) have pushed me away from C+W to required courses (my rare indulgence was starting the Public Rhetorics seminar). So, this semester Fall 2011 marks only the third time I've taught this course (1993, 1999, and now) in the almost 20 years after its current build. [Note: to complete my history with the course, I'll distribute the syllabus from 1993 and a handout from the talk I gave to English 591 until Janice Lauer retired.]

me: (biographical note I wrote for the 1999 syllabus but did not distribute)

I can remember the first time I thought about computers in relation to writing; it was in a class called “Agonistics in Western Culture” taught by Walter Ong in 1974. Near the end of the semester he had us read from an early draft of what became the opening chapter of *Interfaces of the Word*. He had an observation about computers entering the mind that intrigued me so much I still puzzle over it today. I talked with him about it because I knew he composed longhand and then had a typist, while I had become used to composing at the typewriter when I worked on the newspaper. At that point St. Louis U had one computer in a large room, and you used punch cards to compose programs in a programming language (say COBOL). Father Ong suggested that while he was too old to experiment with such things, I certainly should. A few years later, when I decided to study writing seriously, I began taking programming classes at Wyoming (say FORTRAN) and I ultimately chose CMU for grad school, in part because of its computer facilities. From the day I arrived in Pittsburgh I began composing at the computer (and observing the changes it seemed to make in my writing and my habits). Hopelessly literal, I thought that move would make the computer enter my mind. [Note: there's a related biographical note about my struggles with my dissertation in Hawisher et al., *Computers and the Teaching of Writing in American Higher Education, 1979-1994: A History*.]

the field:

Computers and writing is held together as a field by its annual conference which dates back to... noone can agree on when it started. . . but their arguments center around the early 1980s.. . . And Michael Day keeps the origin discussion alive, in part by bringing a t-shirt from every conference and stringing them up in the exhibits area. C+W is the story of the co-existence of linked but almost opposite spirits often named in ways that connect them to programmers and critics/users. I like to characterize these uneasy partners through a story and a symbol: 1) Mary and Martha's story in the Bible—Martha taking care of folk and doing the work in a servile and utilitarian way while Mary flits about seeking limited pleasure open to women of the day in soaking up ideas. However you unpack the psychodynamics of their relationship and the story moves they enacted, they still were sisters. 2) the yinyang symbol—“yin” and “yang” are not good and evil, they are bound complementary opposites in a larger ecology, and though each waxes and wanes in dominance, each is needed by the other to define itself and its other. But not everyone accepts the necessary linkages, so you will have apostles of programming who think only those who program can be real computers and writing people and apostles of user advocacy who think only critical stances toward technology are helpful to those who are learning to write.

Those who aim to have a defined field that is recognized as computers and writing (or whatever name they prefer to call it), face the normal challenges for “fieldness”: is there an undergraduate major and a defined terminal degree? is there a professional organization that set standards for education? are there defined positions? are there journals? are there professional conferences? are there accepted methodologies for knowledge making? is there recognition that c+w faculty should be judged for tenure by means the field sets? C+W passes some but not all of these criteria for fieldness. There are three journals in existence for at least ten years: *Computers and Composition*, *Computers and Composition Online*, and *Kairos*. The yearly Computers and Writing Conference is thriving. There is a history the was published in 1996 (see note above). Many jobs in RC call for strong knowledge of technology and some are focused on C+W. NCTE redefined writing to include multimedia and a variety of technology communication moves [see: <http://www.ncte.org/press/21stcentwriting>].

But it is possible that technology has become so pervasive in the humanities that those who identify as C+W get pulled into other circles that do not keep them aligned with the core of the field. Those who know the most about machines often are also in Professional Writing; those most interested in interpreting texts are also in Sociolinguistics or in Digital Humanities; those who are most interested in the social dimensions of the digital often end up in Sociology or Communication. I see this as a threat to the field, for as the interdisciplinary members move away from a focus on first year writing or speaking, they often stop participating in C+W.

Course Goals

1. subject area: build a vocabulary in this area and interrogate vigorously some aspects of computers and writing
2. pedagogy: consider curriculum, instruction, and how other technologies fit with the teaching of writing in its current definitions
3. profession: consider stewardship’s place in the field
4. personal: a) try out something new, and b) develop a personal project that both helps your thinking mature and your portfolio grow

My thematic interest

While we are covering basic topics, and you will have us read materials you think are important, the theme word that has evolved for me this summer as I read for the course = “ubiquitous.” Computers are everywhere and nowhere, as is the academic talk surrounding their uses for communication, writing, entertainment, and so on. Historically it’s been my experience in studying processes that new writing technologies lay open processes temporarily until new habits take hold. So, those in computer science who have sought to institute ubiquitous computing have seemed like fellow travelers. And, with the growth of wireless computing, and the ascendancy of our attachments to computing device (most of which focus on communication), the lights and shadows of ubiquity intrigue me. If we believe NCTE, writing’s identity is changing. Is writing itself becoming “ubiquitous,” and if so, is that good, bad, or perhaps another lever to invite a resurgence of technological determinism? We’ll think on it. Of course, for technology to be ubiquitous, it needs stewards, and a longtime complaint of C+W folk is that the parts of their work that is stewardship does not get “counted.” There are all sorts of magic involved with this class.

Reading Materials

I have identified readings from a number of sources – books available online through the library, articles out of journals, and some books you need to purchase. The potentially most problematic sources are those books online in the library because they have not been able to standardize the various sources [there are online books through the major databases; many holdings use Academic Complete’s ebrary or EBL; some publishers have there own collections (Wiley, MIT CogSci, Springer); ACLS Humanities EBooks; it seems to go on and on], and they operate in slightly different ways. [we’ll talk about this]

Books to Purchase [we will start using these after you get paid, and books are now on order through Von’s Books]

- Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory* (Polity 2010)
- Paul Dourish and Genevieve Bell, *Divining a Digital Future* (MIT, 2011)
- Malcolm McCullough, *Digital Ground* (MIT, 2005)
- Etienne Wenger, Nancy White, and John D. Smith, *Digital Habits: Stewarding Technology for Communities* (CP Square, 2009)

Other Readings will be pointed to or posted on the courseweb: <https://sites.google.com/site/digitalrhetoric605/>

Grading Info and Policies

30% participation [show you have done the reading and other assignments; share your insights in whatever media/shape sharing takes; try out a new technology; group work]

5% conference proposal to C&W or ATTW or another conference

5% for selecting some readings for class and leading the discussion of them

20% pedagogical project

40% final project [distributed among proposal, oral presentation, final paper]

Groundrules: 1) come to class in order to participate fully; 2) do your work; 3) if your work is habitually late (so that impacts others in the class or your own development) as much as ½ a grade can be subtracted from your course grade; and 4) try not to take an incomplete because I will be on sabbatical in Spring.

Schedule

[every week we will work on a variety of activities. . . discussing readings; playing with and discussing technologies; and entertaining grand ideas]

WK 1: Introduction

[8.31.11] WK 2: C+W as a **group trying to understand technology, teach with it, or steward it**

- Joyce, Michael. (1992). New teaching: Toward a pedagogy for a new cosmology. *Computers and Composition*, 9, 2, 7-16. [at library]
- Ohmann, Richard. (1985). Literacy, technology, and monopoly capital. *College English*, 47, 7, 675-689. [jstor]
- Nold, Ellen. (1975). Fear and trembling: A humanist approaches the computer, *CCC*, 26, 269-273. [jstor]
- Janangelo, Joseph. (1991) Technopower and technopression: Some abuses of power and control in computer-assisted writing environments. *Computers and Composition*, 9 (1), 47-64. [at library]
- Miller, Lance. (1986). Computers for composition: A stage model of helping, *Visible Language*, 20, 2, 188-218. (courseweb)
- Sullivan, Patricia. "Taking Control of the Page: Electronic Writing and Word Publishing." In Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe, *Evolving Perspectives on Computers and Composition Studies: Questions for the 1990s*. (NCTE, 1991). 43-64. [courseweb]
- [note: looking for this article; issue is not in journal online archive. . . Romano, Susan. (1993). The egalitarian narrative: Whose story? whose yardstick? *Computers and Composition*, 10, 5-28.]

and another we listened to. . .

- Weiser, Mark. (1991, September). The computer for the twenty-first century. *Scientific American*, 265, 3, pp. 94-105. [courseweb]

[9.7.11] WK 3: Visions, Metaphors, and Vocabularies

interface

- Walter Ong, S.I. *Interfaces of the Word*, ch 1 (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977) [courseweb]
- Brenda Laurel. *Computers as Theatre* (Addison-Wesley, 1991) [courseweb]
- Thomas Moran and Shumin Zhai. "Beyond the Desktop Metaphor in Seven Dimensions." In Victor Kaptelinin and Mary P. Czernwinski (eds.), *Beyond the Desktop Metaphor: Designing Integrated Digital Work Environments*. (MIT, 2007). [at library]
- Cynthia L. Selfe and Richard J. Selfe. "Politics of the Interface: Power and Its Exercise in Electronic Contact Zones" *CCC*, 45.4 (1994): 480-504. [jstor]

network

- Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thatcher. *The Exploit*. (Minnesota UP, 2007). 35-63. (at library)
<http://site.ebrary.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/lib/purdue/docDetail.action?docID=10212627>

data

- Peter Morville. *Ambient Findability*. (O'Reilly, 2005). ch 6 The sociosemantic web.

built spaces

- Bernard Tschumi. "Six Concepts" in *Architecture and Disjunction*. (MIT, 1996). 227-259. (courseweb)

[9.14.11] WK 4: C+W as a **field (as it intertwines with New Media and Digital Humanities)**

- Walter Ong, from *Orality and Literacy* (ch 3) and ch 12 from *Rhetoric Romance and Technology*
- Walter Benjamin, "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," from *Illuminations*
- Johann Huizinga, from *Homo Ludens* ch 1 & 2
- Marshall McLuhan. From *Understanding Media*
- Michel de Certeau, "Walking in the City," from *The Practice of Everyday Life*
- James Clifford, from *The Predicament of Culture* particularly the
- pronouncement: Yancey's 21st century literacy report for NCTE [Writing in the 21st Century]
- State Governors' common core standards (pp 42-48; particularly stds for 6-12)
- National Technology Plan for Education: 2010 (<http://www.ed.gov/technology/netp-2010>) read executive summary
- NCTE position statement on Definition of Writing in the 21st Century <http://www.ncte.org/positions/21stcenturyliteracy>

[9.21.11] WK 5: Writing and Technology as Actions in an **Environment**

- Dourish and Bell *Divining a Digital Future* (purchase at Vons)
- Czernwinski et al "Digital Memories" (courseweb)
- Karl Stolley, "Integrating Social Media into Existing Work Environments: The Case of Delicious" *JBTC*, 23.3 (2009): 350-371. (courseweb)

- DeVoss, Cushman, and Grabill, "Infrastructure and Composing: The When of New Media Writing" CCC 57.1(2005): 14-44. (courseweb)

[9.28.11] WK 6: Social Media, Wikis Blogs, and Blogrelatives . . .Why are we a crowd?

- Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory* (purchase at Vons)
 - Steven D. Krause, "When Blogging Goes Bad" *Kairos* 9.1 (2001)
<http://www.technorhetoric.net/9.1/binder.html?praxis/krause/index.html>
 - Matt Barton, "Is There a Wiki in this class?" in *Wiki Writing: Collaborative Learning in the College Classroom* Digital Culture Books, U Michigan Press, 2008. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.5871848.0001.001>
- general information texts:
- Nancy Baym, "Social Networks 2.0." In Mia Consalvo and Charles Ess (eds.) *The Handbook of Internet Studies*, pp. 384-405. London: Blackwell, 2011. (courseweb)
 - Lori Kendall, "Community and the Internet." In Mia Consalvo and Charles Ess (eds.) *The Handbook of Internet Studies*, pp. 309-325. London: Blackwell, 2011. (courseweb)

[10.5.11.] WK 7: Focus on a Medium – video . . . screencasts. . . and multimedia [Jing and Camtasia]

proposal for final project due. . . will also work on planning reading for final month

catch up on readings + work day

- Julian Dibbell "Rape in Cyberspace" and "Life of ordinary gold miner" online links at courseweb
- Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart Selber, "Policing Ourselves" *Computers and Composition* (courseweb)
- Turkle, from *Alone Together* (introduction) (book online at Library)

[10.12.11] Fall Break. . . No Class

[10.19.11] On Space and Built Spaces

- Malcolm McCullough, *Digital Ground* (purchase at Vons)
- David Harvey, "Space as a Keyword." In Noel Castree and Derek Gregory (eds.), *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, pp. 270-293. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006.
- Cresswell on Transgression from *In Place, Out of Place*
- Richard Coyne. *The Tuning of Place*. (MIT, 2010)
<http://site.ebrary.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/lib/purdue/docDetail.action?docID=10386194&p00=internet%20handbook>

At this point, other than working with the Digital Stewardship, we'll use the readings you have proposed

[10.26.11] Focus on a Writing Activity – online research and building virtual structures

Digital Habitats 1

group projects

[11.2.11] Focus on Tools – devices; software; hosting; stewarding

Digital Habitats 2

group projects

[11.9.11] Focus on Theory & Culture

[11.16.11] Focus on Power, Race, and Difference

[11.23.11] Thanksgiving—No Class

[11.30.11] Focus on Futures

[12.7.11] last class

TOWARD A REFERENCE e-BRARY OF OUR OWN

Some books that might be good to review:

Eric Gordon, & Adriana de Souza e Silva. *NetLocality: Why Location Matters in a Networked World*. Wiley, 2011.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9781444340679>

Richard Coyne. *The Tuning of Place*. (MIT, 2010)
<http://site.ebrary.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/lib/purdue/docDetail.action?docID=10386194&p00=internet%20handbook>

Andrew Pickering. *Cybernetic Brain*. (U Chicago, 2010).
<http://site.ebrary.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/lib/purdue/docDetail.action?docID=10386301&p00=internet%20handbook>

Some helpful introductory or background books:

Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, & John Unsworth (eds.) *A Companion to Digital Humanities*. Wiley 2004.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9780470999875;jsessionid=4347BE0AC0A9A715F1C066ED02725ABB.d01t04>

John Hartley, & Kelly McWilliam (eds.) *Story Circle: Digital Storytelling around the World*. Wiley 2009.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9781444310580>

Lisa Servon. *Bridging the Digital Divide: Technology, Community, and Public Policy*. Wiley, 2008.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9780470773529>

Barry Wellman, & Caroline Haythornthwaite (eds.) *The Internet in Everyday Life*. Wiley, 2008.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9780470774298>

Mia Consalvo, & Charles Ess (eds.) *Handbook of Internet Studies*. Wiley, 2011.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9781444314861>

Ashley Packard. *Digital Media Law*. (Wiley, 2010).
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9781444318197>

Virginia Nightingale (ed.) *Handbook of Media Audiences*. (Wiley, 2011).
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/book/10.1002/9781444340525>

D. E. Wittkower (ed.) *Facebook and Philosophy*. (Open Court, 2010).
<http://www.purdue.eblib.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=619163>

Lelia Green. *Internet: An Introduction*. (Berg, 2010)
<http://site.ebrary.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/lib/purdue/docDetail.action?docID=10392371&p00=internet%20handbook>

Nancy Flynn. *e-Policy Handbook: Rules and Best Practices to Safely Manage Your Company's . . .* (AMACON, 2009, 2nd ed).
<http://site.ebrary.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/lib/purdue/docDetail.action?docID=10292236&p00=internet%20writing>

Christine L. Borgman. *Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet*. (MIT, 2007).
<http://web.ebscohost.com/login.ezproxy.lib.purdue.edu/ehost/detail?sid=a39ec2dd-c158-41f4-98c6-477ea99bd2ad%40sessionmgr14&vid=1&hid=15&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZhc3QtYm92ZQ%3d%3d#db=nlebk&AN=208748>