

WRRH205: Rhetorical Bytes: Digital Rhetorics and Writing with New Technologies

Spring 2010

Section 01 / 3659 • 1:25 – 2:50 pm • M, F • 9 Rosenberg

Instructor: Michele Polak **Email:** polak@hws.edu
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Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30-2:45 pm and by appointment

Required Materials

Texts:

- *Totally Wired: What Teens and Tweens are Really Doing Online*, by Anastasia Goodstein
- *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World: A Critical Sourcebook*, Ed., Carolyn Handa
- *The Non-Designer's Design and Type Books, Deluxe Edition*, by Robin Williams
- *Robin Williams Web Design Workshop* by Robin Williams, John Tollett, Dave Roh

- Assignments accessed through:

Course Website (WEB): http://www.michelepolak.com/205spring10/Course_Syllabus.html

- Course blog: <http://grandcentralblog.wordpress.com/>

Other:

- online account through Apple's MobileMe: <http://www.apple.com/mobileme/>
- headphones or earbuds

Course Goals, Description and Expectations

As students of rhetoric, we know that the traditions of rhetorical argument began in orality before moving to print form with the written word. For many rhetoricians, alphabetic text became a dominant discourse of rhetorical argument, the written form favoring that of speech in composition courses. Carolyn Handa writes in the Introduction to *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World: A Critical Sourcebook*, "Rhetoric's association with the written word is arbitrary, a by-product of print culture rather than the epistemological limits of rhetoric itself" (2), making a case for a shift in our familiar literacies of rhetorical argument.

With the rise of new technologies in the latter half of the last century, however, new forms of media have enabled rhetoric to take on new meanings with greater exploration, challenging the writer to learn different ways of interpreting ethos, using pathos and situating logos. Purpose may seem more direct and also more abstract, while audience moves from the personal to the public leaving Kress to ask, "Does the category of genre remain important, useful, necessary; does it become more or less important in the era of multimodal communication?" (39). In this course, we will explore these new forms, new genres, and new literacies that bring new technologies into our writing classroom. Through analyzing basic theories of visual rhetoric and design, we will use different elements of digital applications to provide us with new venues for designing, interpreting, and executing rhetorical argument.

There are a variety of rhetorical aspects that can be found in new media forms, from Facebook, to mp3 players, to wikis, to online videos. While instructions on how to use digital technologies are important aspects of some classes, we will focus in this course on the kinds of arguments made on and by these technologies. We will study the impact of different interfaces on writing and persuasion, and will create compositions using a variety of media. This semester, you will have the opportunity to develop skills in analyzing digital technology, composing in various forms of digital media, understanding writing about new technologies, and considering the broader cultural impact of digital rhetorics. Along with critical analysis and writing skills, we will work together on designing strategies for both visual and audio platforms for a variety of audiences.

I have designed this course with your needs as contemporary rhetoricians in mind, with a sampling of theorists to read for foundation and projects that will enable you to put the theories we learn into practice. The topics of exploration in this course, however, remain yours for choosing. While I will provide ideas and guidelines to help keep you structured, it is in your best interest to decide early how you want to organize your needs for this course—consider what you will be taking from what you learn about writing with new technologies into the workplace and beyond.

Course Requirements

Critical thinking is the framework in which you should consider placing your writing.

Grading Policy. All projects will be assigned a letter grade based upon the following percentages:

Social Network Site Analysis:	20%	A	100-94%	C+	79-77%
Podcast Project:	25%	A-	93-90%	C	76-74%
Kinetic Typography Project:	20%	B+	89-87%	C-	73-70%
Website Project:	25%	B	86-84%	D+	69-67%
Course Blog Responses:	10%	B-	83-80%	D	66-64%

For each project, I will provide the criteria by which your writing will be graded. If at any time you have a question about your grade in this class, please do not hesitate to come see me so we can discuss the issue.

Online Blog Response. As this is a writing course focusing on writing with new technologies, there is a required blog element for this course. I have created a course blog that I will keep updated with entries posted weekly (or bi-weekly, as topics arise). You are required as part of your grade to post **at least nine response comments by the end of the semester**. Because I plan to integrate discussions of writing for online spaces into our learning, I will be providing due dates for these response comments, scattered throughout the semester. The due dates are listed in this syllabus. Please note: *this is a public blog!* This means that I have allowed for any reader to post comments, per my approval. By doing so, I hope to expand our community of scholars to one that includes readers from other spaces so you are welcome to share the link. The course blog address can be found under Required Materials listed in this syllabus. I suggest you place the blog URL in your favorites bar on your computer so you will be reminded to read it regularly.

Participation and Preparation. Not only is it important for you to be present in class, but it is also crucial that you have a voice in discussions, group work, and in-class writing. Active, engaged participation is therefore required on your part. You should come to class prepared to participate every day. This means completing all reading and writing assignments, as well as being prepared to discuss what you've learned, observed, loved, and even hated. Know that I have a tendency to call on people at random to get a sense of what is on everyone's mind. I don't do this to make anyone feel awkward or uncomfortable—I do it because some people tend to talk more in class, some less. I do not think that being quiet in class necessarily means you are unprepared. By calling on people, I want to create a space in which we can all engage with one another equally and openly; I want to hear what you have to say, and so will your classmates. This classroom is a safe haven for all ideas. This means that we will respect each other as equal participants in our learning.

Course Policies

Revising. You are welcome to bring any project at any stage of progress to my office for me to read; there are no limitations on how many drafts I will read. I will be glad to comment and help you make revisions. Taking advantage of this opportunity will assure you the grade you desire for this course. **Please note that I will only be able to help you properly revise if you meet with me in person. I will accept no drafts by email.**

I encourage you to also take advantage of the great writing assistance resources that we have on campus. Hobart and William Smith Colleges encourage students to seek the academic collaboration and resources that will enable them to demonstrate their best work. Students who would like to enhance their study skills, writing skills, or have other academic inquiries should contact the CTL. You can visit the CTL web site to learn more about the services and programs that are available:
<http://www.hws.edu/academics/ctl/index.aspx>

Late Work. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the assigned due date. If you are absent the day that something is due, you are still required to email your projects to me by the beginning of class. Late projects are **NOT ACCEPTED** except under extraordinary circumstances and only after prearranged negotiations with me.

Attendance. We cannot form a community of voices if the members of the community do not show up. Attendance for this course is mandatory. You will be allowed **three** absences over the course of the semester (no distinctions will be made between excused and unexcused absences, so use these three days wisely). Each subsequent absence will drop your final grade by a full letter grade. If you are absent, you are responsible for what you missed.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense that could result in an F for your course grade. You have to do your own work and appropriately identify work that is collaborative, borrowed, or copied from other sources. Obviously, when you use words, citations, or even ideas from other sources, you are under the legal and ethical obligation to identify these sources according to citation norms. I take plagiarism very seriously. If you have any questions at any time about what or what may not constitute plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me. Your best bet is to just not do it. I'm serious. Don't even try it.

Keep in contact with me. I am always available to meet with you. If you cannot meet with me during office hours, I will be glad to arrange another time that is convenient. If you are having problems meeting the course requirements, please come talk with me ASAP. Keep in mind that should you come to me during Week 12 to discuss how to improve your grade, it will most likely be too late. Keeping an "open line of communication" will help ease any fears or frustrations you may have about this course.

Disability Accommodations. I am very willing to make accommodations to those with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability for which you may need accommodations, you should self-identify and register for services with the Coordinator of Disability Services at the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and provide documentation of your disability. Disability related accommodations and services generally will not be provided until the registration and documentation process is complete. The guidelines for documenting disabilities can be found at the HWS Disabilities Services website: <http://www.hws.edu/disabilities>

The Digital Classroom

Technology. In this section of WRRH205, we will be paperless, utilizing the digital technologies that are available to us in our classroom. I advise you to save all your work and back up your files often on whatever digital back up source you have purchased for this class (see Required Materials listed in this syllabus). As technology is not always 100% reliable, having a copy of a completed assignment will save you the risk of receiving an F on an assignment that is not handed in on time due to technological errors. I will not change my Late Policy if you have problems with lost files on your computer—this will get you into the habit of backing up your electronic work! For this class, you should frequently check your HWS email account, as I will notify you of any important class changes through your HWS email address.

Course Website. All of the assignments for this course can be found on our course website (see Required Materials listed in this syllabus for the URL). Criteria for each assignment is listed on the website with a link to the .pdf file, downloadable for printing or archiving on your own computer. You can also find links to both the Course Blog and the Student Center, which contains links to general writing documents and other general course information.

Should you wish access to all of the course .pdf documents in one folder, I will provide you with the password to my Public iDisk folder, server space in which I have uploaded all the documents required for this course.

Course Blackboard Site. While the course website will be where you will find most of the information for this course, I will activate our course Blackboard site so that I may update the class on any assignment changes or late-breaking news; if you have not activated your HWS email, please do so as it is the only email account that can be used through Blackboard. You have been automatically added to Blackboard.

Weekly Syllabus, Spring 2010

(Subject to Change)

*all projects DUE at the start of class unless otherwise indicated

WEEK 1	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Fri, 1/22			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Intro to course theme • Intro to course syllabus • Intro to course website

WEEK 2	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 1/25	Course Syllabus (WEB) Goodstein: Ch 6 Kelly: "Becoming Screen Literate" (WEB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • questions about course syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing with new technologies
Fri, 1/29	Handa: "Introduction" 1 (VRDW) Stroupe: "Visualizing English" 13 (VRDW)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual rhetoric in the writing classroom

WEEK 3	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 2/1	Shauf: "Problem of Electronic Argument" 364 (VRDW)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing digital media
Fri, 2/5	Social Network Site Analysis (WEB) Goodstein: Ch 1 thru 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro Social Network Site Analysis

WEEK 4	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 2/8	Stone: "The Children of Cyberspace" (WEB) Rothstein: "In the Mind of the High-Tech Child" (WEB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least three course blog responses by this date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyberculture: Web 2.0
Fri, 2/12	Barthes: "Rhetoric of the Image" 152 (VRDW)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images in cultural context

WEEK 5	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 2/15	Podcast Project (WEB) Kress: "Multimodality" 38 (VRDW)	DUE: Social Network Site Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multimodal texts • Intro Podcast Project
Fri, 2/19			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcast Project group assignments

WEEK 6	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 2/22	Garage Band Basics (WEB)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Garage Band
Fri, 2/26			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue Garage Band tutorial • sign up for studio space by this date, if needed

WEEK 7	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 3/1			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in class Podcast Project workshop
Fri, 3/5		DUE: Podcast Project script, emailed to me by midnight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in class Podcast Project workshop (final chance to meet with your group face-to-face before scripts are due in the evening.)

WEEK 8	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 3/8	Williams, Type: Intro through Ch 7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typography
Fri, 3/12	Keedy: "Rules of Typography" 272 (VRDW) Williams, Type: Ch 8 thru Ch 17	DUE: Podcast Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typography (cont)

WEEK 9	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 3/15 to Fri, 3/19	Spring Break		

WEEK 10	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 3/22	Kinetic Typography Project (WEB) Williams, Type: Ch 18 through end Helfand: "Electronic Typography" 277 (VRDW)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro Kinetic Typography Project
Fri, 3/26	Williams, Design: Ch 1 thru 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least three more course blog responses by this date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinetic Typography Project (cont)

WEEK 11	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 3/29	After Effects Basics (WEB) Williams, Design: Ch 4 thru 7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to After Effects
Fri, 4/2			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue After Effects tutorial

WEEK 12	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 4/5			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in class Kinetic Type Project workshop
Fri, 4/9			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in class Kinetic Type Project workshop

WEEK 13	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 4/12	Website Project (WEB) Williams, Web: "Section Two" 75		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro Website Project • Web Design Basics
Fri, 4/16	Web Design Tips (WEB)	DUE: Kinetic Typography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Basics (cont) • Intro Wireframing

WEEK 14	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 4/19	iWeb Basics (WEB) Williams, Web: Ch 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • final three course blog responses by this date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to iWeb
Fri, 4/23			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue iWeb tutorial

WEEK 15	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 4/26	Williams, Web: Ch 13	DUE: Wireframing (hard copy)	• in class Web Project workshop
Fri, 4/30	Website Evaluation (WEB)		• in class Web Project workshop

WEEK 16	READ FOR TODAY	DUE/BRING TO CLASS	IN CLASS TODAY
Mon, 5/3		DUE: Website Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Evaluations • Closing Reflections

Finals Week—class does not meet			
Wed, 5/12	DUE: Website Project revisions, URL updated by 3p		