Text and Code

English 215-02
Online Class

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Office Hours: M/W/F 10:00 – 11:00 am (and by appointment).

>> Course Description

We encounter digital texts and codes every time we use a smart phone, turn on an app, read an e-book, or interact online. This course examines the innovative combinations of text & code that underpin emerging textual practices such as electronic literatures, digital games, mobile communication, geospatial mapping, interactive and locative media, augmented reality, and interactive museum design. Drawing on key concepts of text & code in fields such as media studies, literature, linguistics, creative writing, geospatial mapping, interactive and locative media, and computer science, students will analyze shifting expressive textual practices and develop the literacies necessary to read and understand them. Practicing and reflecting on such new media literacies, the course explores their social, cultural, creative, technological, and legal significance.

Now, get ready! As we move through the course we will be regularly engaging with different media together. You will be asked to reflect on your own experiences as viewers and think about the ways media texts position and engage you.

>> Texts and Materials

Our readings will be uploaded to our RIT MyCourses site (http://mycourses.rit.edu). You are free to save the articles and print your own hard copies to read.

As an online class, we will also be using computers constantly this semester. We will use them to screen digital texts, do media analysis, and our own storytelling. As part of this class you will need access to a computer with an internet connection. You may also need to pay $30 (est) for software or make arrangements to work in an RIT computer lab that has the software you need.

Be sure to read through [Requirements for Taking Text & Code Online](#) for more information about the materials assigned in this course.

>> Course Expectations and Requirements

Your final grade is calculated in the following way:

- Discussion & Response Posts (20%)
- Participation (5%)
- Reading Responses (25%)
- Media Projects (50%)

Discussion and Response Posts (20%) & Participation (5%)

Discussion and Response Posts - As an online course, this class relies heavily on the active participation of all students. Each week, most of our time will be spent discussing the readings and screenings. To fully participate in the course and to get the most out of it, you must take the time to read through all posts and comments. (Just FYI, MyCourses lets me see who does and does not read each post.) Regularly reading and responding will help you with the course material. Just as importantly, your contributions will also allow you to help others in the class, as all of you work together to flush out an idea or hammer through a challenging question.

As an online class, you will find yourself writing a lot in this course. Each week you are required to post a minimum of one discussion post and two responses. I have provided Online Discussion Schedule & Guidelines to help you with posts. Be sure to read this carefully. I will assess your posts each week to ensure that you are meeting the minimum posting requirements and to assign you a posting grade for the week (see the guidelines for more information).

Remember, instead of talking in person, in this class we write. With each unit of class, you will find yourself writing several pages worth of comments and posts. I expect you to put time and thought into both your posts and your replies to other students. At the beginning of the semester, I will give you extensive feedback on your posts and comments so that you have a sense of what's expected. You can find discussion grades and feedback in the "Grades" area of MyCourses.

Participation Credit - You'll notice I've also specified an additional 5% of your grade for participation. This aspect of your grade is to recognize and encourage all of you to support each other and work together each week. Every week I'll ask you to share your questions and ideas with the class, but I will also ask you to listen to others and give feedback to them on their ideas and questions as well. Essentially, I want I want us to talk to each other, rather than having a discussion forum where we "post and run." The 5% participation grade is designed to encourage all of you to participate. I pay close attention to which students are taking the time to read through other student's posts, reading posts carefully, engaging in other student's ideas, and providing constructive feedback.

Media Projects (50%)

There will be three major projects due this semester. These will consist of critical analysis papers and creative digital projects. Projects will be discussed in detail during the semester and you can plan for them by reviewing the assignment deadlines on the Text & Code Calendar. (If you have questions now, feel free to email me for more info.) Each project has built in deadlines for project proposals and feedback.

Our weekly discussions and assignments are designed to help you develop ideas for these projects. Each digital assignment will also accommodate different levels of technical skill, from the first-timer to the more tech-savvy. I will also be offering regular drop-in hours in my office so that anyone who needs to can either meet with me for some additional help with projects or simply to have some additional time to work.

Grading and Assessment

Here is a breakdown of how grades are assigned in this class:

A: Excellent work. Student goes well beyond minimum assignment requirements. Student pushes themselves and their skills, is conscious of their peers, makes strong and useful contributions to class discussions, and makes significant effort to collaborate with peers. Student's work is original, inventive and creative. Work uses clear and focused arguments that are accompanied by careful use of strong evidence and analysis. Work is well organized, clearly written, and communicates its ideas in effective and compelling ways.

B: Above average work. Student exceeds minimum assignment requirements. Student pushes themselves and their skills, is conscious of their peers, makes regular contributions to class discussions, and regularly collaborates with their peers. Student's work has clear and focused arguments that are accompanied by strong evidence and analysis. Work is organized and communicates its ideas effectively ways.

C: Average work. Student meets minimum assignment requirements and class participation requirements. Student's work is relatively organized and coherent.

D: Below average work. Student work does not meet or only meets a few of the minimum assignment requirements and class participation requirements. Student's work may struggle with organization and coherency issues.

F: Unsatisfactory work. Student work does not meet minimum assignment requirements and class participation requirements. Student's work may struggle with significant organization and coherency issues.

>> Scheduling

Since this is an online course, our schedule is different from a traditional class that meets face-to-face. Our week typically runs from Monday to Saturday (see the [Online Discussion Schedule & Guidelines](#) for more information). The week's materials and assignments are posted by Mondays at 12pm. Monday through Wednesday are prep days (time to do the readings and complete any required activities). Then, Thursday and Friday are your discussion days. Whether you are working at two pm or two am, as long as your work is up by the deadline, you are free to post whenever you wish.

For student's with wonky schedules: Every once in a while I have students with schedules that are overloaded during the Mon-Wed prep period. If you ever have a week coming

where you'd like the lecture material and discussion assignments posted a little early, let me know! I can often work to accommodate you.

>> Email

This is an online class, that means I will frequently use email to contact the class. Make sure you have access to your rit.edu email address and be careful to regularly check your email. Missing an email will not excuse you from missed assignments or late work.

You are welcome to email me with any questions and concerns you have about the class or your work. I generally respond to email quickly and you can expect a response in 24 hours. If you do not receive a response from me in 1-2 days, please email me again. I do receive a lot of email daily. It's rare, but occasionally someone gets lost in the shuffle or inexplicably stuck in the spam/junk mail filter. Failure to follow-up with me regarding emails or questions asked in class will not excuse you from missed assignments or late work.

Our relationship is a professional one. This means I expect our email exchanges to be professional as well. Please take the time to look into questions and check the syllabus before you contact me. Then, when you email me, be careful to explain the issue carefully and be clear about your questions. If you are unsure how to structure a professional email please contact me. I am happy to answer any questions you have about this.

>> RIT Honor Code

As an institution of higher learning, RIT expects students to behave honestly and ethically at all times, especially when submitting work for evaluation in conjunction with any course or degree requirement. The Department of English encourages all students to become familiar with the RIT Honor Code and with RIT's Academic Integrity Policy.

RIT Honor Code URL: https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/p030 RIT Academic Integrity Policy URL: https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080

>> Student Accommodations

RIT is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. If you would like to request accommodations such as special seating or testing modifications due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Office. It is located in the Student Alumni Union, Room 1150; the Web site is www.rit.edu/dso. After you receive accommodation approval, it is imperative that you see me during office hours or contact me via email during the first 1-2 weeks of class so that we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary.

Important Note: In this class interactive games and digital materials are assigned. Some of these materials are unable to be easily captioned. You may need to make arrangements to use these materials with an interpreter.

>> Content Warning

During this semester we will be discussing a variety of subjects and looking at texts that may represent beliefs and life experiences that are different than your own. As an instructor in the humanities, I am particularly interested in issues of age, race, class, gender and sexuality. To a some extent, class materials will reflect these interests. The readings and screenings for this course may contain adult material. Please read the course calendar carefully. If you have any reservations, for whatever reason, about watching, reading, or discussing certain types of content, contact me during the first week of class.

Finally...

Be sure to read through all the materials listed under "Important Course Information" in the content section. These are an extension of this syllabus and will talk you through important details and requirements regarding our class.

Text & Code Fall 2015 Course Calendar

>> A Typical Week*

Days 1-3 (Monday - Wednesday): Prep Days

- Official allotted time for reading course materials and prepping for the week's discussion. (Lecture notes and discussion assignments for the week are typically posted Sunday evenings, they will always be up by Monday at 12pm.)

Days 4-6 (Thursday - Saturday): Discussion and Reading Responses**

- Initial post (150 word minimum) due by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- Two response posts (100 word minimum each) due by 11:59 pm Friday.
  (You are only required to make two responses, but you are welcome and encouraged to respond further and continue your conversations.)
- Reading Response (200 word minimum) due by 11:59 pm Saturday.
  (Remember, you are only required to submit 9 reading responses.)

This schedule will sometimes be altered on weeks with holidays and when projects are due.

This course moves fast and requires careful planning and scheduling on your part. I strongly recommend that you set up a weekly schedule for yourself, keeping in mind your other outside obligations, so you know when the best times are for you to get online and get the work done. Pay close attention to the overall schedule, requirements and deadlines, so that you can stay on track. It usually takes a few weeks for your weekly schedule to fall into place, plan to give yourself lots of extra time in the first few weeks, so you'll be sure you don't fall behind.

>> Week 1 (8/24) - Introductions

Read:

Review *all* the course documents listed under Course Documents, including " Syllabus & Calendar" and "Important Course Information." Read these carefully as they include important information you need to be aware of before beginning an online class. Also, review the "Help With MyCourses" content, if you'd like additional help with MyCourses.

Discussion:

Introductory posts due by Saturday at 11:59 p.m. Check the To Do This Week file for full

details. Also, post any questions about the class or course documents to the "Questions and Problems" discussion forum.

>> Week 2 (8/31) - Code: Semiotics

- **Read:**
  - Excerpts from Chandler's *Semiotics,* "Introduction," "Codes," "Textual Interactions" (see pdf instructions re. sections to skip)
  - Lecture notes.
- **Watch/Play/Do:** N/A
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Response:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 3 (9/7) - Code: Software (Technology, Interface & Language)

Labor Day Holiday this Monday, schedule will be modified. (See course news or for more information.

- **Read:**
  - ~~Excerpts from Ceruzzi's *Computing: A Concise History*~~ *<-- cut! This history is really useful & easy to read, but its also a 3 day weekend and you folks deserve a little extra free time this weekend. :)*
  - Excerpts from Fuller's *Software Studies Lexicon,* "Code," "Language," and "Interface"
  - Lecture notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** N/A
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Response**: Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 4 (9/14) - Code: Protocol

- **Read:**
  - Excerpts from Abelson, Ledeen, & Lewis - "The Internet as System and Spirit" (see pdf instructions re. sections to skip)
  - Galloway's *Protocol,* "Form" & "Institutionalization" (see pdf instructions re. sections to skip)
  - Lecture notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** N/A
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Response**: Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 5 (9/21) - Code: Identity

- **Read:**
  - Kolko, "Erasing @Race: Going White in the Interface"
  - Lecture notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** Be ready to test/check out a few websites this week.
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 6 (9/28) - Code: "New" Media

- **Read**:
  - Excerpts from Manovich's *The Language of New Media,* "Principles of New Media" & "What New Media Is Not"
  - Lecture notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** TBD & work on project proposals.
- **Discussion:**Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.
- **Project 1 Proposals:** Due by 11:59pm Sunday.

>> Week 7 (10/5) - Text: Hidden Operations and Playable Language

- **Read:**
  - Excerpts from Wardrip-Fruin's *Expressive Processing,* "Introduction" and "Playable Language."
  - Lecture notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** Be ready to look at several different digital texts this week.
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 8 (10/13) - Text: Uncreative Writing

- **Read:**
  - Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing,* "Revenge of the Text"
  - Lecture Notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** Be ready to do a bunch of uncreative writing this week!
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Project One Due Sunday, 10/18 at 11:59pm.

>> Week 9 (10/19) - Text: Reframing the Ordinary

- **Read:**
    - Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing,* "Seeding the Data Cloud"
    - Rosa Menkman - Glitch Studies Manifesto
    - Lecture Notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** Oh, just you wait! So much glitch art this week. Also, Twitter Bots!
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 10 (10/26) - Text: Procedural Rhetoric

- **Read:**
    - Excerpts from Bogost's *Persuasive Games,"* Procedural Rhetoric"
    - Lecture Notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** So many browser games to choose from, which will I pick this time?!
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 11 (11/2) - Text: Rewriting Space

- **Read:**
    - Tentative: Rob Kitchin + Martin Dodge -Code/Space, "Introducing Code/Space" (This may be changed.)
    - Teri Rueb, "Shifting Subjects In Locative Media"
    - Lecture Notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** Check out some GIS and AR projects. Work on project #2 proposals.
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.
- **Project 2 Proposals:** Due by 11:59pm on Sunday.

>> Week 12 (11/9) - Process: RW/RO Culture

- **Read:**
    - Excerpts from Lessig's *Remix* (pages 23-33, 51-83)
    - Lecture Notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** Be ready to look at/work with several different remix examples.
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.

- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 13 (11/16) - Process: Digital Labor

- **Read:**
  - Ross - "In Search of the Lost Paycheck"
  - Lecture Notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** TBD
- **Discussion:** Initial post by 11:59 pm Wednesday.
- **Responses:** Two response posts due by 11:59 pm Friday.
- **Reading Responses:** Due by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Project Two Due Sunday, 11/22 at 11:59pm.

>> Week 14 (11/23) Process: The Filter Bubble

- **Read:**
  - Exerpts from Pariser's *The Filter Bubble*.
  - Lecture Notes
- **Watch/Play/Do:** TBD & work on project proposals.
- **Discussion & Responses:** No discussion this week. Please email me with questions.
- **Reading Response:** Due by 11:59 pm Monday, 11/30.
- **Project 3 Proposals:** Due by 11:59 pm Monday, 11/30.

>> Week 15 (11/30) - Work Week

- **Read:** Feedback on project proposals.
- **Watch/Play/Do:** Work on project 3.
- **Discussion & Responses**: No discussion this week.
- **Project 3 Drafts:** Due by 11:59 pm Monday 12/7.

>> Week 16 (12/7) - Workshop Project Three

- **Discussion:** Read through and provide feedback on project drafts (4 minimum) by Wednesday 11:59pm.
- **Responses:** Read through the responses to your work and any questions your received about feedback. Follow up as needed.

>> Project Three Due Thursday, 12/17 at 11:59pm.

* Remember, this schedule is subject to some change over the course of the semester.