Text and Code

English 215-01
Online Class

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Office Hours: Tues/Thurs 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 Posts (30%)
- Media Projects (60%)
Participation (10%)

Discussion Posts (30%) & Participation (10%)

Discussion 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 one discussion post and two responses. With each portion of class, you will find yourself writing several pages worth of comments and posts. 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 and assign them an overall grade (see the guidelines for more information). At the beginning of the semester, I will also 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 10% 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 10% participation grade is designed to encourage all of you to participate by listening to each other, engaging in the each other's ideas, and providing constructive feedback.

One important way to participate in class is to post in the weekly "Reading & Prep" forum during our Monday - Wednesday's reading/prep days. Each week of class, this section of the discussion forums will be available for you as you read through the week's materials and prep for class discussion. Use this space to post ideas, ask questions, share info you looked up related to the week's materials, etc. Posts made in the "Reading" forums are not formally graded, since it's meant as a more informal working/prep space. However, participating there means a lot. It's a way for you to get ready for each week's discussion, share ideas, get help when you need it, and to help your fellow classmates.

Media Projects (60%)

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.)

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](https://mycourses.rit.edu/content/enforced2/539442-ENGL.215.02-Text%20&%20Code%20Syllabus.html?d2lSessionVal=synwa5DLJa567bWulOzoYRtJC1&o...) for more information). The week's materials and assignments are typically posted by Monday at 12pm. Monday through Wednesday are prep days (time to do the readings, post in the "Reading & Prep" forum, and complete any required activities). Then, Thursday through Saturday are 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 also 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.

>> 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.

>> 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 certain extent, some of the 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 Spring 2013 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.)
- Reading & Prep forum is open during this time.

Days 4-6 (Thursday - Saturday): Discussion**

- Initial post (200-250 words) due by 11:59 pm Thursday.
- Two response posts (100-150 words) due by 11:59 pm Saturday.
- You are only required to make two responses, but you are welcome and encouraged to respond further and continue your conversations.

*This schedule will sometimes be altered on weeks when essays 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 (1/26 - 1/31) - 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 and discussion 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 (2/2 - 2/7) - 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 Thursday.

Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 3 (2/9 - 2/14) - Code: Coding & Language

Read:

- Excerpts from Ceruzzi's *Computing: A Consise History*
- Excerpts from Fuller's *Software Studies Lexicon*, "Language," "Interface"
- Lecture notes

Watch/Play/Do: n/a

Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.

Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 4 (2/16 - 2/21) - 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: Be ready to test/check out a few websites this week.

Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.

Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 5 (2/23 - 2/28) - Code: Identity

Read:

- Kolko, "Erasing @Race: Going White in the Interface"
- Excerpt from Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*, "Introduction"
- Lecture notes

Watch/Play/Do: Be ready to test/check out a few websites this week.

Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.

Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 6 (3/2 - 3/7) - 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
- Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.
- Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Project One Due Sunday, 3/8 at 11:59pm.

>> Week 7 (3/9 - 3/14) - Text: Decoding Operational Logics

- Read:
  - Excerpt from Wardrip-Fruin’s *Expressive Processing*, "Introduction"
  - Lecture Notes
- Watch/Play/Do: Be ready to look at several different digital texts this week.
- Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.
- Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 8 (3/16 - 3/21) - Text: Playing With Language

- Read
  - Excerpt from Wardrip-Fruin’s *Expressive Processing*, "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 Thursday.
- Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 9 (3/23 - 3/28 - SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS THIS WEEK

>> Week 10 (3/30 - 4/4) - 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 Thursday.
- Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 11 (4/6 - 4/11) - 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 Thursday.
- Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 12 (4/13 - 4/18) - 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 Thursday.
• Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 13 (4/20 - 4/25) - Text: Rewriting Space

• Read:
  ○ Tentative: Rob Kitchin + Martin Dodge - Code/Space, "Introducing Code/Space"
    (This may be changed.)
  ○ Lecture Notes
• Watch/Play/Do: TBD
• Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.
• Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Project Two Due Sunday, 4/26 at 11:59pm.

>> Week 14 (4/27 - 5/2) - Process: RW/RO Culture

• Read:
  ○ Excerpts from Lessig's *Remix*
  ○ Lecture Notes
• Watch/Play/Do: Be ready to look at/work with several different remix examples.
• Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.
• Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 15 (5/4 - 5/9) - Process: Digital Labor

• Read:
  ○ Ross - "In Search of the Lost Paycheck"
• Watch/Play/Do: TBD
• Discussion: Initial post by 11:59 pm Thursday.
• Responses: Two discussion responses by 11:59 pm Saturday.

>> Week 16 (5/11 - 5/16) - Workshopping Final Projects

• Read:TBD
• Watch/Play/Do: TBD
• Discussion: TBD
• Response: TBD

>> Project Three Due Thursday, 5/21 at 11:59pm.
*Remember, this schedule is subject to some change over the course of the semester.*