ENGL 315-01: Digital Literature
Syllabus—Spring 2017
T/TH 3:30-4:45, Gleason Hall (GLE, BLDG. 9), Room 3139
Credits: 3

Professor: Robert Glick
Email: robert.glick@rit.edu
Office Hours: T/TR 2:00-3:15 or by appointment
Office Location: Liberal Arts Hall (LBR, BLDG. 6), Room 1311

Description
Since the initial development of the computer, writers have collaborated with
programmers, illustrators, and soundscapists to create digital literatures. Following from
radical techniques in print literatures such as Choose Your Own Adventure novels,
reorderable/unbound fictions, and concrete poetry, digital literatures exploit the potential
of digital formats to explore questions of readership, authorship, machine intelligence,
embodiment, and power. In this class, we will learn to analyze and appreciate digital
literatures not simply through their content, but also through their form, user interface,
interactivity, programming platforms, and distribution media. Since digital literatures
don’t always wind up on the computer screen, we might be looking at digital literatures
on cell phones, video game consoles, virtual reality environments, genome sequencers
and physical, environmental topographies – that is, the “real” world.

Deliverables for this class include analytic papers and creative/critical group projects. An
interest in and/or knowledge of hardware, software, and programming will come in
handy.

Objectives
By the end of the semester, you will:
• Become familiar with the history, breadth, and pleasures of digital literature
• Understand the fundamental ways digital literature differs from and builds upon print
literature
• Develop critical thinking and writing skills through the use of traditional and media-
specific literary tools
• Use interactive fiction and web-production applications
• Rule the universe (by being smart, engaged, sophisticated, articulate, and well-
organized)

Required Items
All print texts can be found in the Content section of myCourses or online. URLs for all
online works are listed on the class schedule. You must purchase a few interactive
fictions and games (about $75 total):
Camnizzaro, Danny, and Samantha Gorman. Pry, A Novella
Horowitz, Eli, Kevin Moffett, Matthew Derby, and Russell Quinn, The Silent History
Hume, Christine. Analogue: A Hate Story
The Fulbright Company. Gone Home
Perpetual Testing Initiative. Portal 2

Note: some of these are platform-dependent – it is up to you to make sure you
have access to them.

Recommendation
I strongly strongly strongly suggest that you keep a paper notebook, which you can use
to write notes, great lines from stories, things you see on the road, doodles, and other
flashes of genius. As I don’t do Powerpoint, and much of the important material in class will come from discussion rather than from structured lectures, you will need to take notes to prepare for and rock impromptu quizzes. The notebook allows you to capture everything in a single location.

To-Do List

Your quick guide to deliverables and grades:

- 2 Short Papers: 15% total, 5% and 10%
- Final Paper: 30%
- Group Projects: 30% total, 20% and 10%
- Discussion Posts/Quizzes: 15%
- Participation: 10%

2 Short Papers (5%, 10%): Two short papers (double-spaced) that perform a close reading. I will distribute paper questions.

SUBMISSION METHOD: Uploaded to Dropbox by the start of class on the due date.

Final Paper (30%): A longer paper that performs a more extensive analysis of a work of digital literature.

SUBMISSION METHOD: Uploaded to Dropbox by the start of class on the due date.

2 Group Projects (20%, 10%): Two group projects where you collaboratively build a work of digital literature.

SUBMISSION METHOD: TBD

12 Discussion Posts (15%):
For each class that has a listing of [DISCUSSION POST] in the syllabus, you will write 2 discussion posts. See the document “Discussion Posts on Readings” for details, including a rubric. Obviously, the more time you put into your own posts and the reading of others’ posts, the better grasp you might have on a text, which, in turn, will facilitate discussions and improve your critical thinking. I expect you to have read all the posts, and strongly encourage you to comment on the posts of others.

Of the 16 possible discussion post opportunities, you must write 12. You are awesome if you write more than 12, and I encourage you to write the discussion post before class discussion (even if the discussion post isn’t due until after), but you only need to write 10 to receive full credit.

METHOD OF SUBMISSION:
- Primary Discussion Posts entered in the appropriate Discussion on myCourses by 12pm on the class day.
- Secondary response due by 3pm on the class day.

If you write a provocative and well-argued discussion post, you ensure that you will be prepared for class. However, if the level of discussion is not at a sufficient level or if you are not doing the readings, I will give quizzes. Quizzes take place first thing in class and cannot be made up. Each quiz has the same grade weight as a single discussion post.

Participation (10%): Participation means that you maintain an active, engaged participation in group activities, class discussions, and peer reviews. This is incredibly important – give your colleagues as much attention as you would like them to give to you and your work. You cannot get 100% for participation without speaking in class. If you are shy, please see me in private and we can come up with ways for you to participate.
Grading

After the first class day, I will ask you to email me, confirming that you have read this syllabus and agree to its terms. After that, I consider the syllabus as a binding document — there are no excuses (technical or otherwise) for not understanding your assignments, assignment deadlines, and/or submission methods.

You can always check your provisional grade in myCourses. In general, I go by a fairly standard percentage scheme, as per RIT guidelines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Plus/Minus Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93.00-100.00</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.00-92.99</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.00-89.99</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.00-86.99</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.00-82.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.00-79.99</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.00-76.99</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.00-72.99</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.00-69.99</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;60.00</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, I do reserve the right to curve the grading scheme. What shows up in myCourses is not always exact, complete, or final. Attendance does not get factored in until the adjusted grade, so you won’t see it through the semester.

Late Work:

- For papers and group projects, late work will be accepted the following day at a 5% reduction in grade per day for ten days. After that, you can turn in the work, but it can only receive a maximum of half credit. It is way way way better to turn in a work four weeks late than not to turn it in at all.
- You can turn in late work until 11:59PM EST on the last meeting day of class.
- Late work will not be accepted for discussion posts.
- Make-up quizzes will not be given (exceptional situations notwithstanding).

If you know you will be absent on a day work is due, be sure to hand in your work in advance of the deadline.

*Late work method of distribution: Any late work must be uploaded to the appropriate Dropbox. It’s also helpful if you email me so that I know you have uploaded the late work to the Dropbox.*

Attendance

While you do not gain points for attendance, you can lose points. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. You must initial this sheet (or I will mark it myself). After three absences (barring emergency), I will drop your final grade by 2 points, with each successive absence counting as a ½ percentage point from your final grade. Late arrival to class counts as half an absence.

Feedback

You can expect the following feedback in this class:

- I will give extensive written feedback on your short papers and some basic feedback on the rough draft of your longer paper.
- I will read your discussion posts and give occasional comments. You can assume your comments fulfill the assignment unless I contact you directly.
- Your peers will help review papers and group projects.
- I will meet with groups regularly to discuss expectations and progress.
• I’m always happy to talk/work with you on your writing in office hours. If there’s anything you want to discuss, just set an appointment time with me.
• We will have one-on-one meetings to discuss your first short paper and initial discussion posts.
• I try very, very hard to return papers within two weeks.

**Contacting Me/Confusion?**

If you are confused about an assignment or have missed a class, please, please check the syllabus, myCourses, and the class schedule – I try to make class documents as comprehensive as possible.

If you can’t find the answer, ask one of your classmates.

If you have a logistical question, such as a clarification about an assignment, please make liberal use of the [Clarification Question Discussion](#) area in MyCourses.

Tip: subscribe to the Clarification Question Discussion area so that you will receive notifications about responses.

If, after all that, you still can’t locate an answer or need clarification, or if it’s private, please feel free to email me at robert.glick@rit.edu. I try to return emails in 24 hours on weekdays. Weekends take me a little longer, as I do occasionally leave my house for ramen and rubber bands.

**In the Class**

Please turn your phone off before class. iPads, tamagotchi, beepers, laptops, tablets – all verboten. I start on time, so please be on time – I go through all logistics and attendance at the very start of class, so if you’re late, you will miss vital information.

I realize that this is a class on digital literature, most of which is available online. Having said that, I find that the class works best when we are all looking at the same page, on the same screen, rather than each student looking at his/her/their individual laptop or smartphone.

You may need your electronic devices for group projects. I will let you know when you can bring in your own devices.

In the first three weeks, we’re reading some print literature. **You must print out hard copies of these stories.** You might be wondering: Where can I print? Each college has a lab where you can print a certain number of copies. The library also provides printing services for a small fee.

**NOTE:** Printing at the last minute/printing problems beyond your control account for 72.43% of all late work.

**Course Content**

We will be reading and discussing stories that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I’d be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

If you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion you may always do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.
Names And Pronouns

If you would like to be called by a specific name and/or pronoun, please let me know.

Ethics and Plagiarism

Students must complete their own, original work. Plagiarism is against university standards, and can result in a failing grade for an assignment or for the entire class. Here’s the university definition of plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the representation of others’ ideas as one’s own without giving proper credit to the original author or authors. Plagiarism occurs when a student copies direct phrases from a text (e.g., books, journals, internet) and does not provide quotation marks, or paraphrases or summarizes those ideas without giving credit to the author or authors. In all cases, if such information is not properly and accurately documented with appropriate credit given, then the student is guilty of plagiarism.

The RIT definition of academic dishonesty can be found at http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d080.

Remember: giving an author proper credit is a great way to respect his/her/their hard work.
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Change Log:
Due dates for all assignments (reading, exercises, writings) are binding UNLESS I explicitly note a change in class and on myCourses. With each change, I will publish the update on the myCourses class home page. I will also update this document, change the version/date modified, and re-upload it to myCourses.

Current Version: 1.0
Date Last Modified: 1/24/17
1/24/17 1.0 initial upload to myCourses

How Much Time Should I Spend “Reading”? Since we can’t easily talk about reading a digital text in terms of page or word count, we need new metrics. I will let you know how much I expect you to read – it could be an entire piece or part of a piece; it could be a length of time reading and re-reading. In general, I expect you to read (and, sometimes, re-read) for two hours, with another 30 minutes to write your discussion post and 30 minutes to read / think about / comment on the posts of others – which makes for three hours of general preparation per class.

Key to Assignments:
DP=Discussion Post
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>In Class</th>
<th>Due On This Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan. 24</td>
<td>Course Syllabus and Schedule Conventions of Print</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>Read: Jorge Luis Borges, “The Garden of Forking Paths” (1941)</td>
<td>DP1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read: Albert Sheen, “How to Do a Close Reading”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan. 31</td>
<td>Read: Jennifer Egan, “Black Box” (2012)</td>
<td>DP2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read: Purdue Online Reading Lab, “Literary Theory and Schools of Criticism” (<a href="https://owlenglish.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/1/">https://owlenglish.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/1/</a>)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Read: N. Katherine Hayles, “Print is Flat, Code is Deep”</td>
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<td>DP5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read: Nick Montfort, <em>Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction</em> (excerpts)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>DP10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 13 – 17 DO NOT COME TO CLASS**

<p>| 8    | Mar. 21 | <em>Analogue</em>, cont.                                                        |                  |
|      | Mar. 23 | <em>Twine</em> Workshop                                                        |                  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mar. 28</td>
<td>Group Work – Interactive Fiction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar. 30</td>
<td>Group Presentations – Interactive Fiction</td>
<td>Group Assignment 1 Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10   | Apr. 4  | Read: Rita Raley, “Interferences: [Net.Writing] and the Practice of Codework”  
([http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/memmott_lexia_to_perplexia/index.html](http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/memmott_lexia_to_perplexia/index.html)) | DP11 |
([http://agrippa/english.ucsb.edu/](http://agrippa/english.ucsb.edu/)) | DP13 |
([http://www.gonehomegame.com](http://www.gonehomegame.com)) | Group Assignment 2 Due  
DP15 |
|      | Apr. 20 | *Gone Home*, cont. |  |
([http://www.thinkwithportals.com/](http://www.thinkwithportals.com/)) | DP16 |
|      | Apr. 27 | *Portal 2*, cont. |  |
| 14   | May 2   | Group Work |  |
|      | May 4   | Group Work |  |
| 15   | May 9   | Group Work |  |
|      | May 11  | Group Work |  |
| 15-19 May | FINALS WEEK  
DONOTCOMETOCLASS  
THEREISNOCLASS  
THEREISNOFINALEXAM | 5-7 Page Paper Due in Dropbox May 16, 11:59PM EST |