Course Description: Attention is given to technical and professional writing for digital media and networked environments using ethnographic approaches. Students will conduct ethnographic research related to writing and communication in digital environments. Emphasizes theoretical as well as practical concepts. Satisfies university computer literacy requirement.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of courses within the technical writing minor, a student will

- Analyze information
- Analyze purpose and audience
- Create rhetorically effective professional documents

21st Century Technical Communication Skills

A 21st century technical communicator creates documents that communicate effectively, persuasively, and concisely. Specifically, the technical communicator:

- Solves problems to help achieve an organizations’ goals
- Addresses a particular user/purpose/task
- Acquires, evaluates and applies core knowledge and design concepts
- Integrates cultural and ethical considerations
- Promotes collaboration
- Incorporates appropriate combination(s) of text or graphics
- Uses appropriate tools/media technology

Digital Ethnography is the application of new media technologies to the process of ethnography. We will explore how digital technologies are being used and how they shape how we make meaning. We will create digital presentations and conduct an in-depth ethnography study of current topics using digital technologies in order to better understand the effects of social media and digital technology on society.
**Graded Activity (20% each)**

- **Understanding Digital Technologies** – This assignment will allow you to explore digital technologies. You will choose one digital technology and do an in-class presentation discussing the history of how the technology came to be, how it is currently being used, and any future uses being developed. You are encouraged to use new media tools for the presentation (not just a boring PowerPoint).

- **Creating New Media** – For this assignment you will work in groups to create a digital essay on a topic of your choice. You will have to gather information on research that has been done on the topic, and you may want to conduct some of your own primary research.

- **Research Project** – For this assignment you will conduct ethnographic research using some application of digital technology. The project will culminate in a research report in digital format.

- **Supplemental Work** – Reading, homework and in-class activities will be built into each major assignment.

- **Class Participation** - I expect students will practice respect and responsibility as a part of this learning community. For each day that you are present in class, if you participate in class work and discussions, and complete work assigned in class you will receive a full 5 points. If you only come to class but do not participate or turn in your work, you may receive only 1 point. If you are active in class and complete the then you will get full credit.

Here are some things you can do to exhibit an attitude of respect and responsibility:

- Be on time
- Come to class every day
- Come to class prepared
- Respect other classmates by watching what you say
- Give your attention to the discussion and whoever is speaking
- Add your opinions to/participate in the discussion
- Complete work on time
- Check the assignments before class every day
- Be helpful to other students
- Don't be playing on the computer while the teacher or other students are talking
- Stay focused and stay connected.
- Keep up with your assignments and your grades. It is not the teacher's responsibility to tell you what you have or haven't turned in. Your grades will be available of WebCT so all you have to do is regularly check to make sure you have grades posted for all work.
- If you miss class, check the online schedule and check with a classmate before the next class period so that you can complete the missed work in a timely manner and not get behind.

**Policies**

**Late work** will not be accepted without prior approval. Prior approval means that you have contacted me within an appropriate amount of time. Prior approval does not mean that you call or email at the last minute to tell me something else has come up. I also will not accept any work for major projects that I have not seen drafts of over the course of the semester. In other words, if you turn in a major project at the end of the semester on the day it is due and I have never seen any of the work prior to that time, I will not accept it. I will not accept any of the homework assignments late. If you do not get the work turned in when it is due at the beginning of class you will not receive credit for that work. As long as you turn your work in on time, you will be given opportunities to rewrite any work that needs extra attention, so turning...
your work in on time works very much to your advantage.

**Plagiarism** should not be a part of your writing practices. You will be encouraged to rewrite any documents that you need help with. Most often the issue is not that a student is wanting to steal another’s work, but rather a lack of experience in how best to incorporate the discussions of others in their own writing. Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor if you feel you need extra assistance in this area. In general terms, students are expected to "demonstrate a high level of maturity, self-direction and ability to manage their own affairs" and to "conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty." Instances of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi General Academic Policies and Regulations as listed in the current catalog.

**Attendance and tardiness** can affect your final grade. If you miss more than 3 class meetings (2 for summer, night and graduate courses) I will deduct up to one full grade from your final grade. Save your absences for important things that come up, things you have no control over. This does not mean that you should schedule other appointments during class. If you do need to miss class for an appropriate reason, please let me know as soon as possible.

### Required Statements

- **Notice to Students with Disabilities:** Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Room 116 Corpus Christi Hall, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

- **Reminder to English Majors:** As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

- **Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

- **Grade Appeal Process.** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
Supplies

- Thumb Drive to save computer files.

Texts/Readings

- *Technologies of Wonder: Rhetorical Practice in a Digital World* by Susan H. Delagrange (available free online)
- And other assigned readings.

Provisional Course Outline

Week 1

- Review Syllabus

Understanding Digital Technologies

Week 2

- [http://susancato.com/tag/digital-ethnography/](http://susancato.com/tag/digital-ethnography/) - In this presentation, Dr. Michael Wesch (Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology and Digital Ethnography @ Kansas State University) explores the history and future of “whatever” and its relationship to how the online world is changing us, how we relate to each other, and what we are all going to do about it.
- Read Chapter 1 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard

Week 3

- Read Chapter 2 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard
- Look at [http://facebookstories.com/](http://facebookstories.com/) - People using Facebook in extraordinary ways and in groups discuss the elements of digital technologies represented in this source.

Week 4

- Read Chapter 3 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard
- Digital Technology Presentations
- Look at [http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html](http://www.rebeccablood.net/essays/weblog_history.html) and [http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/](http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/) and in groups discuss the elements of digital technologies represented in this source.

Week 5

- Read Chapter 4 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard
- Digital Technology Presentations
Week 6
- Read Chapter 5 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard
- Digital Technology Presentations

Creating New Media

Week 7
- View [http://mediatedcultures.net/](http://mediatedcultures.net/) Professor Michael Wesch on “Digital Ethnography” and write an analysis of one of new media projects completed by his students.
- Read Chapter 6 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard
- Choose groups for New Media project and develop MOU for group

Week 8
- Read Chapter 7 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard
- Turn in group project plan for review
- View [http://viz.dwrl.utexas.edu/node/276](http://viz.dwrl.utexas.edu/node/276) “Google Earth and Bahrain: Surveillance for All,” and in groups discuss the elements of digital technologies represented in this source.

Week 9
- Read Chapter 8 in *Qualitative Research* and complete discussion questions in Blackboard
- Work on group project

Week 10
- Work on group project
- Turn in proposal for Research Project. Must include theoretical discussion taken from the *Writing New Media Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition* and the *Technologies of Wonder: Rhetorical Practice in a Digital World* books.

Week 11
- Present New Media group projects

Research Project

Week 12
- Turn in Review of Research for Research Project. Must include information from Must include theoretical discussion taken from the *Writing New Media Theory and Applications for Expanding the Teaching of Composition* and the *Technologies of Wonder: Rhetorical Practice in a Digital World* books.

Week 13
- Complete gathering of digital information for Research Project

Week 14
- Submit first draft of Research Report
Week 15
• Work on final Research Report

Week 16
• Submit final Research Report

Final – Submit reviews of Research Report