ENGL 5362.001 (Fall 2019)
Digital Rhetoric
Dr. Christopher Andrews

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Office Hours: TR 10:00-11:00 am & 1:00-2:00 pm; W 5:00-7:00 pm

I maintain a consistent web presence and am available via WebEx, email, or in person. I will commonly respond to email requests within 24 hours, but you can expect a response within 3 days.

Catalog description
Studies in the theory and practice of electronic research, writing and editing. Includes topics that relate to academic scholarship and contemporary writing instruction within electronic settings.

Course description
This course overviews digital rhetoric: an interdisciplinary field offering scholars, teachers, and makers an array of theories, methods, and practices for working with digital texts. We will survey scholarship in digital rhetoric and explore the relevance of that work for composition teaching and professions in writing and technical communication. You will practice digital research methods such as distant reading to develop a research project on a topic of your choosing. You will also add to your technical and rhetorical skills to evaluate and compose accessible and usable digital texts, including building your own personal or professional profile/portfolio site.

The course will have a heavy workshop emphasis, and we will spend part of every class meeting working on your projects in development.

Course outcomes
- Students will compose with attention to multiple and layered elements of digital writing conventions and documents, creating academic, expressive, poetic, and other rhetorical texts in a variety of media
- Students will study how digital media enable and shape rhetorical and cultural expression and analyze such expression through rhetorical analysis
- Students will learn research methods for digital rhetoric, including audience- and media-appropriate documentation for the texts they compose
Required materials

- In addition, we will use several texts available for free online, and you will make use of our library collection and a number of open source, credible online resources.

Additional expectations for course materials

- Active student account to access University resources (email, network, library, student support), including an active Microsoft Office 365 account (free from University)
- A plain-text editor capable of syntax highlighting; set up to use UTF-8/Unicode character encoding. Atom or Notepad++ work great (free)
- Firefox Developer Edition (free) for analyzing and testing webpages
- A GitHub account (free) for publishing your webpages to a public server
- We will work with a variety of cloud-based and other software as the class finds its own direction—a spirit of tinkering and figuring things out is a valuable required material.

Graduate student expectations

Bona fide graduate-school behavior is distinguished in at least five ways:

- Students read assignments on time, completely, to the last page, and come to class with serious responses and a willingness to discuss them.
- Students do not assume that an assignment is legitimate only if it is graded. The work is done for its own learning value.
- Students expect to attend every class, and make home arrangements to ensure that this happens.
- Students approach all readings and coursework with an open mind and a spirit of curiosity. They work to understand ideas and texts prior to attacking or dismissing them.
- Students assume that open and equitable discussion is the soul of a graduate seminar. Everyone participates. Rather than expecting the professor or other students to originate or maintain discussion, students take on the responsibility to contribute their share.

Grading and assignments

I will use the following percentages to calculate your course grade, and will use the grading system as described in the TAMU-CC Catalog. If you have questions about grades or grading throughout the semester, please don’t hesitate to ask.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading discussions and course participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-page profile website (HTML &amp; CSS)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical analysis (webtext)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distant reading (webtext)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography (webtext)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
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**Reading discussions and course participation**
Your active participation in our class discussions is required both for your own success in the class, and for the success of the class as a whole. I do not give reading quizzes, but I assign a lot of reading and expect you to be ready to discuss and apply that reading during class meetings. Class meetings will be workshop oriented—you should come to class each week prepared to develop current projects, get feedback from your instructor, and work with your colleagues on relevant production tasks.

**Multi-page profile website (HTML & CSS)**
You will create a professional-oriented profile or portfolio site for yourself. This site will also be where you’ll publish the other projects you’ll create for the course.

For the first iteration of the project, you will create at least three well-formed, valid semantic HTML pages that will form the foundation of your professional web presence. One of the pages must be your professional resume.

Your second iteration builds on your HTML pages, which you will further revise and fully style with CSS to provide a basic typographic treatment and responsive design that makes use of media queries and relative units. You will publish your pages to a server behind a domain name under your control.

**Distant reading of digital rhetoric-related scholarly journal**
You will be assigned one of the following scholarly journals: Kairos, Enculturation, Hybrid Pedagogy, Computers & Composition Online, or one of a few others (I will provide a full list). Working with excerpts from Mueller’s Networked Sense, conduct a distant reading of the last five published issues. You will create a series of word clouds to share and discuss with your classmates, and will publish them as a webtext on your profile/portfolio site.

We will use the results of your distant readings to inform “special topic” days towards the end of the semester, reviewing current work in digital rhetoric, composition, and technical
communication on topics the class agrees upon. You will also use these as entry points for your annotated bibliographies.

**Rhetorical analysis of digital media**

Choose a piece of digital media to explore and prepare a rhetorical analysis of it based on your reading of *Lingua Fracta*. Your rhetorical analysis will be delivered as a webtext published on your profile/portfolio site.

**Annotated bibliography**

Working from your distant reading, you will take a deep dive on a concept, question, or idea that’s interested you and prepare an annotated bibliography of 8-10 sources on the subject. Your annotated bibliography will be delivered as a webtext published on your profile/portfolio site.

Regardless of medium, all projects using research and references are required to include a correctly-formatted bibliography according to current MLA or APA guidelines. Please consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (7th ed) or the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed, 2nd printing) accordingly.

**Late work**

Assignments are due on the dates listed on the syllabus unless for some reason I announce a change or unless you have made special arrangements with me. Work turned in after that time will be penalized 10% per day. I will not accept major assignments more than five days late. Hard drive crashes and other computer problems will not be accepted as excuses for late work. Back up your materials.

**Course Policies**

**Academic dishonesty**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in:

- first offense ⇒ no credit for assignment
- subsequent offenses ⇒ failure of class

**Technology**

As you might rightly assume, a course titled "Digital Rhetoric" is entirely imbricated with technology: the class is about technology, and it works because of, as a result of, and in dialogue with technology. This means a handful of things:
• **Tech happens.** Difficulty with your computer or technology is not an acceptable excuse for late work, whether those are reading responses or one of our major projects. Practice agency by backing up your work, ensuring your technology is updated within your means and the expectations of coursework, and saving early & often.

• **You should learn something new about digital technology.** While I do not expect you to become an expert in HTML5 in fifteen weeks, for example, I do expect you to push beyond your current technical knowledge. The days of separating technical knowledge from literacy knowledge are long past. Ultimately, you are responsible for your command of technology as well as course content. I will help you do this and provide resources to support you, but if you are having difficulty it is your responsibility to a) ask for help and b) look for tutorials and supplementary material that work for you (this is but one small example of an important idea, a “rhetoric of personal agency,” which we’ll talk about during the term).

• **Learn from failure.** A spirit of inquiry and experiment is just as important as particular technical skills in this course. "Showing up" with broken or malfunctioning work is far better than showing up with an excuse, and sometimes we can learn more from your broken webtext than some slick Squarespace module. Your honest effort is more interesting to me than perfect work.

**Social accounts and privacy**

We may use social accounts for this class. These are public accounts, and thus searchable and scalable: you can't control who finds what, how, and where. To protect your privacy you may create a pseudonym or alias any account we use. At the same time, I strongly encourage you to consider the long-term value of establishing these accounts under your own name or a professional alias. Having accounts where you conduct yourself professionally might well be an asset to your online presence, proving to be useful elements of portfolios you might eventually rely on when applying for jobs or schools in the future.

**Disability services**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
**Statement of civility**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high-quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**Dropping a course**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. The last day to drop a class is Friday, November 8, 2019.

**Grade appeals process**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures ([http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf))

For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved
by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in
the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA
Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-
825-3466.

**Academic continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not
be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue
through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be
modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites,
and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus.
However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a
secondary means of contacting each student.

**Course schedule**

Due dates are tentative. All course days will include dedicated workshop time, to facilitate
feedback, review, and troubleshooting of webtexts.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>Intro to the course, Read: Eyman introduction-1; Stolley 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>The triumvirate: accessibility/usability/sustainability Read: Stolley 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Digital Rhetoric: Theory Intro to HTML markup Read: Eyman 2, Stolley 4-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Digital Rhetoric: Method Semantic markup Read: Eyman 3, Stolley TBD</td>
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<td><strong>Distant reading project due at beginning of class</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>Digital Rhetoric: Praxis Accessible markup Read: Eyman 4, Stolley TBD</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>Interface and Ecology Read: Brooke 1-2</td>
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<td><strong>HTML pages for profile site due at beginning of class</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Invention &amp; Arrangement Intro to CSS Read: Brooke 3-4, Stolley TBD</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Style &amp; Memory</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Delivery &amp; Velocity</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Responsive CSS</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>Special topics (readings TBD from results</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Special topics (readings TBD from results</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td><strong>Rhetorical analysis due; discuss and present in class</strong></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>Reading Day &amp; Thanksgiving break—No classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Special topics (readings TBD from results</td>
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