

Digital Composition

Sample Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Overstreet

Email: -----

Course Description:

Our world is increasingly awash in digital information. After more than two decades of internet and mobile phone use, research is starting to emerge about how a state of hyper-connectivity affects our lives, minds and relationships. In this course, we will explore this research, as well as conduct our own.

Students will compose with text, image, sound and video. Each student will first explore their digital environment and create a multimodal “State of Digital Technology” report in which they analyze what they find through the lens of the course readings. They will then remediate this document into video form. Students will later research a topic of their choice and compose a textual essay, supplemented by a short video and data-focused infographic. Finally, they will create a group podcast and a website that collects and synthesizes the semester’s work.

Learning Goals:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Articulate some of the social, cognitive, ethical and political implications of increased reliance on digital media technology;
- Explain what it might mean to be digitally literate;
- Create a website capable of serving both personal and professional needs;
- Use text, images and design elements to create effective infographics and multimodal reports;
- Produce and edit a short video;
- Produce and edit a short podcast or audio essay;
- Combine video, text, images and sound to create engaging multimodal presentations.

Assessment:

There are no quizzes or exams in this course. Your final grade will be based on the degree to which you: 1) complete every assignment as directed; 2) present evidence of sustained effort and engagement; and 3) progress towards achievement of the course learning goals.

The relative weight of each task is as follows:

State of Technology Report	35%
Textual Essay	20%
Videos (x2)	20%
Podcast / Audio Essay	10%
Infographic	5%
Website	10%

Course Materials:

Primary Course Readings

- Byung-Chul Han – *In the Swarm* (excerpt)
- Barry Wellman – “Little Boxes, Glocalization, and Networked Individualism”
- Alex Grech – “Beyond Networked Individualism and Trivial Pursuit”
- David Chalmers – Is Your Phone Part of Your Mind? (TEDx Talk)
- Brett Frischmann & Evan Selinger – *Re-Engineering Humanity* (excerpt)
- danah boyd – *It’s Complicated: The Social Life of Networked Teens* (excerpt)
- Keles, et. al – “A Systematic Review of the Influence of Social Media on Teens”
- Joseph Firth, et. al – “The ‘Online Brain:’ How the Internet May Be Changing Our Cognition”
- *The Social Dilemma* (2020 documentary film)

Supplemental Materials (TED Talks):

- Sherry Turkle – “Connected, But Alone?”
- David JP Phillips – “How to Avoid Death By PowerPoint”
- David JP Phillips – “The Magical Science of Storytelling”
- Tristan Harris – “How A Handful of Tech Companies Control Billions of Minds”

Computers & Software:

In this class, we will use the following software programs:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- WordPress (website builder)
- Audacity (audio editor)
- ShotCut (video editor)
- GIMP (image editor)

WordPress, Audacity, ShotCut and GIMP are available for free, and for either PC or Mac. You will need access to computer capable of running them. Please bring your laptop to every class.