

COMM270, Introduction to Multimedia Production: Rhetoric, Creativity, and Informance Design

Section 001
MWF, 9:05 – 9:55am
Luerssen 120

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MWF, 11:15am – 12:05pm*

Course Description

In an increasingly digital world that expects fluency in the “language” of new media, multimedia production is an essential literacy. This course will teach some of the building blocks of a multimodal skillset with an emphasis on rhetoric, creativity, and “informance” design.

Given that commercial industries often follow the lead of creative innovations, principles of effective communication will be established in this course through interaction with artistic media as rhetorical artifacts. We will survey a variety of texts that span multiple modes of print, video, sound, and web. As we read, watch, listen, play, and learn from works both creative and scholarly, regular in-class participation in discussions of their critical ideas and workshops adapting their crafts should create the academic environment worthy of them. Major assignments will include an argumentative zine, a video essay, a collaborative podcast project, a creative text-based game, and a course blog for regular discussion posts of specific topics.

Required Texts

All required texts for this course will be made available via Canvas.

All born-digital texts we will study in this course are, as of this writing, compatible with current versions of macOS and Windows operating systems.

Assignments

(1000 total points possible)

150 Argumentative Zine

You will create an argumentative zine using paper and print materials to explore how multimedia is not synonymous with “digital.” Your zine should present an original argument in dialogue with one creative and one scholarly work assigned for class: for a total of at least two sources. Its argument should be expressed through both form and

content in a composition of your choosing. Your zine should include effects not easily represented by digital remediation and be turned in alongside a brief 500 word artist's statement.

200 Video Essay

You will compose a video essay in [iMovie](#) to explore your digital literacy narrative—how you have learned about, with, and through multimedia in your development as a writer. Your video should present an original argument in dialogue with one creative and one scholarly work assigned for class, as well as one creative and one scholarly work discovered through your own research: for a total of at least four sources. Its argument should be expressed through a combination of video production techniques incorporating multiple scenes. Your video should be five to seven minutes long and be turned in alongside its script.

250 Podcast Project

You and a classmate will collaborate on a podcast project made with [Audacity](#) to explore how multimedia has positively and/or negatively shaped rhetoric, creativity, and informance design. Your podcast can be either fictional or journalistic in nature, as long as it presents an original argument inspired by one creative and two scholarly work(s) assigned for class, as well as one creative and two scholarly work(s) discovered through your own research: for a total of at least six sources. Its argument should be expressed through voiceover and interview of/with at least each other, in addition to other sound recording techniques. Your podcast should be at least ten minutes long and be turned in alongside its transcript.

300 Text-Based Game

You will design a text-based game through [Twine](#) to explore how storytelling is augmented by the interactive affordances of multimedia. Your game should present an original argument inspired by two creative and two scholarly works assigned for class, as well as two creative and two scholarly works discovered through your own research: for a total of at least eight sources. Its argument should be expressed through both effective procedural rhetoric and hybrid multimodal appeals incorporating text, image and/or video, sound, etc. Your game should acknowledge critical considerations broached throughout the semester as it tells its own innovative story through interactive, aesthetically compelling format—and, finally, be turned in alongside an 800 word artist's statement.

100 Participation

You must be an active and engaged part of the course to not only receive participation credit but to ensure that our course will be an academically fruitful experience. This grade will be gauged by not only your attendance, but your contribution to in class group activities and larger discussions. Your engagement will further be measured out of class by your thoughtful responses to periodic participation posts on a WordPress

course blog of your own creation at <https://sites.psu.edu/>. **To guarantee receipt of a full grade, you must contribute within class regularly throughout each week.**

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

Unit 0, Introduction to Introduction to...

Week 1:

8/26 Course Introduction

8/28 “Backpacks vs. Briefcases: Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis,” Laura Bolin Carroll

8/30 “Including, but Not Limited to, the Digital: Composing Multimodal Texts,” Jody Shipka

Unit 1, Paper and Print

Week 2:

9/2 (Labor Day)

9/4 “The Cut-Up Method of Brion Gysin” (1963), William S. Burroughs

9/6 “[How to make a zine: A guide to ideating, publishing, and distributing a DIY zine,](#)” Rona Akbari and Somnath Bhatt

- **Participation Post 1 DUE**

Week 3:

9/9 Zine Workshop

9/11 “Bibliocircuitry and the Design of the Alien Everyday,” Kari Kraus, et al.

9/13 [Between Page and Screen](#) (2012), Amaranth Borsuk & Brad Bouse

- **Participation Post 2 DUE**

Week 4:

9/16 [The Queer Zine Archive Project](#) (2003), Milo Miller & Chris Wilde

9/18 “[Toward a More Disruptive Approach to Design,](#)” Jason Markins

9/20 Peer Review

Unit 2, Video Production

Week 5:

9/23 “[Animated Gifs: A Throwback to Cinema’s Beginnings](#),” Kelli Marshall
- **Argumentative Zine DUE**

9/25 [Man with a Movie Camera](#) (1929), Dziga Vertov (excerpts); [Un Chien Andalou](#) (1929), Luis Bunuel

9/27 “The Rhetoric of Film and Film Studies,” David Blakesley
- **Participation Post 3 DUE**

Week 6:

9/30 [F for Fake](#) (1973), Orson Welles

10/2 [Every Frame a Painting](#) (2014), Taylor Ramos & Tony Zhou

10/4 Media Commons Fieldtrip
- **Participation Post 4 DUE**

Week 7:

10/7 Video Workshop

10/9 “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Laura Mulvey

10/11 [La Jetée](#) (1962), Chris Marker
- **Participation Post 5 DUE**

Week 8:

10/14 [More](#) (1998), Mark Osborne; [RPG OKC](#) (2013), Emily Carmichael

10/16 “After Digital Storytelling: Video Composing in the New Media Age,” Megan Fulwiler and Kim Middleton

10/18 Peer Review

Unit 3, Podcasts and Sound Recording

Week 9:

10/21 “Sonic Imaginations,” Jonathan Sterne
- **Video Essay DUE**

10/23 “[The War of the Worlds](#)” (1938), Orson Welles

10/25 “[Inside the Podcast Brain: Why Do Audio Stories Captivate?](#)”, Tiffanie Wen
- **Participation Post 6 DUE**

Week 10:

10/28 Audacity Workshop

10/30 “[Post No Evil](#)” (2018), *Radiolab*

11/1 [Rabbits](#) (2017), Terry Miles
- **Participation Post 7 DUE**

Week 11:

11/4 “[Bridging the Podcast Gender Gap](#)” (2019), *Stuff Mom Never Told You*

11/6 “Sounding Out the *Progymnasmata*,” Eric Detweiler

11/8 Peer Review

Unit 4, (Hyper)Text, Game, and Play

Week 12:

11/11 “The Rhetoric of Video Games,” Ian Bogost
- **Podcast Project DUE**

11/13 [Every day the same dream](#) (2009), Paolo Pedercini

11/15 “[Creation Under Capitalism and the Twine Revolution](#),” Porpentine
- **Participation Post 8 DUE**

Week 13:

11/18 Twine Game Jam

11/20 “Literary Gaming,” Astrid Ensslin

11/22 [Queers in Love at the End of the World](#) (2013), Anna Anthropy; [With Those We Love Alive](#) (2014), Porpentine

- **Participation Post 9 DUE**

Week 14:

11/25 (Thanksgiving Break)

11/27 (Thanksgiving Break)

11/29 (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 15:

12/2 “Metagaming: Videogames and the Practice of Play,” Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMieux

12/4 [Doki Doki Literature Club](#) (2017), Dan Salvato

12/6 Twine Workshop

- **Participation Post 10 DUE**

Week 16:

12/9 “Game Design as Technical Communication: Articulating Game Design Through Textbooks,” Michael Anthony DeAnda and Carly A. Kocurek

12/11 Peer Review

12/13 Course Conclusion

- **Text-Based Game DUE**