

# ENG1131: Writing Through Media—Electronic Literature

Section 1363  
MWF, 4; T, E1-E3  
WEIL 408D

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MWF, 2-3 (or by appointment)

## Course Description

Literature as a discipline is often “bound” within a print-based expectation, even as we increasingly write about it with and in relation to computing technologies. In this course, the literature we encounter will not just reside on a page, but across screens, across networks. This genre, called electronic literature, has been developing its canon from the 1980s through subsequent advancements in digital technology, even up to new digital works which continue to be composed today. We will sample celebrated works from the history of electronic literature, including technologically influenced print texts, examples from the *Electronic Literature Collection*, and various digital media extending from there.

As we survey these works, we will “write through media” by composing our own exercises in electronic literature and scholarship through assignments that explore the possibilities of digital media craft. Course screening times will be dedicated to collaborative reading/viewing electronic works, and to workshopping with required software for composition. We will regularly “read together” to emphasize the diversity of experiences interactive texts may solicit, and to compare the differing resolutions each of you may reach to the shared resolutions we arrive at as a group. You should thus gain appreciation for the analysis and composition of electronic literature in its many forms.

## Required Texts

All required print texts for this course will be available through the UF Bookstore in the Reitz Union, or online via [www.uf.bkstr.com](http://www.uf.bkstr.com).

Borsuk, Amaranth and Brad Bouse. *Between Page and Screen*. Los Angeles: Siglio, 2012. ISBN: 9780986176425.

Plascencia, Salvador. *The People of Paper*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2006. ISBN: 0156032112.

In addition to these print works, you will need to create a STEAM account at [store.steampowered.com](http://store.steampowered.com) to purchase these digital games we will be discussing at length.

Harvey, Auriea and Michaël Samyn. *The Path*. Tale of Tales, 2009.

Pope, Lucas. *Papers, Please*. 3-9-0-9, 2013.

Wreden, Davey and William Pugh. *The Stanley Parable*. Galactic Café, 2013.

**\*Other assigned print and electronic readings will be made available via Canvas\***

**All electronic texts we will study in this course are compatible with current versions of Mac OS and Windows operating systems.**

## **Assignments**

**(1000 total points possible)**

### **200 Twine Composition**

You will create an interactive text through the hypertext editor Twine (twinery.org) to demonstrate how to sustain a thematic chain of ideas through non-linear storytelling strategies and electronic platforms. Your work should engage the equivalent effort of **1500** words.

### **250 Scalar Project**

You will create a critical multimedia project through the digital publishing platform Scalar (scalar.usc.edu) to explore how to make academic arguments in electronic environments. Your project may concern a topic of your choosing provided it fully utilizes the potential of Scalar's software, and critically considers that potential as part of your project's scope. Your work should engage the equivalent effort of **1500** words.

### **150 Netprov Presentation**

You and a group member will prepare a netprov (internet improvisation) presentation highlighting an electronic work not assigned in class. Your presentation should be both informative concerning the chosen work and performative in utilizing the hybrid netprov and public presentation formats. Your work should engage the equivalent effort of **1000** words.

### **300 Academic Paper**

You will compose an academic paper that takes up an issue discussed in our critical texts and demonstrated in our literary texts. Your paper should present an original argument that engages larger critical conversations by citing at least *three* theoretical essays assigned in class and at least *three* other scholarly sources found through your own research in its discussion of one or more of our assigned electronic works. It must be at least **2000** words.

### **100 Participation**

You must be an active and engaged part of the course in class and out to not only receive participation credit but to ensure that our course will be an academically fruitful experience. This grade will be gauged by in class group activities and larger discussions, and out of class discussion posts on Canvas. **To guarantee receipt of a full grade, you must contribute within class meaningfully at least once a class period.**

## **Course Schedule (Subject to Change)**

### **Week 1:**

**8/22** Course Introduction

**(8/23)** Screening Introduction

**8/24** “Electronic Literature: What is It?”, N. Katherine Hayles

**8/26** *The Jew’s Daughter*, Judd Morrissey

### **Week 2:**

**8/29** ; *Twelve Blue*, Michael Joyce

**(8/30)** *Twelve Blue*, Joyce

**8/31** “No Sense of an Ending: Hypertext Aesthetics”, Espen Aarseth; *Twelve Blue*, Joyce

**9/2** *My body—a Wunderkammer*, Shelley Jackson

### **Week 3:**

**9/5** (Labor Day)

**(9/6)** “Contexts for Electronic Literature: The Body and the Machine”, Hayles; *Separation/Séparation*, Annie Abrahams

**9/7** *Loss of Grasp*, Serge Bouchardon and Vincent Volckaert

**9/9** *With Those We Love Alive*, Porpentine

### **Week 4:**

**9/12** “Indistinguishable from Magic: Invisible Interfaces and Digital Literature as Demystifier”, Lori Emerson; *Up Against the Screen Mother Fuckers*, Justin Katko

**(9/13)** Twine Tutorial

**9/14** *Dakota; Traveling to Utopia: With a Brief History of the Technology*, Young Hae Chang Heavy Industries

**9/16** *Project for Tachistoscope [Bottomless Pit]*, William Poundstone

### **Week 5:**

**9/19** “The Coding and Execution of the Author”, Nick Montfort; *Translation*, John Cayley

**(9/20)** Mandatory Conferences

**9/21** *Taroko Gorge*, Montfort et. al.

**9/23** *Prosthesis*, Ian Hatcher

### **Week 6:**

**9/26** “The Pleasure of the Text Adventure”, Montfort; *Galatea*, Emily Short

**(9/27)** Twine Presentations

**9/28** *Galatea*, Short  
- **Twine Compositions DUE**

**9/30** *Blueful*, Aaron Reed

### **Week 7:**

**10/3** “Of Windsights and Wayfaring: Blue Lacuna, an Epic Interactive Fiction”, Astrid Ensslin; *Blue Lacuna*, Reed

**(10/4)** *Blue Lacuna*, Reed

**10/5** *Blue Lacuna*, Reed

**10/7** *Blue Lacuna*, Reed

## **Week 8:**

**10/10** “Between Ludicity and Literariness”, Ensslin; *The Dead Tower*, Mez Breeze and Andy Campbell

**(10/11)** Scalar Tutorial

**10/12** *The Dead Tower*, Mez Breeze and Andy Campbell

**10/14** (Homecoming)

## **Week 9:**

**10/17** *The Stanley Parable*, Davey Wreden and William Pugh

**(10/18)** *The Stanley Parable*, Wreden and Pugh

**10/19** “From Paidia to Ludus: *The Path*, a Literary Auteur Game”, Ensslin; *The Path*, Auriela Harvey and Michaël Samyn

**10/21** *The Path*, Harvey and Samyn

## **Week 10:**

**10/24** *Game, game, game and again game*, Jason Nelson

**(10/25)** Mandatory Conferences

**10/26** “Generating Tension in Papers, Please: A Case for Ludonarrative Dissonance”, Jason Hawreliak; *Papers, Please*, Lucas Pope

**10/28** *Papers, Please*, Pope

## **Week 11:**

**10/31** “Netprov: Elements of an Emerging Form”, Mark C. Marino and Rob Wittig; *Reality: Being @SpencerPratt*, Marino and Wittig

**(11/1)** Scalar Presentations

**11/2** *Speculation*, Hayles, Patrick Jagoda, and Patrick Lemieux  
- **Scalar Projects DUE**

**11/4** *A Modern Moral Fairy Tale*, Deena Larsen and MaJe Larsen

**Week 12:**

**11/7** “Whither American Fiction?”, Jessica Pressman; *Marginalia in the Library of Babel*, Marino

**(11/8)** Netprov Tutorial

**11/9** *Marginalia in the Library of Babel*, Marino

**11/11** (Veteran’s Day)

**Week 13:**

**11/14** “New Media Objects: The Future of Electronic Literature and Its Influence on Print Stylistics” (excerpt), Brian Tillewein; *Reconstructing Mayakovsky*, Illya Szilak

**(11/15)** Mandatory Conferences

**11/16** *Reconstructing Mayakovsky*, Szilak

**11/18** *Reconstructing Mayakovsky*, Szilak

**Week 14:**

**11/21** Netprov Presentations  
- **Netprov Presentations DUE**

**(11/22)** (Thanksgiving Break)

**11/23** (Thanksgiving Break)

**11/25** (Thanksgiving Break)

**Week 15:**

**11/28** “The Future of Literature: Print Novels and the Mark of the Digital”, Hayles; *The People of Paper*, Salvador Plascencia

**(11/29)** Paper Tutorial; *The People of Paper*, Plascencia

**11/30** *The People of Paper*, Plascencia

**12/2** “The Posthuman Reader in Postprint Literature: *Between Page and Screen*”, Pressman; *Between Page and Screen*, Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse

**Week 16:**

**12/5** *Between Page and Screen*, Borsuk and Bouse

**(12/6)** Mandatory Conferences

**12/7** Course Conclusion

**\*Academic Papers DUE 12/13\***