

ENG 400A/600A

Topics in Writing:

Multimodal Writing and Visual Rhetoric: Text, Image, Culture

Course Info:

Prerequisite(s): ENG 303 or junior standing
Section 1001: M/W 4:00-5:15
Frandsen Humanities 107

Chris Mays Info:

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Office:
Hours:

Course Description:

It is long established within writing studies that what can be considered “writing” encompasses more than just printed words on a page. In this course, we will be exploring this approach, and so will consider writing not (only) as linear print texts but rather as *diverse knowledge-making practices situated in particular contexts*. That’s a definition that leads us to consider writing in many forms: printed, yes, but also aural, visual, material, and more—including hybrid forms that include more than one of these modalities. Many of these forms would not typically or traditionally be considered writing at all, but as we will see, we can approach them in similar ways that we would “traditional” writing, and using similar theoretical tools. As we will discover, we make, transmit, and receive meaning in the world in many different ways, and all of these are related in specific and study-able ways.



This is a typewriter (!)

In exploring these varied dynamics of writing, we will delve into practical, political, and cultural implications of what is commonly called *multimodal* composition. We will study all forms of rhetorical practice (including visual rhetoric), and we will produce several kinds of “writing,” including straightforward written texts, but also involving diverse genres of communication, using a range of technologies and tools—from keyboards (or typewriters) to iPhones.

We will begin the course by exploring the current theoretical foundations of the study of multimodal writing, and progress to a series of five projects: aural, visual, data representation, material/circulatory rhetorical objects (i.e. t-shirts and other material forms of rhetorical transmission), and finally, a repurposing of a previous project in a new modality.

This is a photoshop tool panel



Student Learning Outcomes (as listed in the UNR general catalog)

Upon completion of this course:

- Students will be able to draft documents in various genres that demonstrate clear purpose, responsibility to audience, and adherence to generic and stylistic conventions.
- Students will be able to assess their own writing process and apply alternative strategies to the continued development of that process.
- Students will be able to identify an author's purpose, audience, genre, and strategies of support.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the variety of public, literary, and disciplinary situations in which they will be writing when they leave the undergraduate program.
- [This learning outcome applies to graduate students] Students will present class lessons and/or essays that articulate a critical response to scholarly conversations about writing in specific genres.

While the UNR course catalog describes this course as “Analysis and writing practice in selected genres and themes,” as you should be able to see, this description is just the tip of the iceberg.

Required Texts:

- None to buy
- Other short texts will either be distributed in class or available online

Required Equipment/Technology for Assignments:

- None to buy, but you **will** need to use basic technology to complete the assignments in this course (this includes a computer, some form of audio and video recording device, Adobe Creative Suite or equivalent [for some projects], and basic media editing software). If you do not have home access to the hardware or software required for a particular assignment, make sure you make arrangements to use one of UNR's computer labs equipped with the required technology. These labs include (but are not limited to):
 - College of Liberal Arts Computer Lab:
Ansari 610; (775) 682-8868; clacomputerlab@gmail.com
<http://www.unr.edu/liberal-arts/student-resources/computer-lab>
 - @One in the Matthewson-IGT Knowledge Center, First Floor:
(775) 682-5696; <http://guides.library.unr.edu/software/> (this page also provides a listing of several other computer labs on campus)

Course Assignments and Policies

In this course, you will:

- Read/hear/view/etc a variety of short and longer texts and other works
- Give a short in-class presentation on two multimodal texts
- Take four reading quizzes
- Complete five course projects on and in different writing/communication modalities
- Potentially collaborate on a printmaking project with faculty and students in the UNR Art Department
- Graduate students will facilitate part of one class period, and will complete a written assignment synthesizing the themes and concepts covered in the facilitation (graduate students must individually schedule with me their date of facilitation. The due date for the synthesis will be determined by the facilitation date).

If work is not completed on time—that means at the start of class *in class* on the day it is due, or by email at the time specified on the assignment sheet—it will be lowered by one full letter grade, and subsequently half a letter grade each additional day it is late. As well, assignments must contain all components or else they cannot receive a grade higher than a D.

Grade Percentages

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|--|-----------------|
| • Class Presentation on (2) Multimodal Texts | 5% |
| • Short Reading Quizzes (4) | 10% (2.5% each) |
| • Projects 1 and 2 | 20% (10% each) |
| • Projects 3 and 4 | 30% (15% each) |
| • Final Project | 35% |
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- [Graduate students only] Class Facilitation and Write-Up
15% (this will count as part of the Final Project 35%)

Grading Scale for Projects

The grading scale for the course will follow the standard UNR model. As stated in the catalog: “‘A’ the highest grade, [and] is given for work of exceptional quality. Each credit earned with a grade of ‘A’ carries 4.0 grade points.”

Course project grades may be assessed that fall between letters (i.e. so-called “slash” grades). For example, a grade of “B+/C-“ may be assessed, and would count as halfway between a “B” and an “C”; this grade would be higher than a C+, but lower than a B-.

Final course grades will not use these in between (“slash”) grades, and will adhere to the standard model that incorporates either standalone letter grades, pluses, or minuses.

List of Projects

There will be five major projects assigned this semester. The list of the projects and their due dates is as follows:

Project 1: Working with Sound: Language, Music, and Aural Modalities of “Writing”
Due date: Wednesday, February 17th

Project 2: Working with Images: Visual Rhetoric and Shaping Perception
Due date: Wednesday, March 9th

Project 3: Modalities of Data: Representing Information in Different Modes
Due date: Monday, March 28th

Project 4: Writing on Objects: Distribution, Circulation, and the Materiality of Texts
Due date: Wednesday, April 20th

Note: This project will involve a collaboration with faculty and students from the UNR Art Dept.

Final Project: Repurposing and Remediation: Making the Old New, across Modalities
Due date: Monday, May 9th, by 2:00 pm

Multimodal Text Presentations

As we move through the semester, each student will sign up for a date on which they will present on **two** multimodal texts (not every student will have the same due date for this assignment). One of these texts should be scholarly, and one can be more popular-audience directed. I will explain in class the difference between these two categories, and will distribute information, resources, and guidelines for the presentation as well.

Attendance and General Participation

Per university policy: “It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absence from class. Students are responsible for material covered in class, and it is the student’s responsibility to arrange for the completion of all missed classroom work.”

Per course policy, students missing over 20% of class (6 class periods) will automatically fail.

It should also be noted that missing even 10% (3 classes) will have a substantial influence on your grade, as the work we do in class is crucial to receiving the maximum possible grade. Thus, failure to attend class will inevitably lead to a failure to complete successfully the necessary work for the course.

UNR’s full official attendance policy can be found here: <http://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/3000-3999-students/3020-class-absence-policy>

Public Writing

The writing and composing (in all modes) you do for this class is public; do not write about things you do not wish to be shared. Also, always respect others' work that you encounter throughout this course: even if you do not agree with a classmate's point of view, you should provide thoughtful, balanced, and constructive feedback. In general, your responses to peers' work and comments should evince the sort of careful attention you hope to receive from them.

UNR Statement on Academic Dishonesty

"Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog."

Statement of Disability Services

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations. As well, all students are more than welcome to drop by during office hours or schedule an appointment to ask questions, continue discussion of these (or any other) issues, or to offer comments.

Statement on Audio and Video Recording

Surreptitious or covert videotaping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Statement on Online Course Evaluations

Your chance to evaluate this English course will appear two weeks before the last day of classes in the form of a new course on your Webcampus home page. This new course contains only the evaluation survey. These online course evaluations are extremely important to your instructor and to the Department of English, so please take a few minutes to complete your course evaluation when it becomes available. The evaluation is completely anonymous and your comments can never be connected with your name. Instructors cannot see the evaluation course on WebCampus and will not have access to the contents of these evaluations until after final grades have been posted.

Office Hours

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to receive individual feedback on the readings, ideas, or projects for the course. While I will provide as much personal assistance as possible to each member of the class, in class, there will inevitably be times when some of you will want to further discuss something that came up in discussion or on an assignment. These are what office hours are for, and to neglect to pursue the complex issues we encounter is to miss out on a key part of the course. This is not to say that you are required to see me outside of class—some students prefer to work through the complexities of the course on their own. However, this *is* to say that I fully expect if you feel you could benefit from further discussion that you will come to office hours.

All that said, you should know that the hours posted at the beginning of this syllabus do not represent the only times I am available, and I encourage anyone who cannot meet during those hours and wants to meet to ask me about further availability.

The Writing Center / Academic Success Services

I also encourage everyone to take advantage of the Writing Center to work one-on-one with experienced consultants trained in writing (in several modes). This is no charge to go to the Writing Center, and it can be of valuable assistance in your writing as these experienced writing consultants can offer useful perspective and feedback on a variety of assignments. Your student fees cover usage of the University Writing Center (775) 784-6030 as well as the Math Center (775) 784-4422 and the Tutoring Center (775) 784-6801. All of these centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

And Finally...

Communications from instructor to students including communication of class cancellations, meeting times, or room changes will be done using the email address listed for each student on the WebCampus site for this course.

Course Schedule – English 400A/600A (Spring 2016)

(The reading schedule is subject to revision, though I'll give you advance notice if this occurs)

Monday	Wednesday
<p>WEEK 1: Jan 18</p> <p>MLK Day—no class.</p>	<p>Jan 20</p> <p>Syllabus review/Intro to course</p> <p>Reading for next Monday: Jody Shipka <i>Toward a Composition Made Whole</i> “Conclusion” (available on Webcampus)</p>
<p>WEEK 2: Jan 25</p> <p>Reading due today: Jody Shipka <i>Toward a Composition Made Whole</i> “Conclusion” (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>Reading for Wednesday: Jason Palmeri <i>Remixing Composition</i> “Prologue” and “Introduction” (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: What Is Multimodal Composition? Look at multimodal text suggestions/information for presentations Sign up for Multimodal Text Presentations</p>	<p>Jan 27</p> <p>Reading due today: Jason Palmeri <i>Remixing Composition</i> “Prologue” and “Introduction” (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>Reading/Listening for Next Monday: Oliver Sacks “Brainworms . . .” and “The Key of Clear Green” (both available on Webcampus)</p> <p>ALSO</p> <p>Radiolab podcasts: “Need for Speed” and “Musical DNA” (links are below)</p> <p>In class today: First short reading quiz</p>
<p>WEEK 3: Feb 01</p> <p>Reading/Listening due today: Oliver Sacks “Brainworms . . .” and “The Key of Clear Green” (both available on Webcampus)</p> <p>ALSO</p> <p>Radiolab podcasts: “Need for Speed” http://www.radiolab.org/story/need-speed/ and “Musical DNA” http://www.radiolab.org/story/91515-musical-dna/</p> <p>In class today: Discuss Project 1</p>	<p>Feb 03</p> <p>MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB (sixth floor of the Ansari Business Building, Room 610—if this location ever changes I will email)</p> <p>Reading/Viewing/Listening for Next Monday: Madeleine Sorapure “Between Modes: Assessing Student New Media Compositions.” (link below)</p> <p>In class today: Experiment day—get used to the software and technology in the lab.</p>
<p>WEEK 4: Feb 08</p> <p>Reading/Viewing/Listening due today: Madeleine Sorapure “Between Modes: Assessing Student New Media Compositions.” Available at: http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/10.2/coverweb/sorapure/</p> <p>Reading/Viewing/Listening for Wednesday: Jody Shipka “To Preserve, Digitize, and Project: On the Process of Composing Other People’s Lives” <i>enculturation</i> (link is to the right)</p> <p>In class today: Discuss assessment of multimodal projects: how to think rhetorically—and so, critically—about diverse and hybrid modalities.</p>	<p>Feb 10</p> <p>MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>Reading/Viewing/Listening due today: Jody Shipka “To Preserve, Digitize, and Project: On the Process of Composing Other People’s Lives” <i>enculturation</i>. Available at: http://enculturation.net/preserve-digitize-project</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p>

<p>WEEK 5: Feb 15</p> <p>Presidents' Day</p> <p>No Class</p>	<p>Feb 17</p> <p>MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>Project 1 Due</p> <p>Reading for Next Monday: Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen <i>Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design</i> "Introduction: The Grammar of Visual Design" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p> <p>Get used to (and practice with) Photoshop tools, interface.</p>
<p>WEEK 6: Feb 22</p> <p>MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>Reading due today: Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen <i>Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design</i> "Introduction: The Grammar of Visual Design" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p> <p>Discuss Project 2</p>	<p>Feb 24</p> <p>MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>Reading for next Monday: Kenneth Burke "Terministic Screens" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>ALSO</p> <p>Michel Foucault <i>The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception</i> "Chapter 7: Seeing and Knowing" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p>
<p>WEEK 7: Feb 29</p> <p>Reading due today: Kenneth Burke "Terministic Screens" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>ALSO</p> <p>Michel Foucault <i>The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception</i> "Chapter 7: Seeing and Knowing" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: Second short reading quiz</p>	<p>Mar 02</p> <p>MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p>
<p>WEEK 8: Mar 07</p> <p>MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p>	<p>Mar 09</p> <p>Project 2 Due</p> <p>Reading for next Monday: Lisa Gitelman and Virginia Jackson: <i>Raw Data Is an Oxymoron</i> "Introduction" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p> <p>Discuss Project 3</p>

<p>WEEK 9: Mar 14</p> <p>Reading due today: Lisa Gitelman and Virginia Jackson: <i>Raw Data Is an Oxymoron</i> "Introduction" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: Third short reading quiz</p>	<p>Mar 16</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p>
<p>SPRING</p>	<p>BREAK</p>
<p>WEEK 11: Mar 28</p> <p>Project 3 Due</p> <p>In class today: Discuss Project 4</p>	<p>Mar 30 MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>Reading for next Monday: Jenny Edbauer(Rice) "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>ALSO</p> <p>Laurie E. Gries <i>Still Life with Rhetoric</i> "Current Matters: An Introduction" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p>
<p>WEEK 12: Apr 04</p> <p>Reading due today: Jenny Edbauer(Rice) "Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>ALSO</p> <p>Laurie E. Gries <i>Still Life with Rhetoric</i> "Current Matters: An Introduction" (available on Webcampus)</p> <p>In class today: 2 Multimodal Text Presentations</p>	<p>Apr 06</p> <p>*NO CLASS*</p>
<p>WEEK 13: Apr 11</p> <p>In class today:</p>	<p>Apr 13</p> <p>Reading and In-class TBA</p>
<p>WEEK 14: Apr 18</p> <p>Reading and In-class TBA</p> <p>Fourth short reading quiz</p>	<p>Apr 20 Project 4 Due</p> <p>Reading/Viewing/Listening for next Monday: "Can Audio Go Viral? (Is This Thing On?)" (link below)</p> <p>ALSO (peruse this randomly)</p> <p>Q&A: "Can Audio Go Viral? Sometimes!" (link below)</p> <p>In class today: Discuss final project</p>

<p>WEEK 15: Apr 25 Reading/Viewing/Listening due today: “Can Audio Go Viral? (Is This Thing On?)” Available at: http://digg.com/originals/why-audio-never-goes-viral</p> <p>ALSO (peruse this randomly)</p> <p>Q&A: “Can Audio Go Viral? Sometimes!” Available at: http://digg.com/dialog/why-doesnt-audio-go-viral</p> <p>To-do for Wednesday: Bring in final project topic ideas.</p>	<p>Apr 27</p> <p>In class today: Work on final project ideas</p>
<p>WEEK 16: May 02 MEET IN CLA COMPUTER LAB</p> <p>Work day for final project</p>	<p>May 04 Prep Day – No Class</p> <p>Final Project Due Monday, May 9th, by 2:00 pm</p>