WRA 810

WRITING
COMPOSING
DESIGNING
MAKING

fall 2021 • Wednesdays, 3:00–5:50pm • 222 Bessey Hall and online synchronous
Dànielle Nicole DeVoss (she/her/hers) • devossda@msu.edu
office hours in Zoom or Teams (text or email me to set up a time to meet)
text me at 517-528-2365

OVERVIEW

Writing today means writing, of course, *and* composing, *and* designing, *and* making. These practices require attention to rhetorical variables and considerations. These practices also require attention to technological means, methods, and tools for delivering writing across time, space, and media.

In this course, we'll explore what writing looks like, feels like, and does in different contexts—primarily contexts beyond academia. We'll explore corporate/business writing. We'll research nonprofit and organizational communication. We'll consider writing done through and on behalf of communities and collectives.

And we'll not just explore, but we'll also write, compose, design, and make. We will produce a variety of alphabetic texts using tools like Microsoft Word. We will create slideshow presentations using tools like Microsoft PowerPoint. We will edit and create photo/graphic content with tools like Adobe Photoshop. We will produce video pieces using tools like Audacity and TechSmith Camtasia.

An eagerness and willingness to learn, play, and experiment is required for the course. No previous experience with the software is necessary.

OUTCOMES

At the end of this writing-, analysis-, and production-intensive course, I hope you will be:

- familiar with how expansive "writing" is and where/how it happens and is shared
- well-versed in exploring the design, composition, and rhetorical elements of different types of "texts"
- comfortable engaging rhetorical and technological tools **to analyze** the work that writing does
- comfortable engaging rhetorical and technological tools **to approach** different contexts, audiences, and purposes
- comfortable engaging rhetorical and technological tools **to compose** different types of writing

SPACES AND PLACES

D2L	GOOGLE DRIVE	SOFTWARE, APPS, and TOOLS
- the syllabus (this doc) - link to our shared Google Drive folder - weekly folders, with the week's readings, activities, slideshows, links, materials, etc. - full assignments and dropboxes for submitting assignments	- space for us to discuss and respond to readings - space for us to share some of the work for class - links to readings, resources, tools, and examples you want to share	- you have access to the entire Microsoft Office Suite at spartan365.msu.edu - please consider purchasing the Adobe Creative Cloud ($29.99 for the semester) from https://tech.msu.edu/news/2021/08/adobe-student-licenses/ - we will also explore and experiment with a variety of web- and mobile-based apps

SCHEDULE

WEEK	DAY	WORK DUE		TOPIC
1	W 9/1	*MSU observes a Monday schedule for the first day of fall classes; our first day of class will be Wednesday, September 8.*		N/A
2	W 9/8 class online	01	Ehses, Hanno, & Lupton, Ellen (1988). *Rhetorical handbook*. Herb Lubalin Study Center and Cooper Union.	what is writing? part 1
		02	Yancey, Kathleen Blake. (2004). Made not only in words: Composition in a new key. *College Composition and Communication, 56*, 297–328.	
		03	Alvarez, Sara, et al. (2017). On multimodal composing. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy, 21* (2).	
		04	Houser, Alan. (2017, March). Content development. *Intercom*, pp. 9–10.	

3	W 9/15 class modality TBD	01	"Day in the Life" pieces (choose two to read)	what is writing? part 2
		02	Lauer, Claire, & Brumberger, Eva. (2019). Redefining writing for the responsive workplace. *College Composition and Communication, 70*, 634–663.	
		03	Blythe, Stuart; Lauer, Claire; & Curran, Paul G. (2014). Professional and technical communication in a web 2.0 world. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 23*, 265–287.	
		04	Rogers, Priscilla S.; Pawlik, Lisa A.; & Shwom, Barbara L. (2020). Formal communications' role in knowledge work: Evidence from projects. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 34*, 115–156.	
4	W 9/22 class modality TBD	01	Dush, Lisa. (2015). When writing becomes content. *College Composition and Communication, 67*, 173–196.	text docs, part 1
		02	Jones, Natasha N. (2016). Found things: Genre, narrative, and identification in a networked activist organization. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 25*, 298–318.	
		03	*Before & After*, "Design a Brochure of Squares"	
		04	*Before & After*, "Design a Story-style Brochure"	
		05	Spiekermann, Erick, & Ginger, E.M. (2003). Type is everywhere. In *Stop stealing sheep & find out how type works* (2nd ed., pp. 11–23). Peachpit Press.	
5	W 9/29 class modality TBD	01	Kessler, Molly M.& Graham, S. Scott. (2018). Terminal node problems: ANT 2.0 and prescription drug labels. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 27*, 121–136.	**project 1 due by midnight eastern** text docs, part 2
		02	Beveridge, Aaron; Figueiredo, Sergio C.; & Holmes, Steve. (2020). Introduction to "Composing algorithms: Writing with rhetorical machines." *Computers and Composition, 57*.	
		03	Meloncon, Lisa. (2016, January). Technical communication's role in patient health information and education. *Intercom*, pp. 13–15.	
		04	Cullen, Kristin. (2012). Typesetting factors. In *Design elements: Typography fundamentals* (pp. 82–117). Rockport.	
		05	FDA (2021). Changes to the nutrition facts label.	
		06	FDA (2020). The new nutrition facts label. What's in it for you?	
6	W 10/6 class modality TBD	01	Balzhiser, Deborah; Pimenetel, Charise; & Scott, Amanda. (2019). Matters of form: Questions of race, identity, design, and the U.S. Census. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 28*, 3–20.	text docs, part 3
		02	Frost, Erin A.; Gonzales, Laura; Moeller, Marie E.; Patterson, GPat; & Shelton, Cecilia D. (2021). Reimagining the boundaries of health and medical discourse in technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 30*, 223–229.	
		03	The MSU Brand, "Editorial Content."	

		04	Starbucks Creative Expression.	
7	W 10/13 class modality TBD	01	Johnson, Fred. (2012). Film school for slideware: Film, comics, and slideshows as sequential art. *Computers and Composition, 29*, 124–136.	presentations
		02	Getto, Guiseppe. (2016, January). Helping strategy: Building content capacities within nonprofits. *Intercom,* pp. 16–20.	
		03	Williams, Robin. (2010). Four principles of conceptual presentation design. In *The non-designer's presentation book* (pp. 24–74). Peachpit Press.	
8	W 10/20 class modality TBD	01	Arola, Kristin L. (2010). The design of web 2.0: The rise of the template, the fall of design. *Computers and Composition, 27*, 4–14.	web and social media content
		02	Gallagher, John R. (2015). The rhetorical template. *Computers and Composition*, 35.	
		03	Tham, Jason Chew Kit, & Grace, Rob. (2020). Reading born-digital scholarship: A study of webtext user experience. *Computers and Composition, 58*.	
		04	Horton, Sarah, & Lynch, Patrick J. *Web style guide*.	
9	W 10/27 class modality TBD	01	Pigg, Stacey. (2014). Coordinating constant invention: Social media's role in distributed work. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 23*, 69–87.	web and social media content
		02	Wang, Junhau. (2021). Genre change in the online context: Responding to negative online reviews and redefining an effective genre construct on Amazon.com. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 35*, 297–332.	
		03	Buck, Amber. (2017). Chapter 9: Grad school 2.0: Performing professionalism on social media. In Douglas M. Walls & Stephanie Vie (Eds.), *Social writing/social media: Publics, presentations, and pedagogies* (pp. 160–178). WAC Clearinghouse.	
		04	Bredava, Anna. (2020, May). Social media for nonprofits: 13 best practices. Awario.	
		05	Aboulhosn, Sarah. (2019, September). How to craft an effective social media content strategy. SproutSocial.	
10	W 11/3 class modality TBD	01	Robles, Vincent D. (2018). Visualizing certainty: What the cultural history of the Gantt chart teaches technical and professional communicators about management. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 27*, 300–321.	**project 2 due by midnight eastern**
		02	Danner, Patrick. (2020). Story/telling with data as distributed activity. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 29*, 174–187.	

		03	Sorapure, Madeleine. (2019). Text, image, data, interaction: Understanding information visualization. *Computers and Composition, 54*.	graphics, data displays, and infographics
		04	Gillenwater, Jamie. (2017, March). Visual communication. *Intercom*, pp. 15–17.	
		05	Markel, Mike. (2021). Creating graphics. In *Technical communication* (11th ed.; pp. 294–339). Bedford/St. Martin's.	
11	W 11/10 class modality TBD	01	Garrison-Joyner, Veronica, & Caravella, Elizabeth. (2020). Lapses in literacy: Cultural accessibility in graphic health communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 29*, iii–xxv.	photographs
		02	Abbott, Lawrence. (2020). Tires, cigarettes, tampons, and the gendering of instructional comics. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 29*, 240–254.	
		03	Batova, Tatiana. (2021). "Picturing" xenophobia: Visual framing of masks during COVID-19 and its implications for advocacy in technical communication. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 35*, 50–56.	
		04	*Before & After*, "How to Design Motion"	
		05	*Before & After*, "Make a Theme"	
12	W 11/17 class modality TBD	01	Castillo, Christopher. (2020). Mixing tracks: Notes toward the analysis and design of vocal manipulations in Hip Hop music. *Computers and Composition, 58*.	digital audio
		02	Lambke, Abigail. (2019). Arranging delivery, delivering arrangement: An ecological sonic rhetoric of podcasting. *Kairos: The Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy, 23* (2).	
		03	Mantione, Philip. (2021, August). Digital audio 101: The basics.	
13	W 11/24 class online	*This is the week of Thanksgiving; we will not meet face-to-face for class. Class activities will be online and asynchronous this week.*		digital video, part 1
		01	Kedrowicz, April A., & Taylor, Julie L. (2016). Shifting rhetorical norms and electronic eloquence: TED Talks as formal presentations. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 30*, 352–377.	
		02	Ledbetter, Lehua. (2018). The rhetorical work of YouTube's beauty community: Relationship- and identity-building in user-created procedural discourse. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 27*, 287–299.	
		03	Alexander, Kara Poe. (2013). The usability of print and online video instructions. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 22*, 237–259.	
		04	Hennequin, Dom. (2019). How to create a video: The ultimate guide to video production. 99designs.	

14	W 12/1 class modality TBD	01	Cardinal, Alison. (2019). Participatory video: An apparatus for ethically researching literacy, power and embodiment. *Computers and Composition, 53*.	digital video, part 2
		02	Mogull, Scott A. (2021). Developing technical videos: Genres (or "templates") for video planning, storyboarding, scriptwriting, and production. *Technical Communication*.	
		03	Amir. (2019, May). 6 powerful types of video content every nonprofit needs. NP Source.	
15	W 12/8 class modality TBD	01	your suggestion	activating and advocating
		02	your suggestion	
		03	your suggestion	
		04	your suggestion	
			We'll build our final week's readings together; I hope you'll be willing to poke holes in what we've read thus far and offer suggestions for what we haven't yet considered… but should.	
F	W 12/15			**project 3 due by midnight eastern**

ASSIGNMENTS

note that these are just brief overviews—full-length assignments and examples will be provided on D2L and discussed in class

reading responses *700 points (50 points/week)*	Rather than composing and submitting individual responses to the readings, we will build our reading responses together on Google Drive. I will post a prompt or set of guiding questions or ideas that you might consider as you read for the week, as you respond to the readings, and as you engage the ideas of others. Please plan to post a response by **noon eastern** each Wednesday, the Wednesday the readings are due.
what is writing? presentation *250 points*	Once during the semester, you will find and share a composition that resonates with our class discussions, topics, and/or readings—ideally, the topics and readings of the day your presentation is scheduled! Plan to lead a 10-minute-or-so discussion of the composition.
what is writing? v.1 *500 points*	For this initial assignment, you'll compose a short essay in which you explore what writing is.
what is writing? v.2 *500 points*	For this assignment, you'll remix and revise your earlier essay, redeveloping, extending, and recreating it with additional media features and/or using a different delivery mode.

what is writing? v.3	For this assignment, you'll remix and revise your earlier essay and composition, redeveloping, extending, and recreating it with additional media features and/or using a different delivery mode.
500 points	

total points: 2450

points	percentage	grade
2450–2327	100–96%	4.0 = A
2326–2205	95–91%	3.5 = A/B
2204–2082	90–86%	3.0 = B
2081–1960	85–81%	2.5 = B/C

PARTICIPATION

Come prepared to discuss the readings and engage the concepts by writing, composing, designing, and making. Plan on expressing your ideas, frustrations, questions, confusions, etc., even if you're not able to articulate them without some hesitation—sometimes ambivalent or ambiguous remarks spark the liveliest discussions.

AN INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Inclusion and diversity are core values of MSU; the College of Arts & Letters; and the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures. As Spartans, we are dedicated to respecting people of all backgrounds, beliefs, identity status, and political beliefs. MSU holds highly the integrity and well-being of every person in the community. I am committed to providing a learning environment that is fair, consistent, caring, and supportive of intellectual, professional, and personal growth. MSU is committed to protecting the rights of its community members to engage in dialogue and express ideas in an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and exploitation. This freedom of expression does not, however, entail the freedom to threaten, stalk, intimidate, harass, or abuse.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ADA INFORMATION

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity we all bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity across all dimensions, including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that I can make arrangements for you.

If you have any troubles partially or entirely accessing any of our course materials, please let me know and I can try to provide access to you in another, more accessible format. If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability (mental, physical, or cognitive), illness, or other impairment, feel free to contact me. I also encourage you to contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/). The RCPD can help document your needs and provide accommodation support without the need for you to disclose your condition or diagnosis to your instructors. If you already have an RCPD VISA, please share it with me.

CONTENT WARNING

We will discuss topics that can make people feel uncomfortable because of their own experiences with the topic, how the topic makes them feel about themselves, or because it contradicts how they have thought about the world. During the course of this semester, we may discuss historical or current events and may experience texts, images, and other compositions that may be disturbing or even traumatizing to some students.

If you suspect that the material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, if possible, please discuss your concerns with me prior to the class in which the subject will come up. Similarly, if we are discussing something in class and you feel the need to turn off your video/audio or to step outside during a class discussion, you may always do so without academic penalty.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN A TIME OF COVID

All students and campus employees must follow university health directives. If those directives change during the semester, I will be sure to share them with the class so we can discuss what the changes mean for our course.

When we meet in-person/face-to-face, masks will be necessary, as masks are required (regardless of vaccination status) in all indoor spaces on campus, including our classroom. Please be sure to wear a mask (not a bandana or scarf) that completely covers both your nose and mouth. Per MSU's "Together We Will" guidelines (https://msu.edu/together-we-will/faqs/), "a student who refuses to wear a mask even after being asked is considered a disruptive student and should be asked to leave the classroom. The conduct process for a student who disrupts the class by refusing to wear a mask is the same process that is used for any other disruptive student."

If you test positive for COVID-19, are not feeling well, or if you have been exposed to COVID, please stay home and contact MSU's COVID-19 hotline at 855-958-2678. If you have questions about how MSU is responding to COVID-19, please refer to https://msu.edu/together-we-will/faqs/

If you will miss class, please alert me immediately. I will keep you up-to-date regarding missed assignments and/or help you to catch up once you are well, have had the requisite number of negative COVID tests, and/or have quarantined for the CDC-required minimum number of days. I am also willing to schedule a catch-up meeting with you online or by phone, when and as you are able.

BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT AND HELP

If you experience difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, please contact your academic advisor for support. If you are experiencing any other challenges with basic needs, please contact me and I will work to connect you with any resources that I may have access to.

MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY

As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for students and for the campus as a whole. As a member of the university community, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, please see https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/

MSU LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg–Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan's twelve federally recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.