Language, Texts and Technology
Creative Media & Digital Culture (CMDC) 375
6 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 12 - April 27, 2011, in VMMC III at WSU Vancouver

Scope
This class covers the broad amalgamation of language, texts and technology through examinations of prominent, contemporary perspectives as well as via practical creative exercises. We will focus on the maleable nature of texts and the intersection of communication with technology. We will work effectively in groups, building the Creative Media and Digital Culture community. We will do research and create new knowledge. In short, we will be experimenting with language and words and images and other media to discover how and words and images and experiment with language and the intersection of communication with technology.

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Textbook? Final? Extra Credit?
The readings for this course will be provided in an anthology-like packet produced by University Readers, universityreaders.com. On that site, click on the “Student Store” button, register and then buy. This is a required text. Also, a book like packet produced by University Readers, universityreaders.com. On that site, click on the “Student Store” button, register and then buy. This is a required text. Since this class is primarily project based, no final exam will be held during finals week. Any student work created for this class, or directly related to this class, that gets wider distribution could be eligible for extra credit. Extra credit projects must be cleared in advance and documented through a proposal process. The primary extra credit option this term will be the Research Showcase. The maximum per term is 100 extra credit points.

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Attendance
Every class counts. This course meets just 15 times. Students not only are expected to be in class but also to arrive on time, stay the entire session and participate. Some of the assignments will be pass / fail components of participation. If you do them at least adequately, you are participating and get the points. If not, you don’t.

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The limits of my knowledge are extensions of some human faculty -- psychic or physical. This syllabus, per Marshall McLuhan, is an extension of your eye. McLuhan said, “All media are extensions of some human faculty -- psychic or physical.” Image courtesy of “The Medium is the Massage” by McLuhan and Quentin Fiore.

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Attitude
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Because this class is primarily about ideas and thinking and sharing those thoughts, attendance and participation are highly valued and worth a large portion of the overall grade (Woody Allen once said, “Eighty percent of success is showing up.” That seems hyperbolically high, but in this case, 15 percent of your grade is directly related to your “success.” At least in terms of the assessment letter you earn). Because we all have busy outside lives, and get sick, and sometimes just can’t make it to campus, one absence in this course is at your discretion. These are not excused, or unexcused, they just are. You can miss one class, in other words, and still gain the full attendance points. But assignments still are due when they are due, and participation points earned during the missed class are lost. If you miss more than one class -- again, there are no “excused” absences -- the second and third absences deduct 75 points each from the 150-point attendance total.
To excel in this class

Prepare
What you do outside of the classroom in relation to this course brings value to what happens during our group sessions. If you arrive prepared, ready to investigate ideas and engage with classmates, our experiences will be much richer than if you just show up and expect the magic to materialize.

“Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”
- Seneca

Produce
The information monoliths are tumbling. The participatory age is upon us. You now have the power to create your own novels, songs, videos, etc., aided by the professional tools in our labs. You then can distribute your intellectual output digitally worldwide at virtually no cost. What are you going to do during this incredible era of creative empowerment? The responsibility is yours. Be productive. Be prolific! The more ideas you try, and honed, the more likely you are to have successes. Don’t just talk about what you are going to do. Do it. Share it. Get feedback. Make it better. Repeat.

“Never mistake activity with achievement.”
- John Wooden

Polish
To be proud of your work is to set high expectations and then exceed them. When you give a great effort, people will notice. When you don’t, people will notice that, too. What else do you have, really, than your integrity, your expressions and your reputation? Every action is a chance to build those credentials on campus .. and in your community.

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”
- Albert Einstein

My teaching style?

The most important element of our “classroom” isn’t the desks or the dry-erase boards or even the walls. My vision of this socially constructed space -- however that might physically appear -- revolves around you, the student, and the connections and insights we can create together in informing our understanding of the field of Creative Media and Digital Culture.

I hope to inspire you to set and achieve goals, to invest in the course in meaningful ways, individually and collectively, within the framework of the overall themes. During that process, I want you to value questions as much as answers, to interrogate our sources, pick apart evidence and question the way digital media functions in our everyday lives. The participatory age is upon us. What are you going to do during this incredible era of creative empowerment? The responsibility is yours. Be productive. Be prolific! The more ideas you try, and honed, the more likely you are to have successes. Don’t just talk about what you are going to do. Do it. Share it. Get feedback. Make it better. Repeat.

“After you climb the ladder, you can throw it away.”
- Ludwig Wittgenstein

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Who are we reading?

Dene Grigar
Director of WSU Vancouver’s Creative Media and Digital Culture program.

Marshall McLuhan
Ever heard “global village” or “The medium is the message”? McLuhan created those concepts.

Kenneth Burke
American who said that symbols don’t simply “reflect” reality, they select and deflect, too.

Ludwig Wittgenstein
“Philosophical Investigations” was picked as the No. 1 piece of 20th century philosophy.

James Herrick
Hope College professor who has written extensively about argumentation and rhetoric.

Scott McCloud
Author focused on art and storytelling techne in comics, including “Reinventing Comix.”

Lawrence Frey
University of Colorado professor who has written more than a dozen books about theory / research.

Hughes / Hayhoe
Michael Hughes, the Society of Technical Communication president, and George Hayhoe, of Mercer University, wrote a handy research primer.

Clay Shirky
Shirky teaches at NYU, focusing on “how our networks shape culture and vice-versa.”

Boitler / Grusin
Jay David Bolter, from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Richard Grusin, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, redefined the remix.

Chris Cutler
Editor of the magazine Unfiled and author of the book “File Under Popular.”

Henry Jenkins
After a decade as director of the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program, Jenkins now teaches at USC.

Eduardo Kac
Multimedia, communication and biological artist who pioneered telecommunications art and is highly regarded for his bio / telepresence art.

Core policies

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY / PLAGIARISM
Plagiarism (claiming another person’s work as your own) / fabricating research will not be tolerated. Anyone who submits false work, violates the academic integrity policy or cheats in any other way, will fail the assignment in question and possibly the course as well as be reported to the school’s administration, the Office of Student Conduct, for further discipline, including possible expulsion. Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university and will be strongly enforced in this course. For additional information about WSU’s Academic Integrity policy / procedures contact 360-546-9781.

ASSESSMENT
A detailed assessment form will be provided for each graded component of this course to ensure our goals are aligned and expectations are met.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION
Accommodations may be available if you need them in order to fully participate in this class because of a disability. Accommodations may take some time to implement, so it is critical that you contact Disability Services as soon as possible. All accommodations must be approved through Disability Services, located in the Student Resource Center on the lower level of the Student Services Center 360-546-9138.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM
WSU has made an emergency notification system available for faculty, students and staff. Please register at myWSU with emergency contact information (cell, email, text, etc). You may have been prompted to complete emergency contact information when registering for classes on RONet. In the event of a building evacuation, a map at each classroom entrance shows the evacuation point for each building. Please refer to it. Finally, in case of class cancellation campus-wide, please check local media, the WSU Vancouver web page and/or http://www.flashalert.net/. Individual class cancellations may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Each individual is expected to make the best decision for their personal circumstances, taking safety into account.

METHODOLOGY
This course will offer its material in a combination of hands-on activities, small and large group sessions, one-on-one interactions, independent study and lectures, all punctuated by vigorous discussions about such material.