Language, Texts and Technology
Creative Media & Digital Culture (CMDC) 375
6 to 9 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 12 - April 27, 2011, in VMMC 111 at WSU Vancouver

Professor: Brett Oppegaard
brett.oppegaard@gmail.com / 360-521-8150 (cellular) / www.brettoppegaard.com
Twitter: @profbrett / @brettoppegaard
Office Hours: 30 minutes before and after each class / or by appointment

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 malleable 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 oral, print and electronic delivery systems can function efficiently and artistically in the postmodern world.

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."
- Ludwig Wittgenstein

Ceci n'est pas une iPhone

It is not an iPad, either. It is a printing of a digital representation of an iPad, and also a remediation of Rene Magritte's painting "The Treachery of Images." Courtesy of Boris Veldhuijzen van Zanten, TheNextWeb.com.
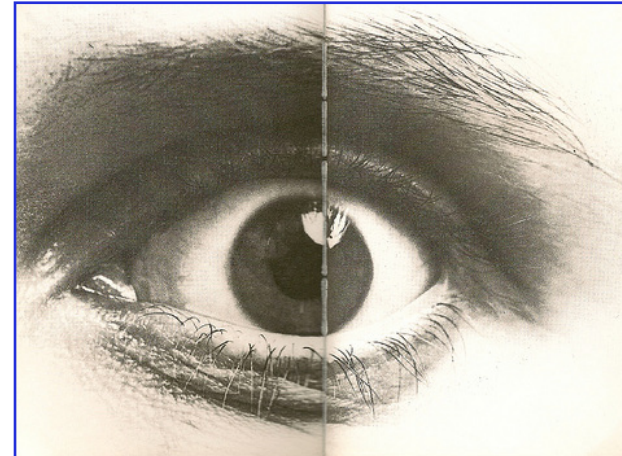
This syllabus, per Marshall McLuhan, is an extension of your eye. McLuhan said, "All media are extensions of some human faculty -- psychic or physical."
Image courtesy of "The Medium is The Massage" by McLuhan and Quentin Fiore.

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. / 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.

Participation

Every moment counts.
Instead of intermittent quizzes or a final exam or weekly blog/journal entries this term, your participation in this class will be assessed continually on a participation/non-participation binary. In other words, you either are participating fully in the class or you are not, and if you are not, then you are not gaining the participation experience of that moment. It is your choice, for example, to complete the assigned readings for the week and be prepared to talk about those, including bringing questions and comments to the group. It also is your choice to sit in the back of the room and play games on the computers. Those choices are not of equal value in terms of assessment. *So each class period, you have the potential to gain 10 participation points, with a total of 150 possible.*

COMM LINKS
lttspring2011.blogspot.com
#wsuvltt (Twitter hashtag)

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. 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.**

"I've found that luck is quite predictable. If you want more luck, take more chances. Be more active. Show up more often."
- Brian Tracy

Assessment
AKA GRADES

Level	Range
A LEVEL	900-929 = A- / 930+ = A
B LEVEL	800-829 = B- / 830-869 = B / 870-899 = B+
C LEVEL	700-729 = C- / 730-769 = C / 770-799 = C+
F LEVEL	699 or lower = F

Jan. 19 [Week 2]
Grades due to the university

May 10

April 27 [Week 15]
DUE: Audio project
Points possible: 125 / Earned: _____
Reading: Review

April 20 [Week 14]
DUE: Audio dress rehearsal
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Kac

April 14
Research showcase - Extra Credit

April 13 [Week 13]
DUE: Script development
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Cutler

April 6 [Week 12]
DUE: Audio script selected
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Bolter & Grusin

March 30 [Week 11]
DUE: Research showcase
Points possible: 200 / Earned: _____
Reading: Review

March 23 [Week 10]
DUE: Data collection B
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Jenkins

March 16 [Holiday]
No class this week

March 9 [Week 9]
DUE: Data collection A
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Shirky

March 2 [Week 8]
DUE: Research proposal
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Review

Meet at Portland Center Stage
Research showcase abstract due

Feb. 23 [Week 7]
Midterm checkpoint

Feb. 16 [Week 6]
DUE: Annotated Journal #2
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Hughes & Hayhoe

Feb. 9 [Week 5]
DUE: Annotated Journal #1
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Frey, et al

Feb. 2 [Week 4]
DUE: Life Map
Points possible: 100 / Earned: _____
Reading: Review

Jan. 26 [Week 3]
DUE: Comic w/out Words
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Herrick / McCloud

DUE: Translation exercise
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Reading: Wittgenstein, Grigar guide

Jan. 19 [Week 2]
DUE: Memorization exercise
Points possible: 25 / Earned: _____
Readings: Syllabus, Grigar's Channels of Info graphic, McLuhan and Burke

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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 bring ideologies to the surface for inspection.

Along the way, we will spend a significant amount of time building our classroom community, breaking down social barriers among students and helping you feel like you are among supportive colleagues, rather than distant acquaintances or even strangers.

Meanwhile, I want to nurture in you a highly adaptive and adventurous and entrepreneurial ethic.

"Every truth has four corners. As a teacher, I give you one corner, and it is for you to find the other three."
- Confucius

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"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."
- William Butler Yeats

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"Most people are doing jobs that did not exist when they were born. The most important skill determining a person's life pattern has already become the ability to learn new skills, to take in new concepts, to assess new situations, to deal with the unexpected. This will be increasingly true in the future: The competitive ability is the ability to learn."
- Seymour Papert

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"After you climb the ladder, you can throw it away."
- Ludwig Wittgenstein
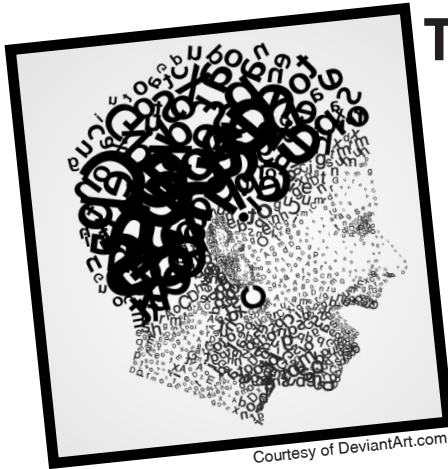
Courtesy of DeviantArt.com

CLASS-RELATED* use of electronic devices *is encouraged

"We open our mouths and out flow words whose ancestries we do not even know. We are walking lexicons. In a single sentence of idle chatter, we preserve Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Norse; we carry a museum inside our heads, each day we commemorate peoples of whom we have never heard."
- Penelope Lively in "Moon Tiger"

This syllabus is a living document, meaning dates, assignments and other information could change, depending on the flow of the course.

Can you solve this word puzzle?

This "Kryptos" sculpture, at CIA headquarters, has an encrypted message that's been baffling codebreakers for more than a decade. Image courtesy of Wired.

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 hone, 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

Learning objectives

In the Creative Media and Digital Culture program, you will be taught to:

Competently design and distribute digital stories in various media through effective human-computer interactions

Synthesize media forms for multimedia contexts

Employ the principles of visual form for sophisticated image manipulation

Identify and explain key principles of information architecture, effectively manage knowledge for both information retrieval and archival purposes, and evaluate and choose appropriate information architecture and knowledge management strategies for a given situation

Think critically about digital media and the ways in which humans engage with various forms of it

Understand the production and assessment of media objects

Question the way digital media functions in multiple cultural contexts

Recognize various forms of language processing and their implications for media authoring

Appreciate the history of technological development, from local to global perspectives, and its implications for a variety of media

Utilize an interdisciplinary perspective in order to understand the basics of social, economic, and education changes brought about by digital media

Be a practiced and capable communicator in all media

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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 Comics."

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."

Bolter / Grusin
Jay David Bolter, from the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Richard Grusin, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, redefined the remix.
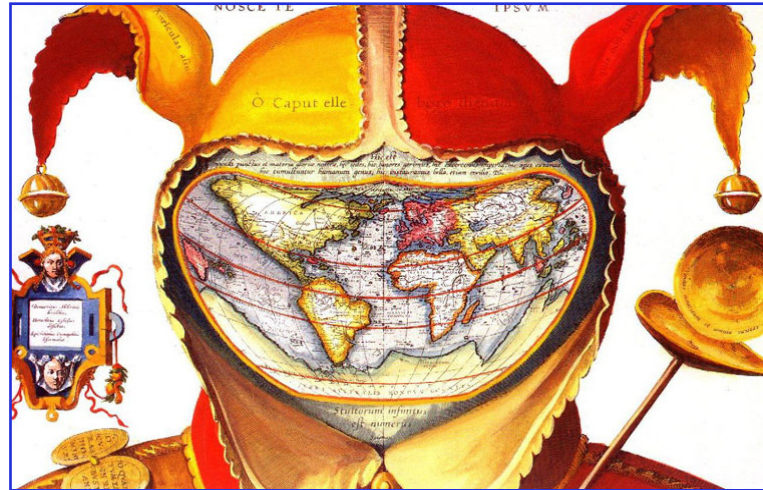
Chris Cutler
Editor of the magazine Unfiled and author of the book "File Under Popular."

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.

The Fool's Cap Map of the World, circa 1590, portrays the earth as the face of a jester and includes such inscriptions as: "The number of fools is infinite" and "All things are vanity: every man living." This image is courtesy of academic.emporia.edu, and more details about this map can be found at: bigthink.com/ideas/24015.

"We will never bring disgrace to this, our university, by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert our suffering colleagues in the ranks; we will fight for the ideals and sacred things of The Academy, both alone and with many; we will revere and obey the university's laws and do our best to incite a like respect in those above us who are prone to annul or set them at naught; we will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of civic duty. Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this campus, not only not less, but far greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."
based on the ancient Athenian Ephebic oath
(original text courtesy of the Ephebian Society)

Expectations of quality and of meeting deadlines

As upper-level university students at a Tier 1 research institution, your writing proficiency by now should reflect that status. Therefore, assignments submitted with spelling errors or basic grammatical errors simply will be marked "REDO" at the point in which the second of such mistakes appears. You will have one week to fix such errors throughout the document and resubmit to receive credit for the assignment, minus a 10 percent deduction. This also goes for substandard components and the like.

Resources for writing improvement include the WSUV Writing Center, WSUV tutoring, "Elements of Style" by Strunk and White, a free version of which can be found here: www.bartleby.com/141/, and Lynne Truss' "Eats, Shoots & Leaves." There are many more, of course. But the best way to write better is to write often, read great writing and reflect upon the gap between the two. Please review your work, all of your work, carefully before submitting it. Avoid mistakes of sloppiness. **Avoid the Redo option.**

DEADLINES
Assignments due by start of class, unless noted.
Late assignments *will not* be accepted.

(Image courtesy of SodaHead.com)

REDO

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 WSUV'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.