Digital Rhetoric and Digital Media, Spring 2017
39083 COMM-6270-01 Wednesday 10:00 a.m.-12:50 p.m., Sage 3713

James P. Zappen
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Course Description
Course Content and Objective: A study of theories and concepts applicable to the study of digital rhetoric and digital media, including traditional and contemporary rhetoric and media theory, the new materialism, place theory, affect theory, text theory, narrative theory, procedural and software rhetorics, and more, with potential applications to the Internet of Things (IoT), Location-Based Services (LBS), social media, writing and composition, technical communication, games and simulations, literature and film, and much more. An examination of the uses of verbal, visual, material, and affective communication for the purposes of persuasion, negotiation, mutual accommodation, and the creation of individual and community identities. A reading of selected theories and applications and the development of individual projects in the analysis, design, and/or assessment of new digital-media artifacts and applications, with regular discussions, oral presentations, and written reports.

Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the course, PhD students will have:

- Read key texts in digital rhetoric/digital media in preparation for qualifying exams and/or professional publications and presentations
- Developed an understanding of theories and methods for the study of digital media and practice by applying them to the design and/or analysis of digital-media objects
- Prepared one or more papers suitable for conference presentation and/or journal submission

Students will receive timely written responses to each writing assignment, with grades, via email.

Course Procedures and Requirements
Required Text: None.

Class Readings: Available in .pdf via LMS

Class Discussions and Presentations: Please be careful when moving about the classroom so that you do not damage your laptops and other mobile devices and do not injure yourself or others.

Institute Review Board: Institute Review Board (IRB) approval is required for all research with human subjects with potential for publications, conference papers, or other public presentations: http://research.rpi.edu/compliance/irb

Learning Management System: https://lms9.rpi.edu/

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Jan.  18  Introduction to Digital Rhetoric/Digital Media
        Course Overview
        Introduction to Media Theory 1 and 2
        Self-Introductions

25  The New Materialism: Martin Heidegger and Karen Barad
        Discussion of Assigned Reading
        Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings
        Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 1

Feb.  1  Place Theory 1: Bruno Latour and Michel de Certeau
        Discussion of Assigned Reading
        Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings
        Presentation and Discussion of Ideas for Conference Paper 1
        Due: Idea for Conference Paper 1
        Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 2

8  Place Theory 2: The Internet of Things and Location-Based Services (LBS)
        Required Reading: Finn Arne Jørgensen, “The Internet of Things,” in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*; Adriana de Souza e Silva and Jordan Frith, *Mobile Interfaces in Public Spaces*, Chapter 3, “From Voice to Location”; and Illustrations (with Caution)
        Reading Quiz 1 (2 points)
        Discussion of Assigned Reading
        Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings
        Presentation and Discussion of Abstract and Preview of Conference Paper 1
        Preview and Discussion of Conference Paper 1
        Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 3 and Abstract of Conference Paper 1
15  Rhetorical Theory: Aristotle on Rhetoric and Kenneth Burke on Rhetoric, Identification, and Dialectical-Rhetorical Transcendence
   Discussion of Assigned Reading
   Presentation and Discussion of Conference Paper 1
   Due February 17, 5:00 p.m.: Conference Paper 1 (15 points)

22  Affect Theory 1: Julia Kristeva and Contemporary Theorists
   Required Reading: Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, pp. 131-36; and *New Maladies of the Soul*, pp. 7-10, 172-80; Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, pp. 44-49
   Discussion of Assigned Reading
   Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings
   Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 4

Mar.  1  Affect Theory 2: Affective Networks and Social Media
   Required Reading: Susanna Paasonen, Ken Hillis, and Michael Petit, “Introduction: Networks of Transmission: Intensity, Sensation, Value,” in *Networked Affect*, pp. 3-8; Ken Hillis, “The Avatar and Online Affect,” in *Networked Affect*, pp. 75-80, 85-86; and Jodi Dean, “Affect and Drive,” in *Networked Affect*
   Reading Quiz 2 (2 points)
   Discussion of Assigned Reading
   Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings
   Presentation and Discussion of Ideas for Conference Paper 2
   Due: Idea Conference Paper 2
   Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 5

8   Procedural and Software Rhetorics: Ian Bogost and James J. Brown, Jr.
   Guests: Accepted PhD Students
   Required Reading: Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games*, pp. 28-40; and James J. Brown, Jr., *Ethical Programs*, Chapter 1, “Web Hosting: Hospitality and Ethical Programs,” and Chapter 4, “Database Integrity,” pp. 103-23
   Discussion of Assigned Reading
Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings

Presentation and Discussion of Abstract and Preview of Conference Paper 2

Preview and Discussion of Conference Paper 2

Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 6 and Abstract of Conference Paper 2

22 Media Theory: Walter Benjamin, Marshall McLuhan, and Jean Baudrillard
Optional Reading: Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, pp. 64-69, 172-77

Discussion of Assigned Reading

Presentation and Discussion of Conference Paper 2

Due March 25, 2:00 p.m.: Conference Paper 2 (15 points)

29 Text Theory: Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Julia Kristeva
Optional Reading: Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, pp. 64-72, and *Revolution in Poetic Language*, pp. 57-61

Discussion of Assigned Reading

Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings

Presentation and Discussion of Ideas for Draft Journal Manuscript

Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 7

Apr. 12 Consultations on Draft Journal Manuscript (as Scheduled)

19 Narrative Theory and Digital Storytelling: Joseph Campbell, James V. Wertsch, and Others
Optional Reading: Jan Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*; and/or Larry Friedlander, “Narrative Strategies in a Digital Age: Authorship and Authority,” in *Digital Storytelling, Mediatized Stories*
Reading Quiz 3 (2 points)
Discussion of Assigned Reading
Presentation and Discussion of Individual Readings
Preview and Discussion of Draft Journal Manuscript
Course Evaluation (Please bring laptops or smartphones to class for the evaluation.)
Due 5:00 p.m.: Individual Reading Report 8 and Abstract of Draft Journal Manuscript

26 Written Examination: Digital Rhetoric/Digital Media State-of-the-Art Assessment (25 points)
VCC North, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon

May 3 Presentation and Discussion of Draft Journal Manuscripts
Due May 5, 5:00 p.m.: Draft Journal Manuscript (25 points)

Grading System
Attendance and Reading Quizzes = 12 Points
Reading Reports = 8 Points
Conference Paper 1 = 15 points
Conference Paper 2 = 15 points
State-of-the-Art Assessment = 25 points
Draft Journal Manuscript = 25 points

93-100 points = A
90-92 points = A-
87-89 points = B+
83-86 points = B
80-82 points = B-
77-79 points = C+
73-76 points = C
70-72 points = C-
00-69 points = F

Policies
Class Activities and Assignments: Assignments include readings in digital rhetoric and digital media, with regular reading quizzes; two short conference papers; a written examination on the state-of-the-art in digital rhetoric/digital media studies; and a draft journal submission. These assignments provide preparation for the qualifying
examination, dissertation research, and the development of conference papers and journal publications. Class activities include discussions of class readings, short presentations on individual readings, informal presentations of papers and reports in progress, and formal presentations of finished products.

Submission of Class Assignments: Each assignment must be submitted no later than the beginning of the class hour on the due date listed in the Schedule of Classes and Assignments. Writing assignments must be typed and submitted in hard copy or via email as .doc or .docx (not .pdf) files, in standard format, such as APA (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/), MLA (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/), or Chicago (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/12/) style and/or Chicago style online (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html).

Late Penalties: The late penalty for each assignment submitted after the due date and time for the assignment will be 1/10 of the value of the assignment plus an additional 1/10 of the value of the assignment for each successive class period (or equivalent time period) after the due date and time (that is, 1/2 point for a 5-point assignment, 1 point for a 10-point assignment, 2 points for a 20-point assignment, etc.). The late penalty for the final assignment (the draft journal submission) will be 2 1/2 points for each day or part of a day late. Late penalties will be assessed in points (of 100 total for the course).

Class Attendance: Class attendance and participation in class activities are required. Students who miss class for extended periods of time without permission or explanation will be reported to the Dean of Students Office or the Department of Public Safety for support and assistance, as needed. Requests for accommodations, exceptions, extensions, or incomplete grades due to illnesses or personal emergencies must be supported by written documentation from the Dean of Students or the Dean of the Graduate School.

Electronic Citizenship and Intellectual Property: Rensselaer’s policies on electronic citizenship and intellectual property are explained in Rensselaer’s Guidelines for Computer Use (http://www.rpi.edu/dept/arc/web/menus/ethics.html). Violations of these policies will be reported to the Dean of Students and the Dean of the student’s college or school.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities: Students’ rights and responsibilities are explained in The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities: 2014-2016 (http://www.rpi.edu/dept/oso/resources/judicial/docs/2014-2016RPIHandbookofStudentRightsandResponsibilitiesAUGUST2014.pdf) and govern the conduct of both faculty and students. Rensselaer’s policies on academic integrity are explained on pp. 15-18 and include strict prohibitions against academic dishonesty. Please note in particular that the plagiarism is “the omission of acknowledgement or reference” of sources, whether or not intentional (so “I did not mean to plagiarize” is not an adequate excuse):

- **Plagiarism**

  Representing the work or words of another as one’s own through the omission of acknowledgment or reference. For example, using sentences verbatim from a published source in a term paper without appropriate referencing, or presenting as
Incidents of academic dishonesty on any assignment will be graded 0 points for the assignment and may be reported to the Dean of Students and the Dean of the student’s college or school, with a request that the incident be entered into the student’s permanent record at Rensselaer.

Student-teacher relationships are built on trust. For example, students must trust that teachers have made appropriate decisions about the structure and content of the courses they teach, and teachers must trust that the assignments which students turn in are their own. Acts that violate this trust undermine the educational process.

The Rensselaer Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities defines various forms of Academic Dishonesty and procedures for responding to them. All forms are violations of the trust between students and teachers.

Office of the Provost

Appeals Process: Decisions by the instructor may be appealed through the Head, Department of Communication and Media; the Dean, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; and/or the Dean of Students Office.

Latest Update: 2017-05-10