Note:
All materials for this course are available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact Professor DeWitt to request such materials.

ENGLISH 4569:
DIGITAL MEDIA AND ENGLISH STUDIES

short form content digital projects/
the digital research project seminar

Autumn 2013
Dr. Scott Lloyd DeWitt
Tuesday & Thursday
2:20pm to 3:40pm
Denney Hall 343

Office: Denney Hall 421/402
Office phone: 614-292-4640
Office hours: TR, 4:00pm-5:30pm
Appointments and digital meetings are strongly encouraged
Cell: 614-330-1329
E-mail: dewitt.18@osu.edu
Web: See class Carmen Site

Course materials

Reading materials: Available online in PDF or HTML format
Media storage: TBD
Materials costs: Headphones; batteries; technical guidance.

English 4569, Digital Media and English Studies--in theory and practice

English 4569 was designed to afford faculty and students the opportunity to examine the intersection of English studies (literature, composition and rhetoric, narrative, literacy, creative writing, folklore, film) and the emergent technologies that are used to acquire and create knowledge in the discipline.

This section will take up the study of short form content, a genre whose definition is pretty cut and dried—it exists in relationship to parallel long form content—but whose parameters are fluid and nonrestrictive. Because this is a course in digital media, our primary concerns will be with graphic and moving imagery, visual design, and sonic landscapes. While defining short form content, we will study texts that combine sophisticated digital imaging, video, sound, and animation. Certainly, many digital media texts still utilize alphabetic “writing.” However, these texts resist flat, print-privileged modes of communication and instead emerge as rich, layered, interactive, and dynamic representations of stories, concepts, and arguments, often blended with
the use of the printed word. Digital media texts focus on aesthetics, form, design, and innovative visual presentations. Also, we will explore the idea of “visual rhetoric,” how graphic imagery and visual design can convey meaning, affect tone and mood, and make arguments. We will learn to “read” images, page layout, and screens. We will also study the role of audio in digital media composing. We will pay attention to a variety of audio and visual text forms, analyzing their purpose, intended audience, and structure/navigation. In our journey to get at all these concepts, we will study documentary work and its intersection with personal narrative, the complicated process of identifying, gathering, interpreting, and telling nonfiction stories. We will look at the relationship among the subject, the audience, and the composer while trying to better understand the concept of "craft."

The most significant part of this course focuses on the “P” word: Production. This course is structured mostly as a studio class, where we will be working together in the Digital Media Project’s classroom/lab. The success of a studio course depends on your willingness to use class time to invent, create, play, and critique. I hope that most of our conversations will emerge from our work in the studio in ways that today, I am unable predict. I firmly believe that we cannot talk intelligently about digital media technologies until we, ourselves, compose with them. This is your opportunity to do just that. I will teach you a number of digital media technologies, and you will be able to create your work in the spaces these technologies afford you. Some of you may have experience with the technologies we will use to compose. For those of you new to these technologies, I will teach you more than you need to know to be successful in this class. Please do not let your lack of experience with technology intimidate you. You will have access to cameras, audio recorders, and computers from The Digital Media Project.

ALTERNATIVE COURSE APPROACH: Students from across areas in the Department of English—literature, film, creative writing, folklore, rhetoric, disability studies, sexuality studies, etc.—or in majors outside of English can propose and create a digital research project they would like to work on in the seminar. Students may bring a seminar paper they have created in another class or a presentation they have given that they would like to imagine in a digital format. They may also have in mind a project idea that involves their work outside the university. Certainly, students could also start from scratch in developing a project.

Course assignments

Your work in this class will consist of the following assignments:

**Short composing/exploration assignments.** I will ask you to complete short assignments that will not be formally graded; instead, I will consider them as part of your class participation. These short assignments will directly feed into and enrich our class exploration of digital media work. Their importance to your success in this course and in shaping this course for all of us will be obvious as you progress throughout the quarter. Many of these assignments will be completed in class.

**Reading.** Instead of having you read one primary text for this course, I have selected a number of reading assignments from various texts and will upload and link them to our class Carmen site (.pdf and .html formats, as well as digital media texts). I think you will
find this reading interesting and challenging. Many of the writers make assumptions of their readers, especially concerning their background with certain theories, writers, and texts. At the same time, as you become more knowledgeable about the subject area, you will find these assumptions less formidable (as is true of any area of academic inquiry).

**Individual Short Form Content Projects.** You will compose a series of four (4) discrete short form content projects that will offer you experience composing with a variety of technologies in a variety of modes. I will provide you specific prompts for these projects, and each will receive a letter grade worth 10% of your final grade. These projects may/will make up your final Short Form Content Portfolio.

**Short Form Content Portfolio.** Your Short Form Content Portfolio, the primary work of the course, may/will grow out of your work on the discrete short form content projects you complete in this class. Your Portfolio will include at least three (3) carefully crafted short form content projects that fully utilize appropriate digital media and that are reasonable in scope and weight for a one-semester, 4000-level English studies seminar. The success of your Portfolio will be directly tied to how you think about, approach, and execute each of your three required projects. Your Portfolio will be completed in iBook Author. In addition to the three projects, you will describe, analyze, and assess the work in your Portfolio. Your Short Form Content Portfolio is worth 60% of your final course grade.

OR

**Digital Research Project.** Your Digital Research Project, the primary work of the course, will grow out of your Project Proposal. It needs to fully utilize appropriate digital media and be reasonable in scope and weight for a one-quarter, 4000-level English studies seminar. This assignment asks you to a research project, eventually housed in a digital space, in which you ask a primary research question, investigate that question with traditional, academic research, incorporate primary source material in rich media formats, and provide arguments for interpreting that material in ways that are new, interesting, and engaging to your audience. Your project, when applicable, can also be reflective in nature, meaning that it can explore the intersections of research, documentary, and personal narration/reflection. The success of your project will be directly tied to how you think about your topic and how you approach that topic. In the end, you will need to find the most appropriate forum for publishing your work. The final step includes a report that describes, analyzes, and assesses your work. Your Digital Research Project is worth 60% of your final course grade.

You will receive further information about these assignments as the quarter progresses.

**Class participation**

Whereas I do not formally assess students’ class participation with a grade, I do believe that class participation is integral to your success in the class. I think about class participation in the following terms:
- your willingness to participate in class workshops and complete short writing assignments;
- your willingness to engage yourself with the class reading;
- your willingness to contribute to class discussions;
- your overall engagement with the course and your effective use of studio time.

**Attendance**

Because of how I have designed this course, your participation is crucial. And of course, you can't participate if you are not here. In short, the best advice that I can give you is, “Come to class.”

You will be expected to attend class regularly. Basically, you are allowed to miss, unexcused, four (4) class meetings throughout the entire semester. Unexcused absences beyond this will jeopardize your grade at the end of the quarter. Your final evaluation in the course will drop one complete letter grade when you miss the fifth (5) class period. Once you have missed your sixth (6) class, you can no longer pass the course, and if you do not drop the course, you will be issued a failing grade. It is your responsibility to understand University policies for dropping classes.

Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade; please notify me and provide documentation if such events arise. You must notify me immediately of any absences so that you do not get behind in the course.

**Grading**

I am required to provide for the University an evaluation of your performance in this class. The University grades for final course assessment are as follows:

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**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. Please
remember that at no point during the writing process should the work of others be presented as your own.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

Disability services

The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 614-292-3307.

One final note

Minor parts of this syllabus may change as the quarter progresses. As changes are made, you will be notified of such changes.