

ENGL 137.002: Literature in a Digital Age

Fall 2016, TR 2:00-3:15pm, Greenlaw 301

Instructor: Adam Engel
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Office Hours: TR 1:00-1:50pm and by appointment via email
Course Website: <http://engl137.web.unc.edu/>

Required Materials (available for purchase at UNC Student Stores):

1. *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr, W. W. Norton (9780393339758)
2. *Neuromancer* by William Gibson, Ace Publishing (9780441007462)
3. *The Sandman, Vol. 3: Dream Country* by Neil Gaiman, Random House/Vertigo (9781401229351)
4. Laptop with access to UNC's wireless network and Microsoft Word (available in the UL basement)

Electronic Materials (available for free as indicated below):

1. *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* by Katherine Hayles (UNC library e-book)
2. *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* by Thomas Rickert (UNC library e-book)
3. *Ghost in the Shell* by Mamoru Oshii (DVD watchable at MRC)
4. Various public online materials to which I'll provide links on our course website

Course Description

"Literature in a Digital Age" is an introduction to significant literary works, movements, and debates that have emerged from the encounter between print media and the digitization of literary arts, the humanities, and literary publishing during the roughly quarter century since the advent of widely accessible and increasingly portable computational technologies. We will consider how the visual aesthetics of the digital book have reshaped narrative storytelling, how print-based media persist while reflecting the influence of digital media, how digital copies affect the ethics of intellectual property and authorship, and how new media afford opportunities for both digital literary creation and scholarship that challenges conventional, print-centric boundaries. Some of the works we'll investigate, like Gaiman's *Sandman*, will remind us of the vitality and adaptability of print, while others, like Roggenbuck's videopoems, use technology to push strongly against literary (and broader cultural) norms. We'll explore the evolution of content within these media, and together we'll make a prediction about what the future of literary expression could (or should) look like.

This course also introduces forms of literary analysis. Those forms include the history of the book, formal analysis of narrative prose, elements of genre, and media studies. The course is designated as a "Communication Intensive" (CI) class at UNC, and as such will require that each student make a presentation to the class, compose at least 10 pages of original prose, and revise some of those pages. Assignment instructions will be posted on our course website. The first essay offers a digital curation (or bibliographic essay) option, and the second essay offers a creative design option. The third essay will take the form of a prepared speech, 3 minutes in length (roughly 3.5 double-spaced pages), to be delivered in class.

Overview

Our central questions: How does digital technology, especially the internet and other new media, influence print culture, and vice versa? What opportunities, dangers, and fantasies do these technologies offer?

Unit 1: The digitization of memory, learning, and culture

Questions: How has the rise of digital technology, especially the internet, changed the way we think, the way we read, and the forms that literature takes?

Topics: Definitions of media, new media, analogue, and digital; the internet; "shallow" vs. "deep" thought; medium-as-message; the mechanization of culture; e-reading and the future of digital books

Readings: Nicholas Carr (*The Shallows*); Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"; select articles about e-readers

Unit 2: The ghost in the shell: technology, authorship, and popular fiction

Questions: How have both print and digital technologies influenced popular genre fiction, especially detective fiction and cyberpunk?

Topics: Rare books and special collections (library visit); cyberpunk and digital art; AI and authorship

Readings: A. C. Doyle; William Gibson ("Agrippa," *Neuromancer*); Mamoru Oshii, *Ghost in the Shell* (at MRC)

Unit 3: Visualizing literature

Questions: How is print reinventing itself in our digital culture? How can the digital provide opportunities to reimagine classics and mythology?

Topics: Recent history of the relationship between text and image; rise of the graphic novel

Readings: Neil Gaiman (*The Sandman*, Vol. 3); select chapters in Hayles

Unit 4: Creating surface and depth: poetry in a digital age

Questions: How can new media open up creative possibilities in both poetry and scholarship?

Topics: Literary magazines past and present (library visit); internet and video poetry; recent literary counterculture; digital humanities; digital archives; alternative scholarship

Readings: Internet and video poets including Steve Roggenbuck, Cindy St. Onge, and others; select chapters in Rickert; our own video poems

Final Exam: We will meet during the exam period designated by the University for this course. Attendance and participation in the final are mandatory. The final will be an oral presentation which we'll discuss in class.

Grade Distribution

Assignment	Percent of semester grade
Essay 1 (response or bibliographic essay)	20%
Essay 2 (response or creative design)	25%
Video poem	20%
Final Exam (presentation, scripted and performed)	15%
Attendance, participation, and homework	20%

I will calculate your final grade according to this scale:

93-100%	A	78-79.99%	C+
90-92.99%	A-	73-77.99%	C
88-89.99%	B+	70-72.99%	C-
83-87.99%	B	62-69.99%	D
80-82.99%	B-	0-61.99%	F

Attendance and Participation

Attendance: You begin the course with a participation score of 100 points (worth 20% of your semester grade). Tardiness, late or missed homework, or failure to contribute to class discussion will result in penalties at my discretion. You are allowed one absence (a "mulligan") without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence lowers your participation score by 7 points. **You are responsible for checking-off your name on the sign-in sheet that will be passed around at the beginning of every class.** If you wish me to excuse an absence, you will need to discuss the matter with me beforehand via email or in person, and I will make a decision. **I expect email notification in advance of any absence.** If this is impossible, please notify me as soon as you can.

Late work: If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and submit any missing work before its deadline. Absences do not alter deadlines. Late work will be penalized at my discretion, and I will not accept work more than three calendar days after it is due.

In-Class Participation: Complete any required reading and bring whatever materials (laptop, drafts, revisions, or ideas for discussion) I have specified. Contribute regularly during discussions, and be respectful to me and to each other. This includes using respectful language, taking each other's ideas seriously, and refraining from distracting behaviors, such as falling asleep, texting, checking email, doing work for other classes, or checking Facebook during class. Please silence your cell phone when you enter the room.

University Policies

The Honor Code: You are required to adhere to the University's Honor Code: <http://honor.unc.edu/>. The following plagiarism policy applies to drafts as well as final manuscripts: **any time** you quote from, paraphrase, or otherwise borrow text, images, ideas, video footage, audio, etc., you are required to cite each source correctly in MLA style (or another applicable citation style). Failure to do so will result in either intentional or unintentional plagiarism, which I'm required to submit to the Honor Court. Should you have questions about whether something needs to be cited or how it should be cited and you can't find the answer on your own, always check with me before submitting your work. **I require you to reproduce, sign, and date the following statement on all papers that receive a grade: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment."**

Students with Disabilities: The University ensures that no qualified person shall by reason of a disability be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity operated by the University. In compliance with UNC policy and federal law, qualified students with disabilities are eligible to receive "reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education opportunities, programs, and activities" (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/lds/faculty-policies.html>). If you anticipate such accommodations, please notify

me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Additionally, you may seek out student support services at the Department of Disability Services (DDS) (<http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>) and through the Learning Center (<http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>).

Non-Discrimination Policy: This university does not discriminate against its students or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability. In this class we will strive to maintain an open atmosphere with shared respect for all people. Such respect is vital for your success in this classroom and in your professional career.

Resources

The Writing Center is a free service staffed by graduate students. The Writing Center's tutors won't edit, revise, proofread, or write your papers for you, but they will help you organize your writing, think through your ideas, and improve your arguments. For more information, or to schedule an appointment, please visit the Center's website at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb> or contact them at 919-962-7710. You can also send drafts of papers to the Online Writing Center; tutors usually respond with written comments within 48 hours. Please note, the Writing Center tutors will **not**, under any circumstances, assign nor discuss grades with you.

The Learning Center (919-962-3782) is available for students who need help with basic reading problems, students who are good readers but wish to become better, and students who wish to improve their study skills: <http://learningcenter.unc.edu/>

The Media Resource Center (MRC) can help you learn common software and teach you how to use a camcorder: <http://library.unc.edu/house/mrc/>

Finally, your success in this class is important to me. If you have any situation that may impact your work or well-being, please contact me early in the semester so that we can work together to meet your needs.

Course Calendar Fall 2016

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
Aug 22-26	8/23: UNIT 1: Introduction to syllabus, course website, and central themes; icebreaker	8/25: Carr, <i>The Shallows</i> ch. 1-3; deep and shallow thought
Aug 29-Sept 2	8/30: Carr, <i>The Shallows</i> ch. 4-6, e-lit #1 (Lara Croft Stir Fry)	9/1: Finish <i>The Shallows</i> ; essay 1 guidelines, e-lit #2 (Globebop)
Sept 5-9	9/6: Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"	9/8: Masnick and Shirky; texting and memes; choose a prompt/thesis this weekend
Sept 12-16	9/13: UNIT 2: Essay outlines (in-class); Doyle, "The Stockbroker's Clerk..."; The Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia	9/15: Library Visit: A. C. Doyle Collection, Special Collections, Wilson Library; the materiality of books

Sept 19-23	9/20: Scavenger hunt results; library debrief; selection from Hayles, <i>Electronic Literature</i> (TBA) (e-book on UNC library website); writing workshop	9/22: Essay 1 DUE in class , Gibson, "Agrippa"
Sept 26-30	9/27: Gibson, <i>Neuromancer</i> pt. 1; cyberpunk explored	9/29: Gibson, <i>Neuromancer</i> pt. 2
Oct 3-7	10/4: Gibson, <i>Neuromancer</i> pt. 3	10/6: Finish <i>Neuromancer</i> ; essay 2 guidelines Fri, 10/7: <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> screening (time TBA): either attend this, or see the film on your own; it's available to watch on DVD at the MRC
Oct 10-14	10/11: Oshii, <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> (1995 anime film); AI and authorship	10/13: UNIT 3: Gaiman, <i>Sandman</i> , vol. 3, stories 1 and 2; reproduction vs. recreation?
Oct 17-21	10/18: Gaiman, <i>Sandman</i> , vol. 3, story 3; Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> (optional)	10/20: No class (Fall Break)
Oct 24-28	10/25: Gaiman, <i>Sandman</i> , vol. 3, story 4; <i>Ava's Demon</i> ; writing time	10/27: Twine workshop #1: Orpheus and Eurydice
Oct 31-Nov 4	11/1: Twine workshop #2 and viewings	11/3: Essay 2 DUE in class; UNIT 4: Internet poetry; Roggenbuck, "Why I dropped out of my poetry MFA" and browse e-poems
Nov 7-11	11/8: Screencasting; how to make and export a video with Camtasia; 30-second ad; Copyright, Creative Commons, and the Internet Archive	11/10: Finish 30-second ad; e-poem guidelines; e-poems (in-class viewings and discussion); work on our e-poems in class
Nov 14-18	11/15: E-poets (in-class viewings and discussion); work on our e-poems; presentation instructions	11/17: Digital humanities; alternative scholarship; digital research and archives; workshop e-poems by viewing in groups and commenting on our course website
Nov 21-25	11/22: Upload your e-poem DRAFT to Vimeo and post its link by the start of class ; workshop e-poems	11/24: No class (Thanksgiving)
Nov 28-Dec 2	11/29: Upload your e-poem REVISION to Vimeo and post its link by the start of class ; watch our e-poems; course evaluations	12/1: Class canceled: work on presentations
Dec 5-9	12/6: Final Class: questions about presentations; review; debrief	Final Exam Date: 12/10/16 from 12:00 to 4:00 (oral presentations)