English 875: Digital Ethics

Professional Writing Seminar WF20 (Online)

👩‍🏫**Instructor:**

📧**Email:**

💻**Office Hours/Student Hours via Zoom:** M-Th:

🏢**Office location:**

👩‍🏫Course Description

This is an online course where you will think about terms such as design and ethics to rhetorically examine how individuals and organizations use digital spaces. You will gain practical skills and theoretical knowledge of copyright, fair use, user experience, and usability. Assignments will include an infographic on a topic related to digital authoring practices, a remix project of a terms of service document, and a final project focused on ethical design. Most weeks will include a discussion topic unless a major assignment is due.

✅*Special note:* Our course delivery method will not change due to any changes that may happen to other courses due to COVID-19. The only change we may experience will be due to any changes to the academic calendar. Any changes made to the academic calendar will be shared through email and Canvas. Stay safe.

✅Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will have learned:
- Design practices common within digital environments
- Basic principles of user experience and usability
- How ethics operates (or not) within digital environments
- Best practices for the ethical design of digital spaces

📚Required Texts

This course uses only open-access texts. All texts are shared on our Canvas site and linked below in our course calendar. If you ever have accessibility issues, please let me know. Note: I also created a Glossary for this course. It can be accessed here.

✅Classroom Environment and Expectations

I practice a feminist, critical pedagogy where I find that I learn just as much as you and that I learn along with you. I have a PhD, but I have no illusions that I know everything about my field. I started college as an unsure, quiet, second-generation college student (my dad went back to college a little before I started college). Academia was a foreign concept to me, but I believe this challenge helped me to become a better, more thoughtful member of the academy (or so this is always my goal). When I step into a classroom, whether in person or virtually, I step in with the expectation that I will not have to discipline you. For example, I should not have to tell you to not be a troll. I ask you to respect differences in embodied experiences. With this, I encourage you to bring your own knowledge, experience, and expertise to our discussions, but also to participate in our online class with an open mind. I learn as much from you as I hope you learn from me. I welcome you to the course and I look forward to getting to know you better. Thank you for your labor, and for being here.

👩‍🏫My Teaching Style

I approach teaching from a rhetorical standpoint meaning I work to put the audience, purpose, and context into the foreground of my teaching while also being mindful that positionality influences every movement. This class is online and asynchronous because I want to provide you with the best opportunity and time for engaging with our materials. I will post a video for us each week and be prepared for multiple videos. All videos will be short, as I try not to go beyond 15 minutes (and may be shorter). We will also have discussion posts due each week, and this will serve as our weekly discussions, along with using other online platforms, as we see fit. As we will be mainly writing to communicate, please let me know if something is unclear to you during our class discussions. My goal is to build an approachable rapport with you as people, so if there is any way I can further support your learning, let me know. I love the content I teach, so I hope you gain something from me sharing that content. Finally, I'm not perfect. I know I leave important readings out. I know we don't have time for everything. If you find something that you feel matters to our conversation, please share. I'm happy to read, post, and discuss.

✅How Our Canvas Course is Structured

I have posted a video going over our course design in Canvas. You can find this video under our Week 1 module. It's probably easiest to click on "Weekly Schedule" from our home page/landing page in Canvas and go through the modules week by week. You also have other options to select from our course homepage, such as Discussions, Assignments, and syllabus. All items, minus the syllabus, can also easily be found under the Weekly Schedule in Canvas.

✅Preparing for Class

This is a seminar class in professional writing. A seminar class requires a high amount of reading, so be prepared to read many pages for class each week. Reading these texts will not be like reading literature, where you can read a book a week. Instead I'll try to par the reading into sections as best as I can. A seminar class in professional writing also requires fieldwork. The fieldwork for this course will require you to work on an assignment related to participant experience.

💻Office Hours (Zoom)

I'm available for office hours via the Zoom platform. Office hours are shared at the top of the syllabus. I'm also available via email or Canvas messaging at this time. You will not need to have your camera on for Zoom. If you do not have audio capabilities, we can use the Zoom chat feature or communicate through email.
While I have office hours in Zoom, I will be available in person in my office this semester if you would like to meet in person. If you choose to meet me in my office, I ask that you follow current COVID protocols.

✅Grades and Grading

I grade on a point system. You can view individual assignments and their point allocations in the section below. I try to grade items in a timely manner. I typically give myself one week to finish grading. If grading takes longer than one week, I will communicate the revised length of time to you. All feedback on your work will be shared in Canvas within the document you submitted. Occasionally I may share brief notes in a rubric, but not consistently. Canvas converts all grades to a percentage in Canvas. A = 90% and above. B = 80% to 89% C = 70% to 79% and D = 60% to 69%. I do not discuss grades via email. Instead please make an appointment with me to discuss a grade.

📋List of Assignments

All listed assignments will include their own assignment description and rubric that will be made available in Canvas. If you have any questions about an assignment, please talk to me. Let me know if you ever have any accessibility or inclusivity concerns as you work on your assignments. I work to make these projects flexible for the online spaces we occupy. Details for all assignments are in Canvas.

- *Weekly Reading Response/Discussions:* For any week we don't have an assignment due, you will post in Canvas your thoughts about our assigned readings. I have scheduled 11 discussion posts for the semester.
- *Ethical Term Infographic:* You will create an infographic around an assigned reading covering copyright, fair use, anything else related to our first few weeks.
- *Terms of Service (ToS) Remix:* For this assignment, you will choose a Terms of Service (ToS) document to remix toward a particular audience or demographic with attention toward accessibility and inclusivity.

- ***Ethical Design Project:*** The final project requires you to use terms and concepts from our course to analyze and critique a social platform of your choice. This final project requires you to write a brief proposal and create a video critique. [Link to the written proposal assignment is here. The link to the video critique assignment is here.](#)

✅Late Policy and Extensions

You may turn in an assignment late, but I deduct 5 points per day late no matter the point allocations of the assignment. You are all graduate students and I expect timely work, but I do understand things happen. If you need an extension on an assignment, please talk to me.

📧About Email

I love the internet. The internet can be a wonderful tool. I am usually online (unless my wifi is down, which also probably means my anxiety is high), but also realize I do have two year old twins and a personal life. I am usually quick to respond to email, but if you email me Friday at 4pm you may not see a response until later in the weekend or on Monday. In other words, I respond to email more quickly during the work week than I do at any other time. Please keep this in consideration when you email and the request is very timely to you!

✅The Life Happens Policy

If you are experiencing financial hardship, food insecurity, fear homelessness, or have any barrier that jeopardizes your ability to meet your basic, daily needs as a human, please reach out to me. I will always work hard to find people who can help you, if I cannot help you myself. Finally, please realize current circumstances are not permanent circumstances. You are all brave and smart people. Never give up. Reach out to people who can help. Because of this policy, I've also shared a mental and emotional health policy below. I care about you.

✅Mental and Emotional Health

I care about you as a person, not just because I'm your professor, but because I'm a fellow human being. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time if you are facing mental and emotional challenges and need someone to listen. Below are further resources to help you:
- Prevention and Wellness, ███████████████████ phone:█████████
- Crawford County Mental Health Hotline Number: ████████████
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273- TALK (8225)
- Crisis text line: Text HOME to 741741

Take care of yourself. Take care of others you are close to. Let's all care for each other.

✅Academic Honesty

I expect all work to be your own. Because of the nature of our work in this class, we don't typically use MLA or APA citation styles. In Professional Writing environments, having some knowledge of APA and the Chicago Manual of Style (CMoS) is beneficial, but for this class may not be necessary. I may at times direct you to the Microsoft Style Guide, which we will have some selected readings from. When referencing material, simply link to that reference or give a full title acknowledgment. The Microsoft Style Guide does have further information for referencing, but for purposes of this class you may just link to various sources used. Since I do allow for flexibility for some assignments, if you do create a mainly print/textual document, and wish to use a citation in place of a link, APA or CMoS is acceptable. If you have further questions about style guides, I'm happy to answer them.

✅[Syllabus Supplement](#)

Please review the syllabus supplement for further information about Fall 2020.

✅tl;dr

This is an online course. Best way to contact me is through email. All office hours will be conducted via Zoom. In this course, we will create a number of digital projects and learn about terms and concepts within digital design and media. We will have weekly assignments, but you will not have readings on weeks when major assignments are due. Discussions are mainly used to see your participation and engagement with course materials. Contact me whenever you have questions. Practice self care.

📅 Course Schedule

Changes may be made to this schedule. All changes will be shared in Canvas and through email.

Date/Week	Weekly focus	Assignments due
Week 1: **Aug 17-23**	Welcome Reading: [What is Digital Humanities Doing in English, Chapter 1 *Debates in Digital Humanities.*](#)	● Discussion post #1 for readings due on Sunday, August 23 by 11:59pm.
Week 2: **Aug 24-30**	Overview/Introduction to copyright and fair use Readings: ● [History of Copyright](#)	● Discussion post #2 due on Sunday by 11:59pm.

	[(Wikipedia)](#) ● [Copyright Act of 1710, or the Statute of Anne (Wikipedia)](#) ● [Brief History of Copyright in the U.S. (Copyright.gov)](#) ● [Understanding Fair Use (U of MN)](#) ● [Thinking through Fair Use (U of MN)](#) ● [Fair Use Fundamentals Infographic](#) ● [TEACH Act (Copyright in Online Courses)](#) (University of TEXAS libraries)	
Week 3: Aug 31-Sept 6	Copyright and Feminism Fair Use and Feminism Readings: ● Bartlow, A. Fair Use and the Fairer Sex: Gender, Feminism, and Copyright Law. *Journal of Gender, Social Policy, and the Law. 14(*3)2006. ● Burk, D.L. Copyright and Feminism in Digital Media. Journal of Gender, Social Policy, and the Law 14(3) 2006	● Discussion Post #3
Week 4 Sept 8-13	Interfaces and Web 2.0 Readings: ● Selfe and Selfe, The Politics of the Interface: Power and its Exercise in Electronic Contact Zones *College Composition and Communication* 45,4 (Dec 1994) ● Arola, The Design of Web 2.0: The Rise of the Template, the Fall of Design, *Computers and Composition 27(*2010)	● Discussion Post #4

	● Nehal Shaw, Cross Cultural Considerations for User Interface Design	
Week 5 Sept 14-20	User needs and Accessibility Readings: ● Ethics of Good Design (Dieter Rams Ten Principles) ● Audience, Outcomes, and Determining User Needs (A List Apart) ● What is Accessibility (Interaction Design Foundation)	● Discussion Post #5
Week 6 Sept 21-27	Dark Patterns Readings: ● Design, White Lies, and Ethics (A List Apart) ● Dark Patterns.org (watch video)	● Discussion Post #6
Week 7 Sept 28-Oct 4		● **Infographic Due on Sunday, Oct 4 by 11:59pm.**
Week 8 Oct 5-7	Privacy Policies and Terms of Service Readings: ● What are Privacy Policies? (can skim) ● What should I know about Privacy Policies (Consumer Ed Foundation) ● What are ToS? Familiarize yourself with Terms of Service; Didn't Read as this may help you think of your ToS Remix.	● Discussion Post #7
Week 9 Oct 12-18	Diversity and Inclusion in Digital Spaces: Readings: ● Queer OS: A User's Manual *Debates in Digital*	● Discussion Post #8

	Humanities. ● Clinnin and Manthey, How Not to be a Troll: Practicing Technofeminism in Online Comments. *Computers and Composition 51(*2019).	
Week 10 Oct 19-25	Data Mining Readings: ● Data Mining Explained (skim this; bring what you find interesting to our synchronous class meeting or leave it in the Discussions for this week)	● Discussion Post #9
Week 11 Oct 26- Nov 1		● **Remix of terms of service due**
Week 12 Nov 2-8	Hacktivism/Activism Readings: ● Online Activisms in 2020 Election (Teacher Scholar Activist) ● Digital Ethics, Rhetoric and Responsibility Online. Edited by Erika Sparby and Jessica Reyman. Chapter title: Confronting Digital Aggression with an Ethics of Circulation by Brandy Dieterle, Dustin Edwards, and Paul "Dan" Martin (2019)	● Discussion Post #10
Week 13 Nov 9-15	Racism and Race in Digital Humanities Readings: ● Black People have Always Been UX Designers (UX Collective) ● Gallon, Making a Case for Black Digital Humanities.	● Discussion Post #11

	[Debates in Digital Humanities.](link) ● [Facebook's Secret Censorship Rules Protect White Men (ProPublica)](link)	
Week 14 Nov 16-22	Conferences. Proposal due at project conference.	● **Proposal for final project due.**
Week 15 Nov 23-29	No assignments or readings this week. Enjoy Fall Break and Thanksgiving break.	No assignments due. Enjoy the week off.
Week 16 Nov 30-Dec 6 Dead Week	Optional conferences on final projects. Email me to set up a time.	**Work on your final project. Optional conferences about the project through Zoom, but I'll also keep my office hours. Let me know if you would like a conference.**
Week 17 Final Exam due on Friday.		**Final project due Thursday, December 10 at 11:59pm.**