English 4335: Studies in Rhetoric

Spring 2018, Section 01. MW, 3:00–4:20 pm (3 Credit Hours)
Prerequisites: ENGL 1301 & 1302; either ENGL 2332 or ENGL 2333; and 3 hours of ENGL 3000-level.

Instructor	Dr. Brandon C. Strubberg
E-mail	strubberg@shsu.edu
Office	Evans Complex (EVC), #112
Phone	936-294-3135
Office Hours	MW 1:00–3:00 and 4:30–5:30; and by appointment in-person or via Skype

- username: bcstrubberg

Classroom EVC 360 (the computer lab in Evans)
You will also use the new Iris Technical Communication Suite in EVC 251.

Textbook [Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice by Douglas Eyman, from the University of Michigan Press, 2015](#)

- This text is open access, but hard copies are available in the bookstore.

[Transhuman by Jonathan Hickman, from Image Comics, 2009](#)

Course Goals This course, according to the catalog description, is selected topics in rhetorical theory, style and stylistics, rhetorical criticism, ethical issues in rhetoric, and rhetoric literature. Drawing on classic rhetoric as its foundation, this semester we will link concepts from the nascent field of digital rhetoric to the unique features of reading and creating texts in 21st-century public settings. This course will challenge students to critique their own roles in the production of culture through the many digital texts they encounter daily. Through a variety of hands-on projects, students will realize the "praxis of rhetoric as a productive art and practical art," (Eberly, 290 qtd. In Sheridan) and learn to analyze discursive situations from a variety of frameworks. Throughout the semester, you will work to accomplish these goals:

- Analyze a variety of digital texts using the theories and methods of digital rhetoric.
- Critique the cultural production practices inherent in digital texts.
- Enter the ever changing conversation of rhetoric as a novice scholar.
- Participate in creating multimodal texts for public consumption.
- Produce digital texts as a member of a team.

Course Evaluation Your grade for this course will be determined according to the following:

Technology Literacy Narrative	15%
Podcast Episode	15%
Video Project	15%
Multimedia Rhetorical Analysis	30%
Exit Interview	10%
Reading Responses	10%
Participation	5%

Grading Standards

I assign grades on a 100-point scale, which corresponds with the University's letter grades as follows:

Quality of Work	Score	Grade
Excellent work – exceeds all requirements with minimal or no errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would be impressed and would pass the document along to others, as is. A customer would use the document successfully and with ease.	90 – 100	A
Very-good/good work – exceeds/meets most requirements with few significant errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would appreciate your work, but would want you to revise it before passing it along. A customer may notice simple mistakes and draw conclusions about the quality of your company.	80 – 89	B
Fair/adequate work – meets most/some requirements, but with fundamental errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would be disappointed with the document and would want it revised significantly before passing it along. In addition, the supervisor could begin to doubt your ability to complete similar assignments successfully. A customer might wonder whether your company deserves her/his business.	70 – 79	C
Flawed work – meets few requirements; has excessive errors. In the workplace, your supervisor would have another employee re-do the document. A customer would likely abandon the document and resent your company for wasting her/his time.	60 – 69	D
Does not meet the assignment's requirements. In the workplace, your supervisor would assume that you don't care about your job. A customer would withdraw business, find your company's replacement, and/or ask to work with a different representative from your company.	0 – 59	F

Policies

Please read these polices carefully and keep them in mind as you complete this course.

Attendance

- Attend class regularly. If you miss class, you are responsible for the assignments and topics that we cover; accordingly, find a buddy in this class and exchange contact information so that you can stay up to date if you are absent. Furthermore, post to the course social media site to ask for help. I'm also happy to answer questions after you've spoken with your classmates.
- Consider your schedule; regular attendance is essential to do well in this course. If you miss 3 or more class meetings, you will lose 20 points from your participation grade per additional absence (starting with the third absence). This policy applies to all students—including those involved in extracurricular activities.
- Plan for travel dates. Students traveling for extracurricular events are responsible for staying up to date and completing assignments on time. Unless I state otherwise in writing, assignments that fall on a student's travel dates are due as scheduled; additionally, students should return from travel having completed scheduled readings and exercises.
- Participate! In addition to attending class regularly, you are responsible for making thoughtful contributions to discussions and in-class activities.
- Respect your classmates. We are engaged in higher education, so be ready to learn from your classmates and me. Treat us respectfully and professionally; we will extend the same courtesies to you.

Mobile Phones & Devices	• This class focuses on digital technologies and the ways in which we interact with them. That said, I do not mind if you have your phone out on your desk. I also do not mind if you check it during class. That being the case, I do expect you to show both me and your fellow classmates respect during class discussions. Engage both the people in our class and your devices professionally. Use discretion when engaging your devices during lecture or class discussion. Feel free to use your device as much as you'd like during production time or group work so long as you maintain your focus on class work and avoid distracting or disturbing the rest of us. If you use your phone/device during class in a way that causes disruption, then I will mark you absent. Deductions from your participation grade will be made regardless of why you're marked absent.
	• If you have an unusual situation that requires your being accessible by phone (e.g., ill child or significant other), then please notify me of the situation before class starts and choose a seat near the door. If you must leave the room to take an emergency call, discretely leave the room and re-enter when you'll make minimal disruption to the class.
	• In keeping with University Policy, I must issue a grade of zero to any student who uses or displays a mobile phone (or other personal electronic device) during an exam—even if the device is turned off.
	• In the event of a campus emergency, I am the designated contact for our classroom. I will receive a call and text message from campus authorities with relevant information.
Assignments	• Complete scheduled readings before completing your assignments or participating in class discussions.
	• Submit assignments on time. Each assignment will have a specific date and time by which you must complete it. If, for any reason, I don't have your assignment by the specified time, then your assignment is late. Late assignments will lose 10 points per class-day late. If you must turn in an assignment late, please email me with an explanation and an official request for an extension. Furthermore, if you experience technical difficulties that prevent you from uploading your assignment, email me as soon as possible (before the assignment is due).
	• Follow assignment guidelines closely. Any assignment not prepared according to my instructions in format, organization, style, or content could receive a grade of *F*.
Academic Honesty	• Students at SHSU are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach, so you are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all academic experiences—both in and out of our classroom.
	• Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, or the abuse of resource materials.
	• Students who submit plagiarized work for my review will receive a zero for the assignment—even if only a portion of the document violates academic honesty standards. A second offense will result in an *F* for the course.

Student Disabilities	SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). I also encourage you to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will remain strictly confidential. **Note:** I can make accommodations only after you've registered with Services for Students with Disabilities and I've received relevant paperwork from that office. For more information about registering for these services see: http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/procedures-to-request-services.html
Religious Holy Days	Section 51.911 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, United States Tax Code.
Classroom Visitors	Only registered students may come into physical classrooms on campus. Student visitations or audits are not permitted.

Overview of Activities

	Throughout the semester, you will complete a variety of assignments. I will provide detailed assignment sheets, supporting documents, and due times/dates on our Blackboard course site.
Readings	All readings will be either open-access or provided to you on Blackboard with the exception of Hickman's *Transhuman*. Your open-access textbook offers much information regarding theories, methods, and real-world applications of digital rhetoric. I will assign readings and other kinds of digital texts that supplement the activities and deliverables for this course. Our assignments and class discussions will rely on your having already read and/or reviewed assigned materials before you get to class.
Technology Literacy Narrative	You will write a reflective essay that examines your relationship to technology.
Class Podcast Season	Our class will produce a podcast season with each of you contributing one episode. As a class, we will decide on a name for the series, the episode format, cover art, and music.
Group Video Project	In groups, you will produce a video for the public sphere analyzing a current event for its rhetorical properties.
Multimedia Rhetorical Analysis	You will choose a topic related to digital culture that interests you and produce a substantial multimedia rhetorical analysis of it. The project will require multimedia production and significant research.

Exit Interview   As the final component of the class, we will sit down for an exit interview. We will discuss the work you produced throughout the semester, your knowledge of digital rhetoric, and your approach to digital culture.

Reading Responses   Our class will share a social media space, and you will be required to "respond" to our readings and class discussions there. These responses may take many forms, including posts, discussion threads, vlogs, memes/gifs, hyperlinks, among other possible media. You will be required to engage this space weekly.

Instructor Evaluations   Toward the end of the semester, students will have the opportunity to evaluate this course and its instructor. These evaluations allow students to rate the efficacy of the instructional methods as well as their perceptions of the course in general. Any information provided by students is anonymous, and instructors do not receive students' evaluations until the following semester.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

The following schedule contains assignments and topics for the semester. Readings will be listed and provided on Blackboard.

This schedule is subject to change throughout the semester; please keep up with class activities and announcements.

Week/Dates	Topic	Assignments Due
Week 1, 1/22–28	What is this class? What is the state of digital culture?	Assign Technology Literacy Narrative
Week 2, 1/29–2/4	What is digital rhetoric? How do we study digital texts?	
Week 3, 2/5–11	How does technology affect society? How do we experience digital culture?	**Technology Literacy Narrative due Feb. 11**
Week 4, 2/12–18	Sound theory	Assign Podcast Episode
Week 5, 2/19–25	Democratization, open-access technologies, and DIY culture	
Week 6, 2/26–3/4	Remix and remediation	**Podcast Episode due March 4**
Week 7, 3/5–11	Videos and narrative style	Assign Video
Week 8, 3/12–18	Accessibility and disability	
Week 9, 3/19–25	**!!! Spring Break !!!**	
Week 10, 3/26–4/1	Work on video projects	**Video due April 1** (will likely move due date since this is Easter)
Week 11, 4/2–8	Multimodality and digital writing	Assign Rhetorical Analysis
Week 12, 4/9–15	Virtual worlds and the rhetoric of gaming	Propose Rhetorical Analysis topic and format
Week 13, 4/16–22	Social media, the digital counterculture, and hacktivism	
Week 14, 4/23–29	Post-humanism	
Week 15, 4/30–5/6	Rhizcomics and Reflections	**Rhetorical Analysis due May 6**
Final Exams, 5/7–10		**Exit Interviews done by May 11**
Grades due, 5/14		