Digital Rhetorics

ENG 351 | Spring 2024
T/Th 2:00 – 3:15pm |

Illinois State University

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Derek M. Sparby
Email:
Zoom Room:
Zoom Hours:

Required Texts

Journal articles and book chapters can be found on Canvas. Popular articles are linked on Canvas and in the course schedule. Videos and films can be found on YouTube, Kanopy, and Netflix.

Course Description and Objectives

This advanced course studies theories of digital rhetorics and asks you to read and think critically about a range of relevant issues, from the practical (information architecture, design, content strategy, usability, and so on) to the ethical (privacy/obscurity, online aggression, artificial intelligence, identity and power, accessibility, and so on). You will create in and analyze digital genres from a design justice perspective while considering how they can be used for advocacy, activism, and other forms of social justice work. Students willing to learn will have a successful semester even if they do not have extensive background experience in technology and/or digital design.

The objectives for this course are to
- Interrogate relationships between technology, identity, culture, and power and how individuals and communities enact (and are perceived in relation to) digital rhetorical skills and practices,
- Understand how biases in technology development teams marginalize and exclude users,
- Identify avenues for resistance to the former while promoting diversity, inclusion, equity, and access in technology development,
- Develop your understanding of digital rhetorics and corresponding principles, practices, and research, and use this knowledge to produce rhetorically effective texts,
- Gain familiarity and experience with a range of tools to produce digital materials.

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS)

This course counts as an elective toward the WGSS minor and Graduate Certificate.
- WGS minor requires four core course (WGS 120; ENG 160 or 260 or 261 or 360; PHIL 246; and HIS 261 or 262) and three electives.
- Queer Studies Concentration requires three core courses (WGS 120; WGS 292; and WGS 392) and one elective.
- WGS Graduate Certificate requires one core course (WGS 490 or ENG 460) and three electives.

Brief Assignment Descriptions

The assignments in this course are designed to meet the course objectives outlined above. Below are brief descriptions of the assignments; full prompts are available on Reggienet.

Coded Bio

To show off your new HTML + CSS skills, code a brief bio of yourself as a student and human.

Attendance/Participation

Arrive to class on time. Complete readings. Engage in all activities and discussions.

Tech Time (Undergraduate Only)

Undergraduate students will present a technology and explain how it works while applying theories and concepts learned in class.

Class Facilitation (Graduate Only)

Graduate students will facilitate for 45 minutes. This can include a lecture and discussion, small group work, mini workshop, etc.

Interface Analysis & Redesign

Analyze and redesign a digital interface. Consider the shortcomings your analysis revealed, as well as the values you think the interface should embody. Produce a redesign that is more inclusive of a variety of identities.

Coded Portfolio

This portfolio will include several artifacts:
- A homepage
- Your interface analysis and redesign
- Two additional pages of your

Journal Entries

Fourteen (14) times during the semester, complete and post a super brief journal entry.

Asynchronous Activities

Seven (7) times during the semester, complete independent activities in lieu of f2f class.

Grade Distribution

Component	Points
Attendance/Participation	16
Asynchronous Activities	7
Journal Entries	7
Tech Time/Facilitation	10
Coded Bio	10
Interface Analysis and Redesign	20
Coded Portfolio	30

Grading Scale

A	100-90
B	89-90
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 or below

All assignments and projects must be completed to pass the course. Grades are earned, not given; I do not respond to requests for higher grades.

Missing Class

You are expected to attend class regularly, arriving on time and prepared to participate. But we're also still in a pandemic. **If you feel unwell or have another excusable reason to miss class, contact me so we can arrange how you will make up the course work for the days you are absent.**

Course Policies

The policies in this syllabus are considered contractual at Illinois State University. If you remain in the class after day one, you have agreed to all that is required. I reserve the right to change the day-by-day schedule (with advanced notice), but not the requirements outlined above in the course description and below in the policies.

Homework Submission

- Submit all homework by the date and time listed in the prompt and on Canvas.
- I accept late work for two days after the due date, but you will lose points from the final grade if I have not granted an extension.
- Except in extreme circumstances, presentations cannot be rescheduled.

AI Assisted Work

If you use an AI tool, I expect you to use it critically and ethically. Cite the tool you used and the information that came from it. These tools have also been shown to be biased and inaccurate; they also often violate intellectual property laws. **You are responsible for the integrity of the work you produce.**

Professionalism

You are expected to produce professional, high-quality documents that are appropriate for specific writing situations. During class discussions, peer feedback, and in your writing, you are expected to treat others with respect. This pertains to all class members, the professor, and the audiences you write for and people you write about. I do not tolerate intolerant discourses. If a student engages in disrespectful or hateful speech, we will discuss conduct; if it happens a second time, the offender will be removed from the course altogether.

All ISU students are responsible for upholding the [Code of Student Conduct](). Instances of plagiarism will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Submitting AI-produced work without attribution and reflection is plagiarism.

Accessibility

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services (SAAS).

Website: http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/

Location: 350 Fell Hall
Phone: (309) 438-5853
Email: ableisu@ilstu.edu

If for whatever reason, you do not feel comfortable contacting SAAS for accommodations but think that you would benefit from a reasonable accommodation, please get in touch with me and we'll determine if we can work out a plan for your success.

Content Warnings

Some of the content and discussions in this course may trigger traumas and strong emotions. I will give content warnings, but please be aware of your own capabilities and limitations. If you decide to miss class, your absence may be excused but you will be responsible for making up any missed work.

Campus Safety and Security

ISU is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please take a few moments to ensure you are signed up for [ISU Emergency Alerts](). Also, note the information posted in each classroom about emergency shelters and evacuation assembly areas (indicated in classrooms). Additional safety information is available on the Campus Safety and Security website.

Additional Student Support Resources

Please use these resources if you need additional support beyond what can be provided in this course.

WGSS Resource Center

Cozy quiet space with access to many resources.
[Website](#)

Julia N. Visor Center

Offers tutoring across a range of fields
[Website](#)

Student Counseling Services

[Website](#)
Email: cahaubn@ilstu.edu
Phone: (309) 438-3655
After hours/Emergency: (855) 256-2188
Location: 320 Student Services Building

Career Services

[Website](#)
Email: CareerServices@ilstu.edu
Phone: (309) 428-2200
Location: 2nd floor of Bone Student Center
Hours: M – F: 8am-4:30pm

Cultural Organizations

Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC), Association of Latin American Scholars (ALAS), Black Student Union (BSU), Pride, and TRIBE.

[Website](#)
Email: themulticulturalcenter@ilstu.edu
Phone: (309) 438-8968
Location: 301 S Main St, Normal, IL
Hours: M – Th: 9am-9pm | F: 9am-4:30pm

School Street Food Pantry

Any students in the Bloomington-Normal aera who are experiencing food insecurity are eligible to use the pantry.

[Website](#)
Email: schoolstreetfoodpantry@gmail.com
Location: 211 N School St, Normal, IL
Hours: Fridays 4-6pm
Find other food pantries through [PATH](#)

Queer Coalition

Has an extensive list of resources for mental health and local support groups, and many other resources for the surrounding area.

[Website](#)

Veterans and Military Services

[Website](#)
Email: Veterans@ilstu.edu
Phone: (309) 428-2207
Location: 112 Moulton Hall
Hours: M – F: 9am-4pm

Office of Sustainability

Main Office
Hours: M-F 8am – 4:30pm
[Website](#)

The ISU Share Shop
Hours: M, W, F: 10am – 4pm
[Website](#)

Fix It Friday Repair Shop
Hours: Fridays 10am – 4pm
[Website](#)

Bike ISU
[Website](#)

Pass It On
[Website](#)

Compost Kiosks
[Website](#)