



# ENGLIT 2501, Topics in Literacy

## Literacy and Technology

University of Pittsburgh, Spring 2012

Mondays, 6-8:50pm, 512 CL

Website: [http://www.annettevee.com/2012spring\\_litandtech](http://www.annettevee.com/2012spring_litandtech)

Prof. Annette Vee

628C Cathedral of Learning

Office hours: MW, 4:30-5:30pm

“the materiality of writing is both the central fact of literacy and its central puzzle”  
(Christina Haas, 1996, p. 3)

We can think of literacy as an ability to express ourselves and communicate through technologies of inscription. How do these technologies shape the way we learn and practice literacy? What have these technologies looked like at various moments in history? What new forms of literacy are made possible through new technologies? How do new literacy technologies get taken up and distributed, and what forms of human expression are enhanced, constricted, or complicated by them? What role do we have in shaping literacy technologies, and what role do literacy technologies have in shaping *us*?

In this seminar, we'll explore the shapes that literacy takes with new technologies, and what that means for us as writers and teachers and readers in a time where technologies of writing appear to be rapidly shifting. We'll look at the history of inscription technologies from clay tokens to the printing press to the Internet, with special attention to more recent literacy technologies—the World Wide Web, mobile devices, computers, video games, etc. We'll explore theoretical perspectives on social factors shaping literacy and technology, and along the way, we'll develop our own theories about the interactions between people, literacies and technologies.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Seymour Papert, *Mindstorms*

Christina Haas, *Writing Technology*

Stuart Selber, *Multiliteracies*

Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves and Writing Machines*

All other readings will be available via CourseWeb.

You will also be required to have regular access to a computer and the Internet. If this is a problem, please see me and we can make arrangements to accommodate you for the semester.

## **COURSE PROJECTS**

I'm asking a lot of you in this course: critical engagement with readings and each other in person as well as online, plus a willingness to push your own textual and digital literacies to a new place.

These projects are designed to help you try out some new inscription technologies, find your way through the theoretical aspects of course materials, and navigate a few details of the profession. We'll discuss details of the assignments in class. I'll offer technical support sessions outside of our regular class time to accommodate students who are not already familiar with these technologies. Since digital literacies are increasingly practiced in public, online spaces and since this course is designed to help direct you toward publicly-shared scholarship, the projects and writing you do for this course will be made public, at least within the boundaries of our class. Unless otherwise specified, I assume that all work produced for the course will be your own.

### **Compose in audio.**

Interview two people about their experiences with literacy and technology—at least one should *not* be a grad student. Record the audio of those interviews. With the audio you have collected, compose an *audio essay*. An audio essay should not be simply a reading of a written text; it should be multivocal, paced in a way to match our aural capabilities, and textured with various kinds of sounds as transitions between sections. At some point in your audio essay you should ask some generative questions about literacies and technologies that were inspired by your interviews. 3 – 6 min. Must include audio from both interviews and sounds/music from other sources.

### **Map your way through technologies and literacies with friends.**

For this visual project, you'll work in a group of 2 or 3 people to digitally map out a representation of the ideas, scholars, and/or texts that we're wrestling with in the course. Software such as Prezi or Cmap will be useful to you for this project.

### **Update articles from CCC on WikiComp.**

WikiComp is a wiki-based composition project started by some folks at Syracuse (spearheaded by Pitt grad Steve Parks) with whom we'll be collaborating. With an agreement with the journal *CCC*, WikiComp is publishing articles from the archive to be revisited, updated, and revised by graduate students in composition. We'll be revisiting two classic digital composition articles from the 1990s that include some

interesting ideas, but may need revision in light of more recent developments in the field as well as in composition technologies.

### **Review a book.**

Writing a book review is a great way to think deeply about the project and argument of a text, as well as to try out the publishing process. For your book review, you may choose a book referenced by one of the texts we're reading in class, or you may choose from the list of books below (or propose an alternative text, but check with me first). You will write a standard review (I'll provide models) and give a short presentation on the book to the class. Your presentation and review should address: the scholarly discourse in which the author is participating, the book's contributions to that discourse, its main arguments and any issues/ideas you wish the book addressed but didn't. I'll collect your written reviews and share them on CourseWeb so that they serve as resources for you as you navigate your way to the final project. 1500 word review, 5-8min presentation in class.

Presentations will be staggered, 1-2 each week, Jan 30-Mar 26.

### **Be a discussant for one class meeting.**

At conferences and keynotes, a discussant is sometimes present to extend the ideas of the main speaker(s) and connect those ideas to others at the conference or to current events. These will be your goals during the week that you are assigned to be a discussant for this course: connect the week's readings to other themes that have developed in the course; extend the ideas from the readings into current events; apply the ideas to our teaching practices; ask questions for further research and discussion. To do this, you will post to the course blog by the FRIDAY BEFORE CLASS meets to seed discussion, then follow up with another post or comment by the WEDNESDAY AFTER CLASS meets to synthesize the ideas from our online and offline discussions. During our class meeting, you will give a 10 minute presentation on ideas from the readings and your connections to them. You are not responsible for leading the entire discussion, but I expect you to be particularly active in discussion that week by probing your peers' comments with thoughtful questions. You are the local "expert" on the themes for that week. This role will begin the third week of class, and there will be one or two discussants per week.

### **Blog weekly.**

Our course blog ([http://www.annettevee.com/2012spring\\_litandtech/](http://www.annettevee.com/2012spring_litandtech/)) is a site for discussion outside of class. It is public, but you are welcome to use a pseudonym on it. Each week, by the SUNDAY BEFORE CLASS, you will write a 300-500 word post wrestling with ideas relevant to the topics and readings in class that week. I encourage you to pull in outside resources in these posts: links, videos, articles, etc. that are relevant. Your post can either comment on the discussant's post of the week or be a separate post, asking your own questions about the issues for the week. Blog posts are due every week, the Sunday before class, starting Jan 21 (no post over Spring Break). A wrap-up reflection on your blogging is due online April 15.

## **Compose a Final Project.**

A paper of 6000 words or an equivalent digital project. We'll talk about projects in class on March 26 and a proposal for your project is due April 2. Your project should pull from course readings as well as outside readings, and it should further our understanding of the interplay between literacies and technologies. Your project proposal (1000-1500 words) will include: an overview of your concept; the significance of your project; an understanding of the scholarly conversations in which you're participating; a description of your methodology; a rationale for your topic choice; a discussion of the connection of your work to your own development; a plan for your work. (I am grateful to Jess Enoch for this outline of a project proposal.) You are not required to submit your course project for publication, but you should research journals in your field and target a specific journal to give yourself an audience outside of our classroom.

## **COURSE POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Grading**

Assuming your attendance and your full participation in class discussion, the relative weight of these projects will be approximately:

Blog posts	20%
Discussant role	10%
Book review	10%
Visual map	10%
Edit CCC articles	10%
Final project	40%

These are not exact calculations, but I'll assess your work holistically towards the end of the course based on these relative weights. We'll meet around mid-term to discuss the progress of the course and our assessment of your work.

### **Disability Resources**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please inform me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services as early as possible in the term. You can reach DRS at (412) 648-7890 or (412) 383-7355 (TTY) and you can visit their office at 216 William Pitt Union. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is a free tutorial service for Pitt students—even grad students! It's always good to have a reader respond to your work. Writing Center consultants can help you learn how to generate ideas, organize your writing, and help you give it a professional polish. You can call for an appointment at (412) 624-6556 or make an appointment online: <http://www.rich36.com/pitt/>.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

Subject to change.

## Part I: Technology, Literacy, Society and Mind

Week 1 (Jan 9): Terms of engagement: approaches to literacy

Street, Brian. "The New Literacy Studies." *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*. Eds. Cushman, Ellen, et al. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2001. 430-442.

Resnick, Daniel P., and Lauren B. Resnick. "The Nature of Literacy: An Historic Exploration." *Harvard Educational Review* 47.3 1977: 370-85.

Brandt, Deborah. "Accumulating Literacy: Writing and Learning to Write in the Twentieth Century." *College English* 57(6) 1995: 649-668.

*Schedule discussants and book review presentations in class.*

Week 2 (Jan 16): (no class: MLK, Jr. Day)

Week 3 (Jan 23): Terms of engagement: approaches to technology & writing technologies

Mackenzie & Wajcman, "Introductory Essay," *The Social Shaping of Technology*. (1985) 2-25.

Winner, Langdon. "Upon Opening the Black Box [...]" *Science, Technology and Human Values*. (1993) 362-378.

Schmandt-Besserat, Denise. "Envelopes that Bear the First Writing," *Technology and Culture* 21.3 (1980): 357-385.

Baron, Denis. "From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technologies." *Passions, Pedagogies, and Twenty-First-Century Technologies*. Eds. Hawisher, Gail and Cynthia Selfe. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1999. 15-33.

*Optional:*

Light, Jennifer. "When Computers were Women." *Technology and Culture* (1999) 455-483.

Cushman, Ellen. "The Cherokee Syllabary: A Writing System In Its Own Right" *Written Communication* 28 (2011) 255-281.

*Discussant posts online Jan 20, presents Jan 23, synthesizes online Jan 25.*

Week 4 (Jan 30): Does writing organize society and mind?

Goody, Jack. "Introduction," *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (1968): 1-25.

Ong, Walter. "Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought" (1986)

Bazerman, Charles. "The Writing of Social Organization and the Literate Situating of Cognition: Extending Goody's Social Implications of Writing," *Technology, Literacy and the Evolution of Society:*

*Implications of the Work of Jack Goody*: Eds. David Olson & Michael Cole (Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006): 215-239.  
Scribner and Cole. "Unpackaging Literacy" *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook*.  
123-137.

*Discussant posts online Jan 27, presents Jan 30, synthesizes online Feb 1.*

**DUE: Audio interviews completed**

Week 5 (Feb 6): Objects to think with

diSessa, Andrea. "Computational Media and New Literacies." *Changing Minds* (Chap 1) 1-28.

Papert, Seymour. *Mindstorms*. Basic Books.

*Discussant posts online Feb 3, presents Feb 6, synthesizes online Feb 8.*

**DUE: Audio essay (play in class)**

## **Part II: Histories of writing technologies**

Week 6 (Feb 13): The Printing press as an agent of (literacy) change

Vincent, David. "The Rise of Mass Literacy," *The Rise of Mass Literacy*.  
(2000) 1-26.

Graff, Harvey. "Print, Protest and the People" *Legacies of Literacy*. (1987)  
108-120; "19<sup>th</sup> century Origin of Our Times," 260-5; 340-372.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. "Some Features of Print Culture," *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. 46-101. (Optional, "Defining the Initial Shift," 13-45)

*Discussant posts online Feb 10, presents Feb 13, synthesizes online Feb 15.*

Week 7 (Feb 20): Writing as inscription technology

Gitelman, Lisa. *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines: Representing Technology in the Edison Era*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

*Discussant posts online Feb 17, presents Feb 20, synthesizes online Feb 22.*

**DUE: Optional revisions on Audio Essay**

Week 8 (Feb 27) 21<sup>st</sup> Century literacy practices

Cope, Bill, & Kalantzis, Mary (Eds.). (2000). Introduction. *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge.

Ito, et al. "Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project," MacArthur Foundation, Nov 2008.

Brock, Andre. "Race and Representation Online." *Writing Public Culture*. (2009): 1-23.

Hayles, N. Katherine. "Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes," *Profession* (2007): 187-199.

*Discussant posts online Feb 24, presents Feb 27, synthesizes online Feb 29.*

**DUE: Visual mapping of ideas from the course**

***Feb 29: Lisa Gitelman speaks. Do your best to attend!***

Week 9 (Spring Break)

**Part III: Literacy and Technology in Composition and Rhetoric**

Week 10 (Mar 12): Revising Composition & Rhetoric's take on technology

Selfe, Cynthia. "The Importance of Paying Attention," *CCC* (1999).

Spooner and Yancey, "Postings on the genre of Email," *CCC* (1996) (responses by Miller, Sosnoski, Holdstein)

*Discussant posts online Mar 9, presents Mar 12, synthesizes online Mar 14.*

**DUE: Edits on WikiComp**

Week 11 (Mar 19): Institutional frameworks for digital literacies (CCCC this week)

Selber, Stuart. *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age*. SIUP,

*Discussant posts online Mar 16, presents Mar 19, synthesizes online Mar 21.*

**DUE: Further edits on WikiComp**

Week 12 (Mar 26): Materialities of Literacy

Haas, Christina. *Writing Technology: Studies on the Materiality of Literacy*.

Kirschenbaum, Matthew. [Blog on *Track Changes*, Harvard, 2013]

Discuss final project ideas in class.

*Discussant posts online Mar 23, presents Mar 26, synthesizes online Mar 28.*

**Part IV: New (?) Literacy Practices**

Week 13 (Apr 2) New forms of writing & reading

Laquintano, Tim. "Sustained Authorship," *Written Communication*

Aarseth, Espen. "Introduction", *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*.

Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. "Authorship," *Planned Obsolescence*

Brandt, "How Writing is Remaking Reading," *Literacy and Learning*

www.goodreads.com and other reading / writing sites.

*Discussant posts online Mar 30, presents Apr 2, synthesizes online Apr 4.*

**DUE: Final project proposal**

Week 14 (Apr 9): New materialities of literacy

What Video Games have to Teach Us / Jim Gee [[excerpt]]

Speech, Writing, Code: Three Worldviews, Chapter 2 from *My Mother was a Computer*, N. Katherine Hayles (U Chicago, 2005): 39-61.

Kim, Miranda and Olaciregui, “Pocket School: Exploring mobile technology [...] for underserved indigenous children in Latin America,” *Internat’l J of Edu Development* 28. (2008) 435-445.

One Laptop Per Child initiative (laptop.org)

Discussant posts online Apr 6, presents Apr 9, synthesizes online Apr 11.

Week 15 (Apr 16): Presentations (no readings)

**DUE: Blog post wrap-up**

**DUE: Oral presentation**

**April 25: Final project due.**

### **Book review suggestions**

\*Farman, Jason. *Mobile Interface Theory*, Routledge, 2011

\*Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. *Planned Obsolescence*, NYU Press, 2011

Gitelman, Lisa. *Always Already New: Media, History and the Data of Culture*. MIT, 2008.

\*Baym, Nancy. *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, Polity, 2010.

Banks, Adam. *Race, Rhetoric and Technology*, Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.

\*Banks, Adam. *Digital Griots*, SIUP, 2011.

Reid, Alex. *The Two Virtuals: New Media and Composition*, Parlor, 2008.

Hawk, Byron. *Counterhistory of Composition*, Pittsburgh, 2007.

Rice, Jeff. *Rhetoric of Cool: Composition Studies and New Media*. SIUP, 2007.

Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media*. MIT Press, 2002.

\*Shipka, Jody. *Toward a Composition Made Whole*. Pittsburgh, 2011.

\*Ritter, Kelly. *Who Owns School: Authority, Students, and Online Discourse*. Hampton Press, 2010.

\*Brooke, Collin. *Lingua Fracta: Toward a Rhetoric of New Media*. Hampton Press, 2009.

\*Dobrin, Sidney, et al., Eds. *Postcomposition: Beyond Postprocess*, Utah State, 2011.

\*Delagrange, Susan. *Technologies of Wonder: Rhetorical Practice in a Digital World* C&C Digital Press (<http://ccdigitalpress.org/ebooks-and-projects/wonder>), 2011.

\*Striphas, Ted. *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control*. Columbia, 2011.

Werschler-Henry, Derek. *Iron Whim: A Fragmented History of Typewriting*, Cornell, 2007.

Levy, David M. *Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age*. Arcade, 2001.

Wright, Alex. *Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages*. Cornell, 2007.

\* denotes a better choice if you’re looking to get your review published.



## LITERACY & TECHNOLOGY BOOK REVIEW

Check calendar for your assigned day (presentation & essay are due the same day)

- 1000-2000 word review (the wide range is to accommodate your particular journal style) + short ~150word intro on why you are targeting this journal and this book (turned in to me via CourseWeb, and to be shared with the class via CourseWeb)
- 5-8min presentation in class

This assignment has three main goals 1) introduce a wider selection of readings into the class; 2) give you the impetus to deeply engage with an outside text that piques your interests (and potentially connects with ideas for your final project); 3) provide you with an opportunity to practice a common academic genre.

### Choose a book

If you haven't done this yet, get in touch with me soon. Your book should have some connection to the themes we're discussing in the class, and be of possible interest to us.

### Choose a journal

You are not required to try to publish your book review, although you may find it helpful to think about that possibility as you write the review. Check out some journals that are in your interest areas (and whose readership may be interested in your chosen book). See reverse for some suggested journals, and note that the policies for publishing book reviews vary widely across journals. For instance, some journals accept unsolicited book reviews, and some do not. When you find a journal and reviews you like, read some of their book reviews as models. How long are they? How do they begin? What issues do they address in the book? How do they situate the book in a larger scholarly conversation? If you want to publish your review, please let me know so that I can provide you feedback accordingly.

### Read the book

Well, of course. But when you read, make sure to take good notes on how the book is structured, what points seem particularly interesting or provocative, and how the author situates his/her argument. You may want to check out other reviews of the book, or reviews of books that the author mentions to get a sense of the scholarly discourse in which the book is situated.

### Write the review

Keep your journal's audience in mind when you write. Who are they? What do they value? How will the book be of use to them? Note how long reviews typically are and write your review accordingly.

Regardless of the journal, a good review:

- situates the book in a larger scholarly conversation
- indicates this book's contribution to that conversation
- says something about the structure and argument(s) of the book
- shares some (minor or major) criticism

Book reviews can be hard to write because they require you to have a decent command of the scholarly conversation in which a book engages. You may want to check out this resource on

writing reviews: “The Art of Reviewing,” Bruce Mazlish, 2001, American Historical Association:

<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2001/0102/0102vie1.cfm>

## Prepare your presentation

Don't just read your review. Tell us what **we** might find interesting about the book, and how it extends the conversations we're already having in class. You can be more explicit about any challenges or criticism you have about the book in our little classroom community than you may be in your written review. Keep it interesting and short (aim for 5 min).

## Notes on Journals

### **Quarterly Journal of Speech (rhetoric)**

[...] publishes articles and book reviews that advance an understanding of rhetorical processes, [...] the journal seeks scholarship that considers the nature and role of rhetorical processes in oral, written, visual or other textual frames, in official and vernacular voices, in public and private realms via direct or mediated channels, and/or in historical or contemporary venues. [...] Suggestions for book reviews can be addressed to the Book Review Editor, Cara Finnegan [qjsbookreview@gmail.com](mailto:qjsbookreview@gmail.com)

### **The Information Society (tech)** <http://www.indiana.edu/~tisj/contributors/authors.html>

We mostly publish unsolicited book reviews. [...] Our reviewers are typically professors, grad students, and occasionally independent scholars or industry professionals. Interested reviewers should send qualifications and areas of specialty, and all related queries about any title or book review question to Michael Filas.

### **New Media & Society (tech)**

NMS includes a section in which books and other significant contributions to the field are reviewed. This includes both essay length and shorter contributions. For more information about reviews please contact book reviews Editor David Park ([park~at~lakeforest.edu](mailto:park~at~lakeforest.edu)).

### **Kairos (tech & composition)**

[...] online journal exploring the intersections of rhetoric, technology, and pedagogy, is actively seeking reviews of technologies and nonprint texts. To propose a review, please contact reviews editor Wesley Venus at [reviews@technorhetoric.net](mailto:reviews@technorhetoric.net). Include a brief CV with your statement of interest. [Check this website for books for which they're actively seeking reviewers] <http://www.technorhetoric.net/cfr.html>

### **Computers and Composition Online**

Reviews: Not only books, but sites, CD/DVDs, events, and other blended media. Please feel free to suggest items for review. Section Editor: Jeff Kirchoff: [jkircho@bgsu.edu](mailto:jkircho@bgsu.edu)

### **Computers and Composition (print):** <http://ees.elsevier.com/cocomp/>

... devoted to exploring the use of computers in writing classes, writing programs, and writing research. [...] It welcomes articles, reviews, and letters to the Editors that may be of interest to readers, including descriptions of computer-aided writing and/or reading instruction, discussions of topics related to computer use of software development; explorations of controversial ethical, legal, or social issues related to the use of computers in writing programs [...]

### **Journal of Technology Education:** [http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/about\\_jte.html](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/about_jte.html)

[...] provides a forum for scholarly discussion on topics relating to technology education. Manuscripts should focus on technology education research, philosophy, and theory. In addition, the Journal publishes book reviews, editorials, guest articles, comprehensive literature reviews, and reactions to previously published articles.

### **Journal of Educational Technology and Society:** <http://www.ifets.info/>

3000 word max, accepts unsolicited reviews. See under “Authors’ Guidelines” and then “Book reviews” for detailed instructions on format.

## LITERACY & TECHNOLOGY AUDIO ESSAY

Due: Feb 6 OR Feb 13

The objective of this assignment is fourfold: 1) encourage you to start thinking of questions that intrigue you about technology and literacy; 2) learn a bit more about how other people experience technology and literacy; 3) explore some “lite” ethnography as a potential method for your future research; 4) practice composing in the digital technology of audio.

Think of some questions that are arising for you from our discussions and readings. Then, think of a couple of people whose practices might shed light on those questions. At least one of those people should *not* be a grad student. Ask to interview them<sup>1</sup> and ask their permission to audiorecord the interview.

### Recording audio

You may already have access to audio recording equipment: your laptop, your iPod, a digital audio recorder. Since you will be using the audio for composition (and not just transcribing it), you should strive for high-quality audio. Use good equipment in a quiet, non-echoing space. A digital audio recorder is the best and least obtrusive way to record interviews. You can check one out from CIDDE. I have one you may borrow, too. You might even want to have a primary recording, and use a secondary recording for backup, just in case. At any rate, know how to use the equipment before you do the interviews.

### Tips for interviewing

Keep interviews relatively short—no more than 45min, but ideally around 15-30min. Long interviews are exhausting; plus, they impose on your subject’s time and make your editing job more difficult. Plan to ask a few key questions rather than delve into every aspect of your subject’s life. If you’d like to pursue this line of research further, you can always ask for a second interview.

Ask good questions: questions that begin with “how” and questions that elicit their memories, impressions, feelings, and practices. It’s often interesting to ask people about their memories growing up—people find it interesting to explore their own background. You do NOT want your interviewee to answer your academic questions; that’s *your* job.

Bad question: What is the relationship between technology and literacy in your life?

[How does someone answer this spontaneously, especially if they’re not studying these questions? You’re unlikely to get a good answer from this.]

Better question: Tell me about the tools you use when you write: pens, pencils, computer, etc. How do these tools affect your writing process?

Bad question: Do you like to use a computer when you write?

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<sup>1</sup> You do not need IRB approval or a release form because this project is for educational purposes only. However, if you anticipate putting this essay on the web or publishing it, you *do* need permission. See me if this is the case.

[This is a yes/no question and a dead end.]  
Better question: Describe how you feel when you write on a computer.

## **Composing in audio**

Once you have your recordings, you can begin composing an audio essay, which should be about 3 – 6 min. If you haven't done audio composing before, budget a lot of time for this, and expect a little frustration. Make sure you have a backup of your interview audio in a separate folder or flash drive, just in case something explodes. Back your work up frequently in different folders or with different file names.

An audio essay should not be simply a reading of a written text or a straight 5min section of your interview. Instead, it should be multivocal, paced in a way to match our aural capabilities, and textured with various kinds of sounds as transitions between sections. The voices in your essay will be you, plus at least one (preferably both) of your interviewees. At some point in your audio essay you may want ask some generative questions about literacies and technologies that were inspired by your interviews. For instance, "How do people remember their first encounters with composing on a computer? I was curious and I asked Dan and Amanda..." Or you can frame your interviewees' responses with your own impressions: "The tactile nature of books is still compelling to people, apparently. Here's Dan on his experiences reading a Kindle vs. a physical book..."

Like writing, good audio essays are all about the transitions. You can use music or framing questions or reflections that you record post-hoc in order to transition from one speaker to another, or from one concept to another. Good writing also begins well and ends well; it's the same case here. Begin with some music. Set up the interview situation. End with a reflective thought and some music again. Audio essays can be more intimate and personal than writing because of the warmth of the human voice. Use that fact to your advantage in your composition.

I recommend using Audacity, which is an excellent, open-source program for sound editing. You can download it here: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> . People have success with Garage Band, too, but I can't tech-support you with that program.

You can find free sources for music and other audio online: Freesound.org, Freemusicarchive.org, Jamendo.com, ccMixer.org. Use only sound that you have permission to use—that is, sound that is licensed with an appropriate Creative Commons license, or sound/music you make yourself.

Definitely check out the excellent resource put together by grads Trisha Campbell, Erin Anderson, and Steph Ceraso:

[http://www.pitt.edu/~dmap/DM@P\\_Sound\\_Workshop\\_Packet.pdf](http://www.pitt.edu/~dmap/DM@P_Sound_Workshop_Packet.pdf)

There are great tips and resources in there for audio composition.

## **Sharing your composition**

We'll share audio compositions in class on Feb 6 and Feb 13. Bring your composition on a flash drive or on your computer. You'll have a chance to revise your composition for the next week, Feb 20.

Your final composition should be in WAV, WMA, mp3, or Ogg Vorbis format. The mp3 format is more standard, but Audacity needs a plug-in to work with it. You can follow directions on the Audacity website for how to install the LAME plugin.

# LITERACY & TECHNOLOGY VISUAL PROJECT

Due: Feb 27

Groups:

Justin, Peter, Kate

Renee, Adam, Lauren H

Kerry, Trisha, Lauren C

Components:

- Visual artifact(s), made collectively by your group
- Presentation of the project in class on Feb 27 (~10min)
- Short letter to ADV (under 500 words) about your composition process & product (written by each group member and submitted individually on CourseWeb by Sun, Mar 4)

This assignment will (hopefully) help you to: 1) consolidate some of the ideas we've been tracing through literacy & technology in the class; 2) learn more about how your peers are interpreting these ideas in the class; 3) get to know each other a bit more and collaborate; 4) practice composing visually (perhaps with an eye for your final project).

## The project

Your group will present the project in class on Feb 27. Aim for about 10min; if you need more, then please let me know so we can plan accordingly.

Your project should be primarily visual, and it must contain some digital component. If you'd like to have motion, sound, taste, smell, interactive elements, etc., too, go ahead. But think about this as a visual project. A primarily analog project is all right, but the project as a whole should have some digital component.

Resources to draw on: Our growing list of keywords will be a good resource for you, as well as your own notes and the blog (especially the excellent syntheses) and the collective (perhaps conflicting?) ideas about tech & literacy in your group. You may want to check out Prezi as a composing tool (a popular, free online canvas tool for presentations and mapping) or Cmap (which I know little about, but it looks cool!). Of course, there are many more technologies that you may know and can help you—Photoshop, for instance.

I don't have set ideas about what this should look like—or rather, if I do, I'm happier to be surprised by your response. True failure isn't possible if you engage deeply with the project, although nominal trial-and-error type failure might be.

## LITERACY & TECHNOLOGY WIKICOMP EDITING

Due: March 12 for first round of edits; March 19 for second round, and March 26 for a potential third round.

By March 26 I'd like to read a ~500 word write-up reflecting on the experience. Ideally, we'll post these to the blog, where they can be public.

WikiComp is a wiki-based composition project started by some folks at Syracuse, spearheaded by Pitt grad Steve Parks, with whom we'll be collaborating. Other collaborators include Ellen Cushman, Jonathan Alexander, Samantha Blackmon, Adam Banks, Morris Young, Anis Bawarshi, Christine Kirklighter, Jean Carr, and grads at Syracuse, Washington, Wisconsin, Purdue, Illinois, Kentucky, and others. With an agreement with the journal *CCC*, WikiComp is publishing articles from the archive to be revisited, updated, and revised by graduate students in composition. We'll be revisiting two classic digital composition articles from the 1990s that include some interesting ideas, but may need revision in light of more recent developments in the field as well as in composition technologies.

<http://www.wiki-comp.org/>

I agreed to enroll our class in this experiment because I hoped we'd accomplish a few different goals: 1) gain a deeper understanding of where comp's approach to tech came from; 2) learn to see texts—even canonical ones—as “unfrozen” and open to revision; 3) practice online collaboration (massively multiplayer!?) in a wiki-based space.

This is a rather experimental assignment, in several different ways: 1) it's collaborative, across our class and other classes at other universities; 2) I don't have a good way of measuring participation or outlining specific goals; 3) it's a new thing for composition as a field. So you're in on the ground floor! But experiments are also bound to fail, at least in some ways. So we all need to be open to that possibility.

### Get an account on WikiComp

Go here and set up an account: <http://www.wiki-comp.org/> . Look around (hang out and mess around?) and see how it's set up. Teach yourself how to edit a wiki if you haven't done that before. They provide some directions on the site, and Wikipedia will offer more (the WikiComp uses the same MediaWiki software as Wikipedia.)

### Read the articles

I've chosen two *CCC* articles that are sometimes still referred to in Comp scholarship and were influential in the 1990s, but that might be a bit dated now in their approach and discussion of technologies: an article by Cindy Selfe and another

by Michael Spooner and Kathy Yancey. They're available to you in a digital version of their original form on CourseWeb. Visit them on WikiComp, too:

Spooner and Yancey: [http://www.wiki-comp.org/index.php?title=Spooner and Yancey : Postings on a Genre of Email](http://www.wiki-comp.org/index.php?title=Spooner_and_Yancey:_Postings_on_a_Genre_of_Email)  
Selfe: [http://www.wiki-comp.org/index.php?title=Selfe : Technology and Literacy - A Story about the Perils of Not Paying Attention](http://www.wiki-comp.org/index.php?title=Selfe:_Technology_and_Literacy_-_A_Story_about_the_Perils_of_Not_Paying_Attention)

The reading assignment for Mar 12 is light because I expect you to be reading these articles more carefully, looking for avenues in, looking for ways to revise them and update them. You may want or need to draw on more contemporary research on literacy and technology in order to revise these essays. You have expertise in that area now, and may want to browse current issues of relevant journals in order to make more current and compelling references (CCC, College English, Computers and Composition, Written Communication, IJLM, Research in the Teaching of English, etc.)

## Revise the articles

OK, this is the hard part—the part where no one knows where we're going and we must chart our own path. There's a space on the WikiComp where we can put the revised article. We will first need a strategy to accomplish this together. How should we collaborate? Through a physical meeting, Google Doc, the WikiComp Discussion pages for the articles, using our blog, our email list, or some combination of all of these? Or should we just make revisions as we go, and wait for something good to come of this? We might want to check out the revisions of other articles on WikiComp to see what other classes have done.

We'll have a chance to meet Mar 12 to touch base about the first round of revisions. We should revise again on March 19, and we may still be revising on March 26.

My only formal stipulation is that we should all be participating in these revisions in some way.

## Write your reflection

By March 26, I'd like to see a ~500 word reflection on the experience. Should we post these to the blog?

## LITERACY & TECHNOLOGY FINAL PROJECT

Proposal due: April 2, via CourseWeb

Presentation due: April 16

Project due: April 25

### **Project: Due 4/25**

Your project should pull from course readings as well as outside readings, and it should further our understanding of the interplay between literacies and technologies. It may be a ~6000 word scholarly essay, an equivalent audio piece, a video, a website, or any other kind of multimodal project. If your project is a creative or multimodal piece, I would like to have an introductory text to help me “read” it in the way that you want it to be read. We will meet to discuss your concept and delivery, and I’m happy to provide feedback and/or meet along the way.

You are not required to submit your course project for publication, but you might want to research journals and conferences in your field and target a specific outlet to give yourself an audience outside of our classroom.

If your project is a paper or media piece, then you can turn it in via CourseWeb. If not, then please make alternative arrangements with me to turn it in.

### **Proposal: Due 4/2**

Your project proposal (1000-1500 words) will include:

- an overview of your concept
- the significance of your project
- an understanding of the scholarly (or other) conversations in which you’re participating
- a description of your methodology of research and production
- a rationale for your topic choice
- a discussion of the connection of your work to your own development
- a plan for your work

I would like the proposal in writing. Please organize it in a way that I will be able to pick out all of these different elements—whether by headings, bolded words, or some other textual marker. It’s fine if it’s a sectioned-up piece without lovely transitions; it’s there to outline the project, not be it. You are welcome to additionally submit a draft website or images or anything else.

### **Presentation: Due 4/16**

On April 16, everyone will present their projects. You can present it in any way you’d like (interactive, formal paper-reading, Prezi, etc.), but please **keep it under 15min**. In your presentation, you should convey the general argument or concept of your project, and articulate how it connects with the shared interests of the class. Don’t just read your paper as-is on April 16 or plan to talk informally about the project. Please give some thought to the mode of presentation, and how it might be different from the mode of your project itself.