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

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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/) 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 2*8 (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; "19th 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) 21st 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*. SUIP,
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. [TBA excerpt from *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

Week 16 (Apr 23): Wrap up for class (no readings)

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.