MAKING / HACKING / COMPOSING

Course Description

All over the America, people are knitting scarves, throwing their own pots, hacking software apps, soldering small electronics, composing their own music and videos, and cooking innovative food---the "do-it-yourself" movement is in full swing. This class will explore the contemporary "do-it-yourself" trend (often called "making") through fiction, critical essays on industrialization, web communities such as Etsy and Instructables, as well as field trips to visit places where the "maker" movement is hot in Pittsburgh. We will be "making" our own projects, "hacking" our way through technologies, and composing essays, blog posts, and images.

We'll be talking about composition in a very broad sense: the composing of physical objects, traditional essays, online writing, and digital images and videos. You do not have to know particular software programs or be "makers" to succeed in the class, but you must be willing to use your hands and brains to make things with both physical and digital technologies. As we make things, we'll always be thinking about what it means to compose in words versus physical and digital technologies.

Course Requirements

This is a four-credit course, so you should expect a fairly heavy workload. Additionally, we only meet once per week, so you will have multiple things due each week. Since this course includes the "Introduction to Arts and

Sciences" curriculum, we'll be talking some about how to juggle the workload. To succeed in this course, you will need to stay on top of assignments, participate actively in online and in-class discussions, and respect your peers in conversation and reviews of their work. Specifically, you will need to:

•	complete all course readings;
•	arrive on time and prepared for class meetings and conferences;
•	participate in discussions online and in-class;
•	draft, revise and submit all course projects;
•	review your peers' work regularly and have your own work reviewed;
•	submit all drafts, projects and work **on time** (day/hour that it is due; no credit is given for late drafts; late papers will normally be docked one letter grade per day, unless you get my approval for an extension before the due date).

If, at any time, you have questions or concerns about your ability to fulfill the expectations for this course, please contact Prof. Vee or KP. We aim to help you succeed in the course, and together we can resolve any issue that may come up.

Course Readings

Readings for each week are listed on the course calendar (see below) by the day they are due to be read. You are not required to purchase texts for this course; all readings will be available online through CourseWeb unless otherwise noted. Throughout the semester, you will also be reading your peers' work and your own. You should be interacting with all of these texts as you read them, so you may print them out to highlight and annotate them, take notes in a digital or physical notebook, or digitally annotate the texts using a program like Adobe Acrobat. We will regularly discuss your reading and writing strategies in class and in one-on-one conferences.

Novel: Makers (Part I, up to p84 on pdf: http://craphound.com/makers/Cory_Doctorow_-_Makers_Letter.pdf)
Novel: Oryx & Crake; Part 1: Chaps 1-5 (up to pg 110); Chaps 6-10 (up to 261); Chaps 10-15 (up to end/pg 374)
Ellen Lupton, DIY: Design It Yourself (excerpts)
Anne Lamott, "Shitty First Drafts"
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction "
Wired Magazine on Limor Fried: http://www.wired.com/magazine/2011/03/ff_adafruit/
	and Atoms are the New Bits
Clay Shirky. "Gin, Television and the Cognitive Surplus"
Langdon Winner, "Technologies as forms of life," from The Whale and the Reactor
Plus, short readings on style, audience and writing techniques

Grading

Participation in class	10%
Participation in 2 workshops	5% (A/C/F grading)
IAS event participation	10%
Blog participation	5%
Midterm blog portfolio	5%
Final blog portfolio	5%
5 short papers on novels	10%
2 longer papers on novels	10%
"Found" book	5% (A/C/F grading)
"Local" Website	20% (10% is A/C/F grading; 10% is A-F grading)
Final project	15% (10% of this is A/C/F grading; 5% is A-F grading)

A/C/F grading: All "making" projects for the class will be graded on an A/C/F basis. This grading scheme is designed to take some pressure off you and encourage you to try something difficult and new in your compositions for the class.

- "A" work shows significant effort, signs of drafting/versioning and deliberate choices in composition. It is creative, interesting and has pushed its creator to try something new.
- "C" work fills the requirements. It is adequate but it may not be very creative or interesting or it may not show signs of drafting.
- "F" work does not fill the requirements, is late, or is extremely sloppy.

Textual compositions in the class will be graded on a traditional A-F scale.

Late work will be docked one letter grade per day it is late, unless prior arrangements are made with me for extensions, etc. I offer extensions only in extreme circumstances.

Short papers on novels

These are each 300 word (~1page) explorations of the section of the novel that is assigned for the day. You can think of them as a cross between take-home reading quizzes and a short essay. Each short paper should explore one small idea and offer an interesting insight on the novel.

Longer papers on novels

Your longer papers (750-1000 words) will be based on your feedback on your shorter papers. You can choose to revise one short paper from both novels, or combine a couple of them, or write a new, longer paper on both novels. The papers should make interesting textual or conceptual arguments about the novels. You will get feedback on drafts from Prof. Vee before they are graded.

"Found" book

You will assemble a small, short book out of materials you've found around campus or your house. (You may have to purchase a glue stick or staples to keep the book together). The book should be about something related to the class, but that "something" is up to you: your time at Pitt; college; the future of work; technology in your life; bioengineering; etc. Your book should have some characteristics of other books: a front and back cover, a binding, and at least six pages (including one title/about the author page). This will be graded on an A/C/F basis so that you have some room to be creative.

"Local" Website

In a series of steps that we'll do in class and outside of class, you will construct a website on your free webspace available through Pitt. For the first weeks, you will just try out some designs and learn how to write some html and upload images to the web. The final version of your website will be focused on a local topic of your choice—perhaps a building in town, a neighborhood, an organization, an issue. You'll have to do both primary and secondary research for this assignment. Your final version of the website should include at least 4 images, 3 pages, and 1500 words. It should be more than just a Wikipedia page on the issue/place/history. Tell a compelling story about the topic that makes a compelling argument.

Final Project

Your final project can take one of several different forms: a physical book, a website, or a traditional essay. The topic is also your choice, although it should be related to the class and it should be relevant to your future at Pitt or your future beyond Pitt. There should be a visual and textual element to your project (in other words, it must have a deliberate design plus words). Rather than a minimum word limit, this project has a minimum time limit: 20 hours. You will keep track of your time spent on a website we can all see. With your final project, you will turn in a cover letter addressed to Prof. Vee that explains why you made the choices you made in your design and form of your Final Project. (This project will be graded 5% for the presentation (A/C/F), 5% for project design (A/C/F) and 5% for the writing (A-F).

Participation

In-class: Participation in the class consists of short writings in class and on the course blog, peer review, discussion, and your general contribution to the work we do together. Participation grades are by their nature subjective, which does not mean they are arbitrary.

Someone with an excellent participation grade:
* will have attended class and appeared engaged without fail;
* will have offered timely, insightful comments to his peers;
* will have always brought her readings or other materials to class;
* will have contributed regularly and thoughtfully to class discussions both online and offline.

Some people are more likely to speak up than others and some are more comfortable sharing ideas after they have had more time to process them; for these reasons, I offer both online (that is, written and not time-sensitive) and offline (that is, vocal and real-time) venues in which to participate in the class. It's normal to be more comfortable in one space than another, but I strongly believe that you will need to be proficient in sharing your ideas in real-time, asynchronous, written and face-to-face contexts to be a successful teacher, entrepreneur, employee, or anything else you may want to be in the future. Therefore, I will consider your participation across all of these venues and may call on you both in class and online to give you an opportunity to share your ideas. Please see me if you have questions about how to participate more actively in any area of the class.

Participation in workshops
We have two field trips scheduled during class time—to Hack Pittsburgh in Uptown Pittsburgh, and to Assemble, in Friendship/Garfield. These are workspaces for local making/hacking groups and the leaders of these groups have agreed to run a workshop to help us make something. You are expected to participate and respect the time they're giving us. Additionally, you will post one entry and one response on the blog about each event (due the day after the workshop).

IAS event participation
This includes all of the field trips to the Carnegie Museum, attending at least one Oryx and Crake lecture, visits to the Writing Center and Math assistance, emailing Prof. Vee to set up an appointment, paying attention and participation in class discussions about IAS topics, etc.

Blog participation
The class blog is a central space for you to wrestle with the ideas from the class. Participation on the blog will be graded, but you will also be asked to submit two blog portfolios of your best writing to be graded. Both of these portfolios will include 2 posts and 4 responses of your choice, plus a cover letter addressed to Prof. Vee reflecting on your writing on the blog.

You will be split into two groups:
Group 1=last names A-Q
Group 2=last names R-Z

Each week, one group will post to the blog and the other group will respond to TWO different posts. Posts and responses should be at least 200 words long. KP and I will also post to the blog to offer you additional ways to reflect on the readings and ideas from class.
Blog posts should ask probing questions about the readings or ideas from class; alternatively, they may extend an idea from class or point to a current event that connects to our discussions. **Blog comments** should respond to a post by answering a posted question in a complex, thoughtful way or by extending the connection posted even further or in different directions.

You are welcome and encouraged to post more often than you are required to. The goal is for the blog to be a conversation about our ideas, not a series of monologues (as class discussion boards often are). Do not simply agree or disagree with your peers; nothing is ever that simple. Instead, comment on specific points and extend ideas and complicate theories. If you're doing it right, the word minimum shouldn't be your primary motivation; instead, you should think about spending the time and space necessary to reflect on complex ideas. Although you should generate and reflect on difficult ideas in your post, you are encouraged to write in a relatively informal, online style. Include links and images to illustrate your points. The blog is public (although your name will be anonymized) and so you should consider your posts carefully.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance
Regular attendance in this course is required. Because this is a low enrollment course, your presence and contributions affect everyone. Regular attendance also means that you are writing and responding to writing regularly, and it means that your peers and I can give your writing the attention it deserves. For these reasons, you need to be in class, on time, prepared, every meeting. If you miss more than **one** meeting of this course (one week of class), your final grade will be lowered one-half a letter grade. If you miss more than two weeks total of this course (2 class meetings), you will not pass the course.

It is your responsibility to get the assignments, class notes, and course changes from a classmate if you do miss a class. It is also your responsibility to keep track of and complete the missing work. In-class work cannot be made up. If you miss class on the day a written assignment is due, make arrangements to turn it in on time. As mentioned above, every day a project is late the grade drops by one letter grade.

I understand that things happen and occasionally you may need to miss a class because you're sick, you've missed your flight back to campus, or you have pressing personal or family issues. The policy above allows for one absence for any reason without penalty. If you need to be absent for some extraordinary reason—because of a severe accident or illness, a family emergency or death, a religious holiday—please let me know, and we will work something out. For such absences, either prior notification or subsequent documentation will be required.

Guidelines for Written Work
I have specified word limits for assignments rather than page limits so that you do not need to use wide margins or tiny, strange fonts to display your work. Please use reader-friendly fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Garamond, or Helvetica and sizes that are humane for your readers (10-12 point). Please use 1.5 to 2 line spacing. All work, including drafts, should be printed out and turned in at the beginning of class the day it is due, unless otherwise noted or arranged with me.

Academic Integrity

The University asks us to include in our course descriptions this quotation from Pitt's Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (February 1974):

> The integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation on the part of faculty and honest academic conduct on the part of students. To this end, students are expected to conduct themselves at a high level of responsibility in the fulfillment of the course of their study. It is the corresponding responsibility of faculty to make clear to students those standards by which students will be evaluated, and the resources permissible for use by students during the course of their study and evaluation. The educational process is perceived as a joint faculty-student enterprise which will perforce involve professional judgment by faculty and may involve—without penalty—reasoned exception by students to the data or views offered by faculty.

Plagiarism hurts the relationships and scholarship we construct during this class. Assignments for this course are designed to be relevant to your specific contexts—your personal literacy narrative, your future work as a teacher or learner, etc.—and are therefore rarely plagiarized in full. More commonly, students plagiarize by improperly quoting and documenting their sources. We will review how to properly document sources in class and I am happy to answer questions about how you can ensure that work you do for the class is your own. Additionally, please visit the English Department's site defining plagiarism and explaining how to properly document sources: http://www.englishlit.pitt.edu/lit_plagiarism.html.

Should you plagiarize, consequences are severe: students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted above, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process that I initiate. A minimum sanction of a failing grade for the paper or project will be imposed.

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. Writing Center consultants can help you learn how to generate ideas, organize your writing, and understand assignments. They can help you understand and deal with any sentence-level problems that you have, too. It's a great place to go in order to have a reader respond to your work so that you can do some intensive work on your writing. You can call for an appointment at (412) 624-6556 or make an appointment online: http://www.rich36.com/pitt/ .

The writing center is located in 317B of O'Hara Street Student Center and it is open Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. You can also visit the satellite site at Hillman Library. Visit the Writing Center website at http://www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter/ for more information.

Technology etiquette

Please turn off your cell phone **before** class begins and keep it inside your book bag, purse, etc—do *not* keep it on your desk during class. I allow and encourage the use of computers, netbooks, tablets, etc. in class for those who want to take notes digitally during class. These devices are *not* for socializing during class, however—during class you must log out of Facebook, Twitter, IM and the message boards you follow. Studies show that these activities are distracting to your ability to learn and participate. You may visit our blog, Wikipedia or

dictionary sites, etc. to help you understand a concept we're discussing in class, but be prepared to explain any of your in-class Internet use to the entire class. If you are socializing online or on your phone (including texting) during class, then you will be considered absent for that class period. Please contact me if you have specific questions about this policy.

Course Schedule

Life is complicated; consequently, this schedule is subject to change.

Week 1 (Sep 1): Introduction to course and DIY culture

Discuss course theme DIY, go over schedule, grading, and expectations
IAS: Bring in syllabi from other classes: how do we read these?
IAS: CourseWeb expectations
IAS: classroom civility
Discuss writing in the real world and the future of work
Diagnostic writing

Week 2 (Sep 8): Starting again!

IAS: Transition to college & writing: starting over!
IAS: Getting help: using Pitt resources: WC, Math assistance, etc.
IAS: How to talk to professors
Talk about "Shitty first drafts"
Discuss first section of Oryx & Crake
Peer review of first short essay (intro to peer review)
Schedule conferences in class
    Due:
    Register for blog (invitation code= MAKING); post on something you have failed productively at; respond to TWO people's posts.
    Read Anne Lamott, "Shitty first drafts" (on CourseWeb)
    Oryx & Crake, part 1 (up to p110)
    300 word essay on Oryx and Crake (#1), answering the question posted under "Assignments" on CourseWeb.
    IAS: Write me to set up a meeting

[Sept 9-14, outside of class: 15min confs with Prof. Vee in 628C CL]

Week 3 (Sep 15): Style

IAS: Asking for recommendations
Q&A about academic stuff
Discuss second section of Oryx & Crake
Peer review of second short essay
Discuss style
    Due:
    Readings on style, Zinsser and Williams
    Reading: Lupton, excerpts on personal design from DIY 29-31
    Oryx & Crake, part 2
    300 word essay on Oryx and Crake (#2)
    Blog post and response
    IAS: Visit to the Writing Center, Math assistance
    IAS: Write Prof. Vee to practice asking for a recommendation
    Blogs: Group 1 posts Mon night, Sep 12; Group 2 responds Weds night, Sep 14.

[Pittsburgh Neighborhood visits this week]

Week 4 (Sep 22): Collaboration

IAS: Academic honesty
IAS: Finding resources, creative commons, fair use.

IAS: Present Neighborhood projects
Discuss third section of Oryx & Crake
Peer review: essays on O&C in class, discuss strategies for revision and expansion
        Due:
        Read Oryx & Crake, part 3 (until end)
        300 word essay on Oryx and Crake (#3)
        IAS: Pittsburgh neighborhood trip
        IAS: Read Pitt's policy on Academic Integrity: http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html
        DIY 23-27, on property
        Blogs: Group 2 posts Mon night, Sep 19; Group 1 responds Weds night, Sep 21.

Week 5 (Sep 29): Field trip to Assemble!

Field trip to Assemble, 5125 Penn Ave. (Friendship/Garfield neighborhood)
        Due:
        IAS: Visit the Carnegie Museum of Art's Craft exhibit
        750-1000 word essay on Oryx & Crake (draft 1 due to Prof Vee)
        Read: DIY 37-49, on bookmaking
        ADDITIONAL BLOG POST: Post on the blog about the workshop by Sept 30, and respond to another's
        post by Sept 31.
        Blogs: Group 1 posts Mon night, Sep 26; Group 2 responds Weds night, Sep 28.

[Oct. 3-7: IAS mandatory event: Attend Information session on Opportunities in Undergrad Research]

Week 6 (Oct 6): Self-reliance

IAS: registering, knowing what options are open to you for majors, ugrad research, study abroad
Discuss Shirky: "Gin, Television, and the Cognitive Surplus"
Celebrate "Found" books and/or Assemble projects in class
        Due:
        Read: Shirky, "Gin, Television, and the Cognitive Surplus"
        "Found" book: assemble a homemade book entirely from things you've found.
        Optional trip to Unblurred gallery night, Fri Oct 7 on Penn Ave. (Assemble is part of this)
        Blogs: Group 2 posts Mon night, Oct 3; Group 1 responds Weds night, Oct 5.

[Conferences with Prof. Vee this week.]

Week 7 (Oct 13): Class canceled for conferences & UGrad Research

(Prof. Vee is out of town)
        Due on CourseWeb by midnight, Thurs, Oct 13:
        750-1000 word essay on Oryx and Crake, Final draft
        Midterm blog portfolio (the best of your blogs and a cover letter describing your work)

Blog posts are optional this week.

Week 8 (Oct 20): The Future of Work

Discuss Cory Doctorow's Makers, part 1
Peer review Makers essay #1
Talk about WWW, basic HTML & how to set up a page on Pitt's server
      Due:
      Read: Makers, part 1 (up to pg 49, available free: http://craphound.com/makers/Cory_Doctorow_-
      _Makers_Letter.pdf)
      300 word essay on Makers (#1)
      Read Wired articles on DIY revolution
      (optional workshop on web set-up this week)
      Blogs: Group 1 posts Mon night, Oct 17; Group 2 responds Weds night, Oct 19.

Week 9 (Oct 27): Digital Self-reliance (meet in G26 CL computer classroom)

Discuss Makers, part 2 (up to pg 84)
Emerson, "The American Scholar" (in class)
Talk about digital self-reliance: what does that mean now?
Discuss web writing, part 2.
Image workshop
Discuss "Local" Website project
      Due:
      Makers, part 2
      300 word essay on Makers (#2)
      Read various websites on DIY/Hacker culture
      Set up your Pitt webspace and post an image and an introduction to your online space
      (optional workshop on web & image writing this week)
      Blogs: Group 2 posts Mon night, Oct 24; Group 1 responds Weds night, Oct 26.

Week 10 (Nov 3): Field trip to HackPittsburgh!

Field trip to Hack Pittsburgh, 1936 Fifth Ave. (Uptown neighborhood)
      Due:
      750-1000 word essay on Makers (due to Prof. Vee)
      Website progress
      ADDITIONAL BLOG POST: Post on the blog about the workshop by Nov 4, and respond to another's
      post by Nov 5.
      Blogs: Group 1 posts Mon night, Oct 31; Group 2 responds Weds night, Nov 2.

[Due Nov 7 on CourseWeb: 150 word proposal on a local topic]

Week 11 (Nov 10): New vs. old work (meet in Hillman Lib computer classroom)

Library session: 6-7:15pm
In–class: "The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
Web-writing, part 3
      Due:
      Website with at least 2 pages and 2 images, plus cover letter
      Read this Pitt library guide: http://pitt.libguides.com/ias
      Reading on research, TBA

Blogs: Group 2 posts Mon night, Nov 7; Group 2 responds Weds night, Nov 9.

Week 12 (Nov 17): Composition & Technology

Discuss composition strategies for Local Website, present drafts
Discuss Final Project ideas.
In-class: Reading "Technologies as a form of life"
> Due:
> Website with at least 3 pages, 4 images.
> 400 word draft of your Local website text, plus an annotated bibliography with one primary source and two secondary sources.
> *Blogs: Group 1 posts Mon night, Nov 14; Group 2 responds Weds night, Nov 16.*

[Nov 21-23: Confs with Prof. Vee about final projects]

Week 13 (Nov 24) Class canceled for Thanksgiving

Due Mon., Nov. 21, midnight: Email link to your Local Website to your peers, including all elements of final version.
Due Mon., Nov. 28, midnight: Email your comments on your peers' Local Websites.
> *Blogs: Group 2 posts Mon night, Nov 22; Group 2 responds Weds night, Nov 23.*

Week 14 (Dec 1): Wrap-up discussion & presentations

Begin presentations of Final Projects
> Due:
> Send link to Local Website draft to Prof Vee for comments.
> *Blogs are optional from here on.*

Week 15 (Dec 8): Final Presentations

Presentations of final projects
> Due:
> Final Blog Portfolio

Finals week (Dec 15): Day of Reckoning (no class)

> Due:
> Final Projects
> Final draft of Local Website