

## **Course Syllabus**

### **COM 75-304-01; Digital Rhetorics**

Instructor: Andrew Rechnitz

Days: TTH

Time: 2:30-3:45

Unique ID: 22616

Location: Olin 208

Office Location: SLC 201

Office Hours: TTH 11:00-12:00, and by appointment

#### **Course Description:**

This course will serve as a practicum for students who are interested in learning how rhetoric can be applied to the analysis, design and development of digital media projects. The coursework will be divided into four units: Units I and IV will focus on rhetorical analysis and web development; Unit II will examine visual rhetoric and graphic design; and Unit III will explore multimodal rhetorics and audio/video production. For each of these units, you will produce a high-quality project geared toward a specific audience and write a short paper that explains how you utilized rhetorical principals to guide the design process. After completing these units, you will propose, design, and execute a final project that showcases the digital rhetoric skills you have acquired. Throughout the semester, you also will submit weekly reports that chronicle your experience applying rhetoric to digital projects, preferably using different media platforms.

#### **Attendance Policy:**

You are expected to attend class, to arrive on time, to have prepared the assigned reading and writing, and to participate in all in-class editing, revising, discussion, and studio sessions. Should you miss the equivalent of five TTH class sessions this semester, excused or not, you will fail the course. Please do not contact me about any missed classes unless the University has already excused them. You will not be penalized for missing class on religious holy days. A student who misses classes or other required activities for the observance of a religious holy day should inform me, in writing, well in advance of the absence so that alternative arrangements can be made to complete work. Please note that the University specifies very few other excused absences (e.g., jury duty). When you must miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate.

#### **Coursework and Grading:**

For a course like this, evaluation can be tricky. The time and energy spent composing digital projects is often difficult to quantify just by looking at the projects themselves, and students invariably will come to the course with different levels of experience working in a given medium. We will review the specifics of the grading policy as it pertains to each project when the time is appropriate, but for now you should understand that, generally speaking, *you* will make a case for the grades you receive this semester. I will of course review your projects and provide my own evaluation of your work, but a good deal of my assessment also will be based on how thoughtful and thorough your

weekly reports are and how well your short papers articulate the connection between rhetoric and the design process. Please note that the deadlines for weekly reports are non-negotiable.

10 Weekly Reports – 20 pts. (2 pts. each; completion grades)

Coding Units – 8 pts. (2 pts./unit; completion grades)

Image Project deliverable – 10 pts.

Image Project short paper (2 pages) – 5 pts.

Audio Project deliverable – 10 pts.

Audio Project short paper (2 pages) – 5 pts.

Interactive Website Project deliverable – 10 pts.

Interactive Website Project short paper (2 pages) – 5 pts.

Final Project proposal (1 page) – 2 pts.

Final Project deliverable – 15 pts.

Final Report (2-5 pages) – 10 pts.

92.5–100 = A

89.5–92.4 = A-

86.5–89.4 = B+

82.5–86.4 = B

79.5–82.4 = B-

76.5–79.4 = C+

72.5–76.4 = C

59.5–72.4 = D

Below 59.5 = F

Pluses and minuses will be part of the grading scale in this class. Class attendance is required and students are responsible for all class work, on the date the work is due.

Southwestern University will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To arrange accommodations students should contact the Office of Academic Success on the first floor of the Prothro Center for Life Long Learning. Students seeking accommodations should do so at least two weeks before services are needed. It is the student's responsibility to discuss any necessary accommodations with the appropriate faculty member.

### **Academic Honesty:**

The Southwestern University Honor Pledge—*I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not*—pertains to and should appear on all of your work this semester. I will specify how the pledge pertains to different assignments but also urge you to ask me any questions about course policy and to consult [www.southwestern.edu/academics/honorcode](http://www.southwestern.edu/academics/honorcode) in not only this class but also in all your classes.

## Schedule:

### Week 1

Tuesday, August 25

Class: General introductions; Codecademy account registration; Google Drive setup  
Homework: Complete the Codecademy HTML/CSS lessons 1-6 (if you're confused about the lesson divisions, click [here](#) to see a breakdown); when you finish lesson 6, copy your code into a plain text editor, and save it with a **.html** extension; visit Dan Nguyen's [website](#) and follow his directions for setting up an Amazon Web Services account; upload your .html file to your new bucket; share the link to your webpage with me via Google Drive **by 11:59pm on Wednesday**

Thursday, August 27

Class: Introduction to rhetorical analysis; website design I (fonts and colors)  
Homework: Codecademy HTML/CSS lessons 7-13; use your new coding knowledge to create a stylesheet for your original .html file and update your webpage (you can test your code using the [JSFiddle](#) online editor); upload both files to your Amazon bucket; compose Weekly Report 1 (upload the file to Google drive and share it with me **by 11:59pm on Monday**)

### Week 2

Tuesday, September 1

**Due:** Weekly Report 1

Class: Introduction to rhetorical analysis; website design II (usability)  
Homework: Codecademy HTML/CSS lessons 14-19

Thursday, September 3

**Due:** Codecademy Unit 1

Class: Codecademy "Build a Resume" project

Homework: Use creative commons content to build a simple website aimed at students. The theme of the website should focus on learning to code (be sure to include a Works Cited page); publish the website to your Amazon account and share the link with me via Google Drive **by 11:59pm on Sunday**; compose Weekly Report 2 and upload to your Google Drive folder **by 11:59pm on Monday** (follow the same submission guidelines for all future Weekly Reports)

### Week 3

Tuesday, September 8

**Due:** Website; Weekly Report 2

Class: Review of websites; introduction to the Image Project and visual rhetoric  
Homework: Read Scott McCloud's "[The Vocabulary of Comics](#);" read the [Drawing Basics](#) guide for Adobe Illustrator; watch the first two [Get Started](#) Illustrator tutorials (1. Overview and 2. Essentials for Beginners); play the learning games ([How to use the Line Tool](#), [Try drawing shapes](#), [How to use Shape Builder](#), and the [Play the Pen Tool game](#))

Thursday, September 10

Class: Discuss reading and Illustrator introduction; 10-minute design challenge

Homework: Read J. Anthony Blair's "[The Possibility and Actuality of Visual Arguments](#);" watch the "[How to Design a Logo](#)" video; begin audience research for Image Project; compose Weekly Report 3 and upload it to your Google Drive folder **by 11:59pm on Monday**

#### **Week 4**

Tuesday, September 15

**Due:** Weekly Report 3

Class: Discuss reading; Illustrator workshop on logos

Homework: Come to class with 4-5 mockups of the design for your Image Project

Thursday, September 17

Class: Group critique of mockups

Homework: watch additional [Illustrator tutorials](#) (click on the Learning Essentials tab) to learn new techniques that will enhance your project; continue designing your Image Project (make sure you save all of your work to Google Drive!); compose Weekly Report 4 and upload it to your Google Drive folder **by 11:59pm on Monday**

#### **Week 5**

Tuesday, September 22

**Due:** Weekly Report 4

Class: Studio session

Homework: Continue designing your Image Project

Thursday, September 24

Class: Studio session

Homework: Finish a draft of your Image Project and upload it to Google Drive for peer review; compose Weekly Report 5 and upload it to your Google Drive folder **by 11:59pm on Monday**

#### **Week 6**

Tuesday, September 29

**Due:** Weekly Report 5

Class: Peer Review

Homework: Revise your Image Project deliverable, and compose your Image Project reflection paper; upload both files to Google Drive and to your website **by the beginning of class on Thursday**.

Thursday, October 1

**Due:** Image Project deliverable and short paper

Class: Introduction to A/V Project

Homework: Read Tony O'Keeffe's "[Multimodality's Complex Invitation to Remake Text, Meaning, and Audience](#);" register for a SoundCloud account and a Vimeo account; compose Weekly Report 6

### **Week 7**

Tuesday, October 6

**Due:** Weekly Report 6

Class: Workshop on sound and video recording

Homework: Watch the iMovie tutorials (available on Google Drive); come to class prepared to discuss your ideas for the A/V Project.

Thursday, October 8

Class: Discuss projects; workshop on editing

Homework: Watch the GarageBand tutorials (available on Google Drive); collect media for A/V project and upload it to your Google Drive folder; compose Weekly Report 7

### **Week 8**

Tuesday, October 13

**Fall Break**

Thursday, October 15

**Due:** Weekly Report 7

Class: Studio session (editing and production)

Homework: Continue (re)mixing and editing your clip(s); compose Weekly Report 8

### **Week 9**

Tuesday, October 20

**Due:** Weekly Report 8

Class: Studio Session (editing and production)

Homework: Complete a rough draft of your A/V Project and upload it to Vimeo or SoundCloud for peer review **by 11:59pm on Wednesday** (after uploading, **send me the link** to your project)

Thursday, October 22

Class: Peer review

Homework: Revise your A/V Project; upload both the deliverable and your short paper to your website and to Google Drive **by the beginning of class on Tuesday**

### **Week 10**

Tuesday, October 27

**Due:** A/V Project

Class: Introduction to the Interactive Website Project; review of HTML and CSS (Codecademy Make a Website unit and the [Broadway Website Project](#))

Homework: finish in-class HTML/CSS projects; Codecademy jQuery

Thursday, October 29

**Due:** Codecademy Units 2 and 3

Class: Advanced rhetorical analysis; interactive websites I (design phase)

Homework: Codecademy Make an Interactive Website; Weekly Report 9

### **Week 11**

Tuesday, November 3

**Due:** Weekly Report 9; Codecademy Unit 4

Class: Advanced rhetorical analysis; interactive websites II (development phase)

Homework: Watch tutorial on Wireframes (available on Google Drive); create a wireframe in Illustrator for your interactive website and upload it to your website and to your Google Drive folder **by 11:59pm on Wednesday**

Thursday, November 5

Class: Group critique of wireframes; studio session

Homework: Finish your Interactive Website Project; upload both the deliverable and your short paper to your website and to Google Drive **by the beginning of class on Tuesday**

### **Week 12**

Tuesday, November 10

**Due:** Interactive Website Project

Class: Introduction to the Final Project and review of Final Project Guidelines

Homework: Create a pitch for your Final Project proposal, and upload it to Vimeo for peer review

Thursday, November 12

Class: Peer review of Final Project proposals

Homework: Weekly Report 10; upload your revised Final Project proposal to Google Drive **by the beginning of class on Tuesday**

### **Week 13**

Tuesday, November 17

**Due:** Weekly Report 10; revised Final Project proposal

Class: Studio Session

Homework: Work on Final Project

Thursday, November 19

Class: Studio Session

Homework: Work on Final Project

### **Week 14**

Thanksgiving Break

### **Week 15**

Tuesday, December 1

Class: Final Project Presentations; course evaluations

Homework: Work on Final Report

Thursday, December 3

Class: Final project Presentations; closing remarks

**Submit Final Report and Final Project deliverable by 11:59pm on December 11<sup>th</sup>**