

[English 326 – Cultural Identity and Representation Across the Media]

[T/Th 11:45 am – 1:00 pm, 252 O'Donnell Hall]

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Office: F3 Milton Hall (Graduate Teaching Complex)

Office Hours: By appointment

[Course Description]

The course considers the relationships between representation and culture including how images and languages shape racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, and socioeconomic identities. We will examine theories from several disciplines regarding ways to critically analyze media and technologies. We will spend the semester considering how we “write” ourselves and our communities and how we are “written” by technologies and media around us. We will investigate visual rhetoric as a means for interpreting the world around us and will consider the use of visual, audio, and cultural conventions within certain technological communities (Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Blackboard) in creating individual and group identities. We will also discuss the importance of identification through association (with one another, with media, with brands, etc) and how such identity via association necessitates critical awareness of the technologies we use.

[Required Texts and Materials]

Because there is not a textbook for this class, students will be required to access and annotate electronically provided articles (via Blackboard or websites). This may require printing costs on the part of the student.

- Twitter account (see assignments)
- You will also need some sort of storage device (jump drive, CD, Dropbox) as we begin working on projects in class.

[Course Requirements]

Attendance and Participation

A great deal of what we do in this course will build upon discussion and work done during class meetings. Therefore, **daily attendance is required for this class**. I understand that illness and family emergencies may arise; if it is a true emergency, please discuss this with me as soon as possible and we can work something out. Also keep in mind that missing my class to do work or projects for other classes is not an excused absence. Please remember that it is your responsibility to find out from your peers what you missed in class. Contact me as soon as possible via email if you know you must be absent. We will do many graded in-class assignments and these cannot be made up. **Excessive absences (six or more) will result in failure of the course**. Additionally, each tardy counts as a half an absence, therefore, please be on time.

Projects

Because of this course's focus on new media and technology, we will be producing a few “writing” assignments in modes other than traditional alphabetic essays. However, traditional essays remain an important part of the class and may be used to reflect on our own new media production, as well as consumption in our culture. There will also be occasional in-class and out-of-class writings designed to help us critically discuss topics in the course.

Late Work

All work must be turned in on time and during class. Assignments in this course are designed to build on one another so getting behind with coursework may impact your ability to successfully complete the class. **I will not accept late work** unless you have made arrangements with me **well in advance of the due date**. The decision of whether or not I accept late work is solely mine. I will not accept or grade late work that is left on my desk or sent to my email. If you are unable to turn in an assignment for emergency reasons, please inform me as soon as possible so we can work together to help get you caught up.

Cell Phones/Texting

Don't do it. And if you choose to do so anyway, I reserve the right to ask you to leave.

Individual Conference

Talking about writing, whether it be traditional papers or new media texts, only increases the odds for writing to be successful and so there will be in-class time to discuss writing with other members of the class. Additionally, students will meet with me at least once this semester to discuss major course projects and the overall class. Although only one conference is required, **I encourage students to make an appointment to meet with me to discuss any issues involving the course.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, in any form, will not be tolerated. The *NMSU Student Handbook* includes a statement on academic misconduct. If you have any questions or concerns about this, review the policy statement in the handbook, visit the library's statement on plagiarism (<http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>) and/or come see me.

Services for Students with Disabilities

I urge any student with specific needs or concerns in this area to meet with me or to visit the SSD Office. New Mexico State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for qualified NMSU students in accordance with state and federal laws. Students with documented physical, learning, or psychological disabilities should feel free to drop by the SSD office in Room 244 of the Corbett Center or to call (575) 646-1918.

[Course Projects and Assignments]

Major assignments will include instructions and explanations of grading expectations for each project.

In-class activities – 20%

Group work, several short writing assignments, peer reviews and other in-class work will be included in the final course grade and will often build towards your final projects. Many of these assignments are graded and some are not, but all are mandatory and necessary to contribute to your success in this course.

Reading Responses – 10%

There will be 9 reading responses due throughout the semester. They will be important as they will prepare you for in-class discussions of those readings.

Twitter – 10%

This class requires you to create and maintain a Twitter account throughout the semester. I will sometimes provide you with Twitter prompts, but often you will be responsible for updating your account with links or discussion with others.

Article Review – 15%

The article review will be a 3-page critique of a piece of research or scholarship related to new media. Writers will choose from scholarly articles read in class and will respond to questions of author ethos, use of theory, relevance to scholarly conversation, and possible connections to popular culture.

Group Project – 15%

For this assignment, groups will work in groups to persuade someone (a company, a celebrity, a non-profit organization, a teacher, etc.) to adopt a specific media tool, space or philosophy. To make your case, groups will utilize research, observation, and theory.

Online Tech Autobiography – 30%

Each class member will tell his or her own story with technology through a technology

autobiography. These will be created through multiple new media spaces and approaches. We will spend time in class creating these projects and will also workshop projects in progress with the members of the class. The final project for the class will be presented the last weeks of class and into our scheduled finals week meeting. Students will also turn in a reflection essay on the tech autobiography project explaining decisions made during the project and citing theories, readings, or other research from this course that is pertinent to the project.