Public Writing with Technology (ENGL4373/5391)
"Digital Rhetoric and Identity"

Instructor: Dr. June Oh
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Class Meeting: Online (asynchronous)
Office: CAS (College of Arts and Sciences) 240
Office Hours: Mon 12-2 pm via Zoom & Wed 3-4 pm in-person; and by appointment

Course Information*

A seminar in experiential learning requiring a digital project for a local organization or business. Topics include, but are not limited to, public writing, writing for non-profit organization, cooperate writing, citizenship and literacy, economy and writing technology, media and community, machine-assisted writing technologies, and digital writing platforms. End projects may be displayed on a public domain owned by the University.

*This class meet with ENGL5391

Course Description

This course asks students to apply the skills, concepts, and composing strategies from the Writing and Technology minor to practical, real-world contexts. Students will examine the dynamics of digital rhetoric, focusing on the phenomenon of "granfluencers," digital identity, the social media platform writing culture.

Students will independently research a local business, organization, or social issue to develop a sustainable digital profile that reflects a digital writing culture identity, thoughtfully curating rhetorical choices across text, visuals, and other elements.

In addition to online lectures and activities that introduce students to foundational theories of digital rhetoric and digital writing, the course will also examine AI-driven tools such as Word, Grammarly, and ChatGPT, exploring how they can influence the writing process. Students will critically examine the benefits and limitations of machine-assisted writing platforms and tools, considering their impact on creativity, authorship, and the integrity of the writing process.

As English majors, students will engage in ethical discussions surrounding Gen-AI's role in writing and communication, while learning to navigate the challenges of producing high-quality, original work in a digitally enhanced writing environment.

The class requires a proactive approach and fosters self-directed learning, encouraging students to develop independent research skills and responsibly integrate digital tools into their writing practices.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Identify key concepts and theories related to digital rhetoric.
2. Explain the impact of digital rhetoric on communication and identity formation within social media platforms.
3. Design, refine, and produce a quality digital project by strategically incorporating AI-driven tools.
4. Evaluate and explain the author's media and writing choices for effective communication.
5. Produce a final project that integrates research, AI tools, and mindful curation of digital elements, demonstrating independent thinking and ethical decision-making.
6. Cultivate and apply habits of proactive self-directed learning.

Texts and Course Materials

Students will need to create or use social media accounts and have regular access to them. All texts will be provided by the instructor and will be uploaded on our class Canvas shell. Readings may evolve based on the class's interest and need.

<u>Reading List</u>

Social Media
- Dyer, H. T., & Abidin, C. (2022). Understanding identity and platform cultures. In W. Housley, A. Edwards, R. Beneito-Montagut, & R. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of digital society* (pp. 170–187). SAGE Publications.

Digital Rhetoric
- Miller, Carolyn R. "Genre as Social Action." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70.2 (1984): 151-167.

Granfluencer

- Banerjee, M. (2023). Successful aging on Instagram? Gender, age, and the "rise of the granfluencer." *Gender Forum, 22*(2), 87–113.

- Fielding, C. (2023, August 14). How granfluencers are breaking stereotypes on TikTok. *Fielding Graduate University*. https://www.fielding.edu/how-granfluencers-are-breaking-stereotypes-on-tiktok/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- Harvey, L. (2019, May 22). The rise of the 'granfluencer.' *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/bbcthree/article/d6e8fb6f-b92f-4952-ae3c-62bc5974ce6f
- Ng, R., & Indran, N. (2023). Granfluencers on TikTok: Factors linked to positive self-portrayals of older adults on social media. *PLOS ONE, 18*(2). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0280281

Critical AI Usage and Writing with Digital Tools
- Clarke, Roger. "The Risks of AI Writing Tools." *Communications of the ACM*, 64(11), (2021): 55-62.
- McKee, H. A., & Porter, J. E. (2020). Ethics for AI writing: The importance of rhetorical context. *AIES 2020 - Proceedings of the AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society*, 110–116. https://doi.org/10.1145/3375627.3375811
- Rad, H. S., Alipour, R., & Jafarpour, A. (2024). Using artificial intelligence to foster students' writing feedback literacy, engagement, and outcome: a case of Wordtune application. *Interactive Learning Environments*. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2023.2208170
- *Using ChatGPT as a technical writing assistant*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 6, 2025, from https://martinfowler.com/articles/2023-chatgpt-tech-writing.html

Important Notes Technology

1. You will need access to a laptop/desktop and internet.
2. You will need to create or use your existing social media account.
3. You should **regularly check Canvas** (announcement, course schedule, assignments, modules, etc.) **and emails.**
4. For a tutorial on announcements, click here. To manage notifications, click on "Canvas notifications" in the blue box at the top of the page. For help in resetting notifications, click on the help button on the left-hand side of your UTT Canvas home page (the question mark in a circle) and call the "Canvas Support Hotline (Students)."

Course Grade

		Points
Theory	Discussion Response	15
Experimentation	Example analysis	15
	Proposal	10
	Critical Gen-AI report	10
Creation	Profiles	25

	Rationale with a Log	15
Evaluation	Reflection essay	10
		100 points

Grade Scale

A   90   to   100   points
B   80   to   89   points
C   70   to   79   points
D   60   to   69   points
F   0   to   59   points

Minimum Requirement to Earn a C in the Class

To earn a C or above in the class, students must earn a C or above **on *all* components**. A grade of D or F on major assignments will result in the grade for the class being no higher than a D.

Syllabus Changes

Per the UTT Syllabus Policy: "The information contained in the syllabus, other than the grading criteria and absence and make-up policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice as long as the change is without prejudice to the students."

Important Dates

1/27   Census date
3/31   Last day to withdraw
4/28   Final reflection due

Major Assignments

All writings done in this class are public and will be publicly shared.

THEORY AND CONTEXT
Students will work collaboratively in groups to analyze and discuss weekly readings that introduce foundational theories of digital rhetoric, digital writing/culture identity, and AI-assisted writing practices. Together, they will examine how these theories inform the creation, representation, and reception of digital texts and identities.

Discussion Response (15 points):

Students will post a short response (about 300 words) to a discussion prompt based on the weekly reading, highlighting key concepts, debates, and connections to real-world examples. Through this process, students will practice critical reading and rhetorical analysis, developing a shared understanding of how digital platforms and tools shape communication, identity construction, and audience engagement.

EXPERIMENTATION: DEVELOPMENT PHASE
Students will engage in structured experimentation to develop and refine their ideas for the final digital project. Through research, planning, and hands-on interaction with AI-driven tools, they will critically examine how digital rhetoric and technology influence writing and design processes.

Example Analysis (15 points):

In this assignment, students will conduct a rhetorical analysis of a digital profile and its social media presence related to their chosen topic, organization, or business. Using a historically-informed and theoretical lens, they will evaluate how texts, visuals, and design elements work together to construct identity, convey messages, and engage audiences.

Proposal (10 points):
The Proposal assignment encourages students to map out their project goals, identifying the topic, audience, and key rhetorical strategies while considering the integration of machine-assisted tools. This step emphasizes thoughtful planning and problem-solving to anticipate challenges and ensure alignment with the course's focus on digital writing practices, identity, and culture.

Critical Gen-AI report (10 points):
In this assignment, students will use AI-driven writing tools (e.g., Grammarly, ChatGPT) to assist in the revision or generation of a written component of their project while experimenting with getting "feedback" from them. They will reflect on the effectiveness of the tool, its impact on their writing process, and any ethical concerns of using AI tools a collaborators in the writing and revision process.

CREATION, ANALYSIS, & METACOGNITION
Students will rationalize their rhetorical and digital design choices. Students will also discuss how digital technology allows and navigates various methods of communication and describe their process, challenges, and successes in implementing their plan in detail.

Final Profile (20 points):
Students will submit their completed social media profile. The project should demonstrate an effective use of AI and digital tools to create a polished, mindfully curated product with an attention to digital rhetoric and digital writing culture identity.

Rationale with a Log (15 points):

This assignment requires students to write a rationale that clearly articulates and rationalize the choices they made throughout their digital project based on their knowledge of the theories previously covered. Students will justify their use of various rhetoric, including the visual, textual, content-embedded elements as well as their use of Gen-AI and machine-assisted technologies, and how those tools enhanced or shaped their final product.

Students are also required to keep a Log that records their creation process including intentions, implementation, challenges, successes, and questions.

Reflections (10 points):

At the end of the course, students will submit a reflection on their overall experience. This will include their learning journey with AI tools, how their perception of digital rhetoric, media platforms, and identity has evolved, and the challenges and benefits they encountered during the course.

Schedule

Week	Title	Topics/Activities	Readings/Assignments Due
1	Introduction to Public Writing with Tech	Course introduction	Read: Miller Complete: Discussion Post 1
2	*Theory & Context*: Digital Rhetoric and Social Media	Explore foundational theories of rhetoric and public writing with technology	Read: Dyer & Abidin Complete: Discussion Post 2
3	Digital Writing Culture	Introduction to identity theory	Read: De or Christian et al. Complete: Discussion Post 3
4	Granfluencer	Introduction to granfluencers	Read: Berry, and Banerjee Complete: Discussion Post 4
5	*Experimentation*: Example Analysis	Analyze existing digital profiles	Assignment Due: Example Analysis
6	Crafting Your Proposal	Start brainstorming ideas and contact (if needed) local organization, business, or conduct research on a chosen topic	Complete: Discussion Post 5
7	Gen-AI and Writing in Theory	Introduction to theories around AI writing tools	Read: McKee & Porter Complete: Discussion Post 6
8	Refining Your Proposal	Refine proposal for the final digital profile based on research	Assignment Due: Project Proposal Start keeping a Log
9	Experimenting with AI Tools	Hands-on practice with machine-assisted writing tools	Read: Fowler Assignment Due: Critical Gen-AI Report & Digital Profile Draft 1

Week	Title	Topics/Activities	Readings/Assignments Due
			Keep a Log
10	Spring Break		
11	*Creation*: Building the Final Product	Building and curating a digital profile	Assignment Due: Digital Profile Draft 2 Complete: Discussion Post 7 Keep a Log
12	Workshop	Feedback and revisions	Keep a Log
13	Refining the Digital Product	Fine-tune the final digital profile, ensuring effective integration of text, multimedia, and AI tools with a focus on digital rhetoric and digital writing culture identity	Assignment Due: Final Digital Profile
14	*Analysis*: Rationale	Articulate rhetorical choices and integrating theories	
15	Workshop		Assignment Due: Rationale
16	*Metacognition*: Course Wrap-Up & Final Reflection	Submit final reflection on the course experience and learning journey	Assignment Due: Final Reflection

Submitting Written Work

To be counted for a grade, written work must be submitted (unless instructed otherwise) as a Word document in the appropriate drop box in Canvas. For a free copy of Microsoft Office, including Word, click here. Assignments that do not follow the above format, that are emailed, that are submitted to the wrong drop box, or that I cannot open (e.g., zipped files, ios files, damaged files) will receive 0.

Late work will not be accepted unless discussed with the instructor at least 3 days prior to the due date. This class is scaffolded in a way that missing one due date can have a riffle effect.

I understand there are unforeseen circumstances. You should contact me as soon as possible if you encounter or foresee any issues that can seriously affect your performance.

Attendance

Students are expected to engage with all class materials. In this online asynchronous class, attendance and participation are not a "portion" of the grade in this course because it's an absolute requirement for you to succeed in this course. There are no excused or unexcused absences or missed works.

Academic Dishonesty & Disruptive Behavior

This class has a Zero Tolerance Policy for academic dishonesty. Any act of academic dishonesty will result in immediate failure of the <u>entire</u> course and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Intervention.

For the UTT definition of "academic dishonesty," go to the UT Tyler Syllabus Module in the class Canvas shell. Click on "University Policies and Information." Scroll to the "Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct" section. Click on "Student Conduct and Discipline policy." Read Section 8-802 "Academic Dishonesty."

Disruptive behavior will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Intervention and may result in failing the class and/or University sanction. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- hindering other students from working on the tangible learning activities taking place during face-to-face and online class sessions
- talking when the instructor is talking
- repeatedly arriving late and/or leaving early
- using technology for purposes other than working on the tangible learning activities taking place during the class period
- doing something other than working on the tangible learning activities taking place during the class period
- sleeping during class

For the UTT definition of "disruptive behavior," go to the UT Tyler Syllabus Module in the class Canvas shell. Click on "University Policies and Information." Scroll to the "Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct" section. Click on "Student Conduct and Discipline policy." Scroll to Section 8-804 "Certain Other Offenses." Read item number four "Disruptive Behavior."

Artificial Intelligence Use Policy

Under two conditions, students are welcome to use Gen-AI programs: 1) Using it to help generate ideas and brainstorm and 2) when the student is fully equipped with the skills to ethically utilize and cite AI-generated contents.

Any unacknowledged AI-facilitated work and acknowledged AI-facilitated work without critical revision process will be considered as cheating and will be reported. This includes using ideas and paraphrasing. Students should never submit any work or content generated or supported by an AI program as their own. It should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference). Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including full revocation of credit for the assignment, and other sanctions.

Class Conduct

All students are expected to behave in a becoming manner. Sensitive topics may be addressed during discussion, and passionate opinions are welcome. However, each student should remain respectful and civil throughout, and avoid using inflammatory language or taking insubordinate action by practicing equitable etiquette/netiquette.

Our texts or our discussion of the texts may include offensive, controversial, and/or uncomfortable topics and contents. Violence, suicide, physical and mental illnesses, racism, sexism, explicit sexual content, and political views may be discussed. If you anticipate issues reading such contents, consult with the instructor during the first week of the course.

Contacting the instructor

If you have individual questions, you can set up a time to meet either in-person or via Zoom.

To contact me, use UTT email or Canvas messenger. Per the [UTT Email Policy](), I will not reply to emails sent from non-UTT email addresses.

Emails and Canvas messages should provide a succinct overview of the topic and be written using complete sentences, reasonably correct grammar, and proper structure. In the subject line list the class (ENGL4373), your name, and a topic.

University Policies and Information

Go to our class Canvas for information relating to University Policies.

Student Resources

Go to our class Canvas for information relating to University Policies.

This syllabus is a product of many generous educators' hard work and support.
I give special thanks to UT Tyler's English department faculty and staff and my former colleagues at Michigan State University.