

ENG 574

NEW MEDIA STUDIES

DR. BEARDSLEY



SPRING 2025

SIMPKINS 214
THURS. 5 – 7:30 PM

SYLLABUS

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Course Description

This course will introduce you to the ways that media has been studied in the field of rhetoric, composition, and literacy. We will discuss what new media is, focus on the evolution of communication technologies, and examine the cultural, social, and pedagogical impacts of our mediated world. Each week explores a theme relevant to new media studies and its connections to the field more broadly. Weekly themes include multimodal composition, digital rhetoric, and video games. Through readings and production practice—low-stakes assignments that ask you to play with composing techniques and technologies—you’ll develop an understanding of how to study and create with new media.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the ways new media have been studied in rhetoric, composition, and literacy
- Develop nuanced understandings of new media and its importance in history and contemporary society, culture, and politics
- Analyze and evaluate ideas, arguments, and interpretations
- Develop advanced skills in writing and presenting
- Compare and evaluate approaches, theories, and methods that relate to the study and understanding of new media
- Engage in an interdisciplinary conversation about composing, communication technologies, and new media

Course Texts & Required Materials

Texts

You probably noticed that there aren’t any books required for purchase. That’s because many of the books we’ll read are open-access. The rest of the materials are either hosted on websites or provided via PDF; however, you might decide you need access to an entire text for your final project or that you need to read a related book. Our course relies heavily on independent research, and you’ll need to plan to utilize the library to request sources.

The Texts and Tools WO page provides additional resources to help you begin your research. Materials will be added throughout the semester.

Required Materials

- [Discord](#)
- [Canva](#) or your favorite resource for creating slides
- [hypothes.is](#)

Absences and In-Person Attendance

You will be allowed **two absences** this semester. For these two absences, I don’t distinguish between excused and unexcused. These are your absences to do with what you wish—you don’t need to explain yourself to me. Absences beyond two may significantly impact your ability to keep up with course material and your final grade. Please see me immediately if you need to make accommodations.

Unless you live outside Macomb, I expect you to attend class in person. Please arrive on time, ready to work, and plan to stay for the duration of the class. That being said, we're still dealing with COVID-19, and illness happens. If you do not feel well, do not come to class. Send me an email and join the class via Zoom (the link is on Western Online).

How to Engage Texts and Prepare for Class

I will refer to our course materials as texts because, as you'll see, we will read books and articles, listen to podcasts, and browse websites. Please come to class each week ready to discuss the assigned texts. We all need to read and write to get the most out of this course. Therefore, I expect you to read/listen to/engage with all the material assigned for each week's discussion.

When reading, take notes on the following:

- Write down questions you have
- List and define key terms and theories, especially those that connect to rhetoric and new media
- Note how what you're reading each week connects to other texts we've engaged
- Consider how what you're reading contributes to what you plan to write about or create for your final project
- Pay attention to how texts are written
 - What goes in the intro, lit review, methodology, body, and conclusion?
 - How is the text designed?
 - How are sources used to support claims?

Use your notes to write your weekly writing response.

Student Hours

I hold student hours in person (Simpkins 129) and virtually (Gather.Town). Student hours are dedicated to meeting with students one-on-one or in small groups to discuss questions about the course material, unpack assignment prompts, brainstorm ideas, strategize for keeping up with coursework, develop research and writing skills, and get back on track if you've fallen behind. Even if you don't have any questions, please feel free to drop by student hours and chat!

Spring 2025 Student Hours

Mondays & Tuesdays
11 AM – 12 PM

Thursdays
2:45 – 4:45 PM

If my student hours conflict with your class or work schedule, [use my appointment scheduler](#) to schedule a meeting.

Email & Discord Policy

I typically respond to emails within 24 hours, M – F, 9 AM – 5 PM. I do check my email after that and on the weekends, but not as frequently as I try to keep a work-life balance. Please take this

response time into account when reaching out. **Additionally, I do not accept assignments via email.**

I have Discord set up to notify me when someone posts, and it's the quickest way to ask me and the rest of the class a question. I encourage you to answer questions for each other.

Writing Guidelines

The American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines are often used in rhetoric and writing studies, so that's what we'll use in this course. Please use the 7th edition. I expect you to work on citing sources properly. The Purdue OWL has excellent [APA information](#), and I also encourage you to bookmark the [APA Style website](#).

Course Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

GenAI Partially Permitted Course

As a course exploring new media, using artificial intelligence might be useful to help you engage with technology in a way you haven't before. AI tools, including but not limited to Generative AI (GenAI) like ChatGPT, can help with content creation at various stages.

Each of your professors might have different policies about using GenAI, but here are the guidelines for this course.

- **Brainstorming:** You can use AI to develop topic ideas, find examples, and create outlines for written and multimodal content.
- **Drafting:** Some AI tools can help you generate content during the drafting stage, especially if you're building a website or recording a podcast.
- **Refining ideas and seeking initial information:** Take a topic you're interested in and see if it might fit a project. Narrow your idea and begin research by chatting with an AI tool.
- **Revising:** Use AI to check grammar and style after you've drafted everything.

You **may not** use AI for the following:

- Summarizing texts as the DL.
- Writing weekly reading responses.
- Generating complete assignments (e.g., do not use AI to write your proposal, paper drafts, or final papers).

I expect you to modify what AI gives you—it doesn't know what it's saying. AI spits out words based on the prompt you feed it, and what it says could be real or made up and can contribute to promoting biased language practices. Therefore, you must think critically about what it gives you and revise based on further research and your unique scholarly voice. Ultimately, I'd rather hear what you have to say, even if the assignment is incomplete. If I suspect your work was generated using AI without thorough revisions, you will receive a zero on the assignment and must schedule a meeting with me.

If you use AI as part of your writing process, whether that means brainstorming or prompting ChatGPT to build you a website, you must explain your choices in a **Statement on AI Usage** that you include as a separate document. What AI tool(s) did you use? To what ends? How did it enhance your project? How did you revise what AI gave you to make it yours?

Assignment Overviews

1. Weekly Reading Response (10%)

Each week, you will write a response (~500 words, single-spaced) or explore a technology that engages the assigned texts. I'll provide specific prompts for some weeks, but in general, I'm not looking for right or wrong answers here. Consider these responses a space for you to play with ideas and make connections across readings that might contribute to your final project. Do not simply summarize the texts. Each response must:

- Apply 1-2 of the theories from the texts to what you're interested in applying to your final project; for example, if you want to create a unit on podcasting for an undergraduate class, use a theory from that week to start doing this work
- Identify and explain key terms/concepts in a way that makes sense to you
- Explore connections across weeks; for example, how do readings from week 2 "talk" to week 5?
- Pose questions that could guide class discussion or your final project

You'll submit your weekly reading responses on Western Online **before** each class, but make sure you have access to your response for class discussion. Also, when you are the Discussion Leader, you are not required to submit a response.

2. Discussion Leader: In-Class Presentations (10%)

Each week, one person will be responsible for leading the class discussion and identifying the central claims of that week's text(s). Presentations will take up half our class time, making them about 75 minutes (I'll lead the second half of class).

Each presenter must come to class with the following:

- Slides
- 1-page handout to guide us through your presentation (include key terms/concepts, guiding questions, etc.)
- Reading summaries
- Discussion questions
- 1-2 activities that engage the text(s)
- Issues and connections for the class to explore
- Examples (popular or additional scholarly texts) for the class to review that illustrate the issues and/or perspectives from the assigned texts

An example handout and detailed presentation expectations will be provided.

3. Midterm: Annotated Bibliography (20%)

For your midterm, you'll turn in an annotated bibliography of at least 10 sources on a topic of interest related to rhetoric, composition, literacy, pedagogy, and new media studies. Your annotated bibliography is a space to do a deep dive into sources you'll need for your final project. Your annotations will be evaluative and must show connections across sources.

General Annotated Bibliography Requirements

- APA (7th edition)
- 10 sources total

- Can include up to 7 sources from class
- You must find, read, and annotate at least 3 sources on your own
- 2 paragraphs per source
 - Paragraph 1 summarizes the source
 - Paragraph 2 makes connections across sources and evaluates its effectiveness for your potential final project

Note: If you're using multiple chapters from the same book, please talk to me. We will determine if you need to annotate chapters separately or if they should be combined.

A detailed assignment sheet will be provided.

4. Project Draft + Peer Review (10%)

I believe drafting is a crucial part of the writing process. You'll submit a partial draft and receive feedback from your peers. This grade includes the draft submission and your participation in peer review.

5. Final Project (50%)

Your final project should explore new media studies from one or more perspectives we've studied. All approaches/methods are welcome, but you will work with me to define a direction.

Project Proposal + Meeting (10%)

You'll write a project proposal of no more than 500 words to state your final project topic. You'll indicate what research exists, the project's exigency, what you already know, and what you hope to learn. Each final project option will require a slight modification to your proposal (to be explained in the full assignment sheet).

We'll have a short meeting (~15 minutes) to discuss your project.

Options (30%)

Option 1: Keyword Synthesis Project

4,000 words, excluding references

How is "fan" defined by rhetoric and writing studies scholars? What about "celebrity," "memory," or "text"? Our readings explored some of these key terms, but there is more to learn—more to know. For the Keyword Synthesis Project, you'll choose one or two terms to research in depth. You'll craft a literature review of scholarship that frames how the field understands this term through your research.

Option 2: Multimodal Review

"Word count" varies based on mode; excludes references

Writing reviews helps us engage scholarship on a deeper level. Choose one book or five articles that have some sort of connection and write a cohesive review. You can choose from texts we read in this course or find something that piques your interest. Your review must be more than written words. You'll use Kairos's

[Call for Reviews](#) as your guidelines and choose a mode that fits the content (e.g., webtext, podcast, video, etc.).

Option 3: Develop a Digital Rhetoric Project

4,000 words, excluding references

Using Doug Eyman's (2014) *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice* as a guiding text, craft a research project that applies one or a combination of the methods Eyman explains. Research a topic, artifact, individual, or community of interest to you. Use the weekly course topics as a starting point (e.g., research a fandom).

Option 4: Teaching With New Media Studies

1 teaching portfolio; includes portfolio cover letter, an annotated unit plan, 1 full lesson plan with in-class activities and homework, and the final assignment sheet + rubric

How would you teach students in a 100-, 200-, or 300-level English course theories of and/or how to compose with new media? Would you create a podcasting unit? What about a unit where students play and review video games? Or how about a collaborative class comic? Create the materials you'd need to teach a unit and explain your choices by explicitly connecting texts from this course to your materials.

Final Presentation (10%)

On the last day of class, you will give a 7–10-minute presentation with an additional 3 minutes for questions. The purpose of the presentation is to tell us what you're doing for your final project and show off your work. The presentation is a celebration of your ideas and a way for you to improve your academic presentation skills.

Detailed assignment sheets will be provided.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90–100%
B	89–80%
C	79–70%
D	69–60%
F	59% or below

Late Work and Extensions

I do not accept late weekly reading responses, so even if you're not in class, make sure you turn in the work that was due. Additionally, missed Discussion Leader work cannot be made up. Late midterms, project proposals, and final project options will lose 1/4 of a letter grade for every day—not class meeting—they are late. Please see me immediately if you're having trouble submitting work on time.

If you need an extension on a major project (midterm, proposal, or final project option), you must message me at least 24 hours in advance. I will provide you with an updated due date and expectations at that time. Extensions aren't always possible (e.g., you can't get an extension on an in-class presentation you signed up to give on a scheduled day), but sometimes we just need a bit more time.

Professionalism and Respect

Respect and care should be shown in your behavior, whether you're responding to a question, participating in workshop, or completing an assignment. Disruptive, disrespectful, threatening, or harassing behavior toward any individual in our class environment will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the course. If you feel uncomfortable about any aspect of the class, including class discussions, please contact me ASAP so we can address your concerns.

Revision Policy

Because writing is a process, you'll have the opportunity to revise the midterm and project proposal; however, the assignment must be fully completed to be eligible for revision. For example, if you only annotate four sources for your midterm, you cannot revise.

Revision due dates will be announced after the project is graded. Ultimately, revising is your choice, but consider how the grade impacts your overall standing in the graduate program.

Feedback

The feedback I give varies by assignment. I read all weekly reading responses, but I will only comment extensively if you need a bit of guidance to move forward. For major assignments, I use a combination of in-text comments on WO, a rubric, and a short, summative paragraph to provide feedback. Don't just look at your grade on WO—look at all the pieces.

University Writing Center

As many of you know, I am the University Writing Center (UWC) Director. I believe that the UWC is a superb resource, even for strong writers. Having someone to bounce ideas off or review APA citations can help you see your project anew.

The UWC is your go-to resource at any stage of the writing process! Appointments are available in three formats: in-person (3rd Floor, Malpass Library or QC Riverfront 205), online (real-time with video or chat and document sharing), and eTutoring (asynchronous feedback on an uploaded paper).

You'll be strongly encouraged to make UWC appointments throughout the semester and will receive extra credit for completed appointments. If you use the UWC, please request that the consultant send me a copy of the client report after your visit (consultants will need my email, a-beardsley@wiu.edu).

Please make an appointment with someone who is not in this class. Your peers will see your work throughout the semester, and they'll be too familiar with it.

I reserve the right to cancel or modify your UWC appointment to meet course requirements.

Register, view the schedule, and begin self-scheduling appointments at wiu.mywconline.com.

General Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Responsible academic conduct is required in this and all other WIU courses. **Plagiarism and cheating are serious infractions subject to University policy on academic integrity.** Scholastic dishonesty in any portion of the work for this course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of F for the assignment or an F for the entire course, and further disciplinary action may be taken.

It is crucial that you turn in your own work and that you document the sources for ideas that are not your own. If you are using material or ideas from another source, **including the internet and any graphics**, and have questions about how to properly document the material, you should consult a style manual for guidelines. If you remain unsure or if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please contact me before the assignment is due.

Please note that turning in work for this class that was prepared for another class or by another individual will be considered cheating. The policy on plagiarism and cheating applies to **all** drafts, as well as final products, turned in for this course.

For the university's policy on academic integrity, including plagiarism and cheating, refer to <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

Accessibility Statement

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Financial Aid & Academic Progress

It is the responsibility of students to understand the attendance and academic progress requirements of their classes and the financial programs of which they are recipients. Regular attendance and successful academic progress are required for various federal, state, and private loans, grants, awards, and scholarships. Your financial aid rights and responsibilities are available online at:

http://www.wiu.edu/student_success/financial_aid/policies/

Faculty are required to report attendance and academic progress information to financial aid personnel in a timely manner regardless of individual course attendance policies. WIU and other universities are sometimes required to pay back the amount of awarded and dispersed financial aid when they fail to verify attendance and academic progress information for each class in which students are enrolled.

Incompletes

An incomplete ("I") grade will be given in extraordinary circumstances (i.e., prolonged illness, death in family) at my discretion. It will not be considered unless the amount of work remaining in the

course is limited and you had a passing grade before the incomplete assignment. The assignment of an “I” requires a written agreement between me and you specifying the time and manner in which you will complete the required assignments. Failure to adhere to the contract could result in an F for the missing work.

Military/Veteran Support Statement

As a military-friendly institution, and in accordance with federal regulations and Illinois statutes, Western Illinois University has established policies and procedures to accommodate military service students. In addition to the supports available at WIU’s Veterans Resource Center (wiu.edu/student_success/veterans / 309-298-3505), veterans, members of the National Guard or Reserves, and active-duty military personnel with military obligations (e.g., deployments, trainings, drill) are encouraged to communicate these, in advance whenever possible, to the instructor. The Military Service Policy can be found at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/military.php>.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities

Full Policy: <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities: In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Development and Success Center at 309-298-1884, disability@wiu.edu, or in 125 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.

Title IX

University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: https://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/report.php.

If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct policy is available at: <https://www.wiu.edu/policies/dhsm.php>.