The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
DigiComm 2311G
Special Topics in DC: Writing Across Digital Media Platforms
Course Outline, Winter 2022

Instructor Information

Michelle Edwards, MBA

Office and Office Hours: By appointment only – please email with at least two dates and time slots that work for you

Email: michelle.edwards@uwo.ca; estimated response time is 24 hrs (Monday to Friday; responses may be delayed on weekends and holidays)

Course Information

Lectures: Wednesdays from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

- **Jan. 12, 19, 26:** 1 hour of synchronous time (on Zoom) and 2 hours of asynchronous time each week
    - **Zoom information:** DIGICOMM 2311G - Writing Across Digital Media Platforms Virtual Synchronous Class
    - Join Zoom Meeting: https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/93439813429
    - Meeting ID: 934 3981 3429
    - Passcode: MeetWithME
    - You're welcome to download and import the iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system
- **Feb. 1 onward (TBA by school):** in-person, on-campus, FNB-1270

Course website: DIGICOMM2311 via OWL

Technology requirements: personal computer, internet connection, and Zoom app.

Tutorial: There are no tutorials and TAs allocated for this course.

Prerequisites and Antirequisites: There are no prerequisites and no antirequisites for this course

Description

DIGICOMM 2311G considers the relationship between written language and new media technologies. Students will engage critically and creatively with various digital tools and environments as a way to evolve their own skillset for writing, interfacing and collaborating with others, and producing content across a range of platforms and contexts. The key concerns of the course are technology, text, communication, and subjectivity, all of which are explored at length through themed bi-weekly units that alternate between course readings, discussion, preparatory exercises, and collaborative writing workshops. The semester is structured so that bi-weekly readings/viewings are always followed by a writing workshop (4 in total) that responds to and evolves the previous week's content and discussion.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will ideally be able to demonstrate a range of intellectual, transferable, and practicable skills. Namely, students will:

- Have experience writing and producing content in a range of new media modes and contexts
- Be able to reflect critically on the relationship between writing (both the act and the writing itself) and new media technologies
- Acquire effective strategies for locating a range of examples of writing across various digital platforms, for evaluating them, and for adopting and adapting features which might strengthen their own writing practice
- Be able to be creative with their writing practice and the technologies which mediate it
- Appreciate and employ collaboration as a significant way to engage critically with digital writing and new media and to generate digital and online content
- Have a sophisticated understanding of what constitutes a text and of the intricate relationship between different kinds of digital texts
- Apprehend the implications of digital writing in new media contexts and how such writing has to do with more than just text and communication
- Be able to think and speak critically, creatively, and with nuance about the meaning of words and concepts such as: the digital, platforms, media, text, composition, communication, technology, and mediation.
- Appreciate the complicated relationship between digital and analogue modes and forms of writing, composition, and communication
- Develop a writing portfolio consisting of concrete and diverse outputs

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service. https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/docs/indigenous-land-acknowledgment.pdf

Schedule
*Note that the specific details of each class may change depending upon timing and circumstances.

Week	Topic and due dates	Readings For Discussion
1: Jan. 12	Introduction **Groups will be randomly assigned this week. These will be your groups for the Media Appraisal group assignment.**	Supplementary: • https://blogs.dickinson.edu/wrpg211/2016/11/06/how-is-digital-writing-different-from-traditional-writing-and-why-do-we-care/
2: Jan. 19	The Medium Remains the Message (I): Rethinking Composition and Text	1. Read: Yancey's "'With Fresh Eyes': Notes toward the Impact of New Technologies on Composing." 2. Watch: Petersen's condensed version of "Start with 'Why' – TED Talk from Simon Sinek" 3. Read: Blankenship's "Writing is Recursive"
4: Jan. 26	The Medium Remains the Message (II): What Is Multimodality? **Friday, Jan. 28: Media Appraisal (due by 11:59 p.m. EST) – group**	4. Watch: Rodrique's "Multimodal and Digital Writing In the Disciplines" 5. Read: Vie's "Social Media as Multimodal Composing"
3: Feb. 2	Writing Workshop **Friday, Feb. 4: Digital Communication #1 (due by 11:59 p.m. EST) – individual**	Supplementary: • https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/writing-skills

5: Feb. 9	The Medium Remains the Message (III): Making Things Political	6. Watch: Bolanos and Tuggle's "Race and Politics in the Digital Age" (TEDx Talk) 7. Read: Takayoshi and Van Ittersum's "The Material, Embodied Practices of Composing with Technologies"
5: Feb. 16	Writing Workshop **Friday, Feb. 18: Digital Communication #2 (due by 11:59 p.m. EST) – individual**	Supplementary: • https://businessdegrees.uab.edu/blog/internet-vs-world-wide-web-whats-the-difference/
Spring Reading Week: **Feb. 21-25**	Enjoy your week off!	
7: March 2	Writing Workshop **Friday, March 4: Digital Communication #3 (due by 11:59 p.m. EST) – individual**	Supplementary: • https://owl.uwo.ca/access/content/group/da9005a2-17be-4cbf-bd85-8553dce21d93/Week%208/Sample%20Opinion%20Piece.pdf
8: March 9	Digital Subjectivity (I): Writing and Performing, Self and Other	8. Read: McPherson's "Self, Other, and Electronic Media"
9: March 16	Writing Workshop **Friday, March 18: Digital Communication #4 (due by 11:59 p.m. EST) – individual**	Supplementary: • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drake_(musician) • https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin_Bieber
10: March 23	Digital Subjectivity (II): Interpellation and Audiences	9. Read: Scolere et al.'s "Constructing the Platform-Specific Self-Brand"
11: March 30	Pause for Thought: Things to Consider before Clicking "Publish" • Class discussion	
12: April 6	Course Conclusion **Friday, April 8: Final Project (due by 11:59 p.m. EST) – individual**	

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. There are 6 required readings and 3 required viewings, access to which is provided on the course website (OWL). This media functions to structure and inform class discussion, all assessments, and the work required. Supplementary material (as mainly indicated in the above Schedule) will be made available along the way, but engaging with it is optional. Slides will be posted on the course website each week to correspond with the weekly meetings/lectures; this will occasionally happen before the weekly sessions and, more often than not, shortly after them.

Assigned Readings/Viewings

1. Yancey, Kathleen Blake. 2018. "'With Fresh Eyes": Notes toward the Impact of New Technologies on Composing." The Routledge Handbook of Digital Writing and Rhetoric, eds. Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes, pp. 61–72. New York and London: Routledge.

2. Petersen, Joe. 2016. Condensed version of "Start with 'Why' – TED Talk from Simon Sinek. TED Talk. YouTube video, 7:10. Sept. 22. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ss78LfY3nE

3. Blankenship, Chris. N.D. "Writing is Recursive." PressBooks. https://openenglishatslcc.pressbooks.com/chapter/writing-is-recursive/

4. Rodrique, Tanya. 2013. "Multimodal and Digital Writing In the Disciplines." YouTube video, 7:29. Sept. 13. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIsvVG5p8DI

5. Vie, Stephanie. 2018. "Social Media as Multimodal Composing: Networked Rhetorics and Writing in a Digital Age." In The Routledge Handbook of Digital Writing and Rhetoric, eds. Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes, pp. 115–23. New York and London: Routledge.

6. Bolanos, Cinthya, and Kynnedy Tuggle. 2018. "Race and Politics in the Digital Age." TEDx Talks: TEDxMemphis. YouTube video, 6:16. June 5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cT5iAE9yxM

7. Takayoshi, Pamela, and Derek Van Ittersum. 2018. "The Material, Embodied Practices of Composing with Technologies." In The Routledge Handbook of Digital Writing and Rhetoric, eds. Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes, pp. 84–94. New York and London: Routledge.

8. McPherson, Tara. 2002. "Self, Other, and Electronic Media." In The New Media Book, ed. Dan Harries, 183–94. London: British Film Institute.

9. Scolere, Leah, and Urzula Pruchniewska, and Brooke Eron Duffy. 2018. "Constructing the Platform- Specific Self-Brand: The Labor of Social Media Promotion." Social Media + Society (Jul.- Sept.): 1–11.

Note: for all assignments, late submissions will not be accepted.

Media Appraisal (x1) – Group project   20%

Due: Friday, Jan. 28 (no later than 11:59 p.m. EST)

This GROUP assignment (8 pages maximum) prompts students to examine FOUR media platforms and work collaboratively to identify and write about what they think does and does not work for each platform. The assignment is designed to enhance and develop critical thinking and analytical skills in the context of digital multi-media. Each media platform must include best practices (screenshots of examples are highly recommended) and share what to do/not do in each. This assignment will begin to build a repertoire of examples of best practices for writing and curating digital platforms. Further instructions for this assessment will be posted on the website and discussed in class. **Completed as a group (max. 4 students). Please ensure all students' names are included on the cover page and have one student submit on your group's behalf.**

Digital Communications (x4) – Individual assignments   40% (10% each)

Due Fridays after Writing Workshop: Feb. 4, Feb. 18, March 4, March 18 (no later than 11:59 p.m. EST)

These writing-based assignments (4 pages maximum) extend from the Writing Workshops and the digital platforms you researched in the Media Appraisal assignment. Please select ONE topic/area of interest (each communication assignment must discuss a different topic each time). Then, craft a media communication in the medium of your choice. Within each of the four assignment submissions, you should explore a different digital platform (for example, if you write a blog post in assignment #1, you should use a different medium in each of the remaining three assignments). Further instructions for this assessment will be posted on the website and discussed in class. **You will be given time to work on these digital communications during your Writing Workshops.**

6

Final Project (x1) – Individual assignment 30%

This assignment enables students to assemble their various writing outputs in the form of a portfolio and to produce a critical reflection on the relationship between course content and portfolio. The portfolio creation platform is up to the student's discretion and knowledge (examples include: digital portfolios using WordPress, etc.). Further instructions will be posted on the class site and discussed in class.

Participation – Individual assessment 10%

This assessment is determined by evaluating students' presence in weekly sessions, contributions to the discussion, engagement with and completion of the exercises (non-graded take-home tasks/assignments), group and practical work, and all formal assessments listed above. **Class attendance is expected, but participation is not attending class only – your contributions and engagement are essential.**

Note: All work will be evaluated by the Instructor.

Note: There is no final exam for this course. The details for all assignments will be posted on the course website at least two weeks prior to the relevant deadline.

In order to pass this course students must: submit all the formal assignments (listed above) and achieve a minimum of 50% (D letter grade) as a final grade for the course. The course website is set up so that work cannot be submitted after the stipulated deadlines. Work deferred using an SRA is due 48 hours following the end of the SRA, any work submitted after this 48 hours after will be subjected to the following late penalties: 5% off per day to a maximum of two days late.

Students will receive graded work worth no less than 15% at least 3 days prior to the deadline for withdrawal without academic penalty. This year, the date by which students are to have received at least 15% of their final grade in a second semester course is March 11, 2022. Students can find details about this academic policy here:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf

Please note, students are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the grades they have received in their courses.

Note well: To get a grade of B or higher: The student's writing must be acceptably accurate, and free of significant errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation. No paper, however brilliant in conception, will get higher than 68% if the writing fails to communicate that conception effectively.

Producing/Submitting Work and Correspondence

For both the workshop component of the course and submitting assignments, students will be able to employ existing personal media accounts and platforms. Students are encouraged to seek out and subscribe to relevant media platforms that might be used as spaces for writing; however, doing so is not a requirement for the course. Alternative means will be negotiated for those who may wish to work exclusively offline or to work on media that is not registered in their name.

Whether in the form of written documents or access information (links etc. to writing which lives on the World Wide Web), all assignments should be submitted to the course website. When not using media platforms and the Internet as a space for writing, written work must be submitted as a Word document (no PDFs) using 12pt. font, double-spaced and with the margins set at 1-inch (2.54 cm) all around. In some cases, PowerPoint slides may be the medium stipulated. Written documents in the forms of essays or reports must employ either the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) or the Chicago manuals of style and guides to scholarly publishing (with the author- date system) for citations and general formatting (no footnote citations please). Note that portions of these manuals of style are available on the Internet and in full (as e-books and hard copy) through Western University's Weldon Library. For Word document submissions, please include a separate title page with your name, the date, the course code and title, and the instructor's name.

Given current circumstances pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic, hard copy submissions will not be accepted and all submissions will be evaluated and returned electronically, either via the website or Western email. For all correspondence regarding assignments and submission, and for any matter pertaining to the course, include the course code and/or name in the email's subject field.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

The use of electronic devices during synchronous class time must be for matters relating to the course. Unless your instructor indicates otherwise, ensure that your Zoom microphone is muted when not speaking during class sessions and that there is no excessive and distracting ambient noise coming through your microphone on the video call. Please ensure to switch off all mobile phones and to not take phone or other video calls during class time.

Statement on the Use of Video (Zoom) Recording

Remote learning sessions for this course will be not be recorded. Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. This includes data in the form of: an individual or group's image, voice, chat logs, and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to the recording of sessions.

COVID-19

In the event of course delivery changes necessitated by the changing COVID-19 situation during the upcoming term, students should expect that the grading scheme in the course will not change. Assessments may be delivered face-to-face or online as determined by the course instructor.

1. Students will be expected to wear triple-layer non-medical masks at all times in the classroom as per university policy and public health directives. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons should seek accommodation through [Accessible Education](#).
2. Students are expected not to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks, provided MLHU guidelines permit this.

Rights and Responsibilities

The conditions governing a student's ability to pursue their undergraduate education at Western are ratified by Senate and can be found on the Academic Policies section of the University Secretariat:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/academic_policies/rights_responsibilities.html

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments, including take-home exams, in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software Turnitin under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- during exam periods,
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are NOT met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate or equivalent documentation, if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact the FIMS Undergraduate Student Services Office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons. **All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see Policy on Academic Consideration For Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs
and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

In the event of a Covid-19 resurgence, it is possible that different procedures may need to be put in place on short notice.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Academic Calendar.

Grading at FIMS

- Normally, first year courses required for entry into an MIT or MPI module (MIT 1020E and MIT 1025F/G) are expected to have a course average between 68-72%.
- Normally, second year required courses (MIT 2000, 2100, 2200, 2500) are expected to have a course average between 70 and 75%.
- Normally, third year required courses (MIT 3000, 3100) are expected to have a course average between 72 and 77%.

Elective courses and 4th year seminars have no recommended course averages.

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/

SUPPORT SERVICES – LINKS

Office of the Registrar:
www.registrar.uwo.ca
Mental Health Support:
https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html
Accessible Education:
http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html
Accessibility Information:
www.accessibility.uwo.ca/
Writing Support Centre:
http://writing.uwo.ca/
Learning Skills Services:
https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/
Academic Learning and Support for Online Learning:
https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/types/academic-and-learning-support.html
Indigenous Services:
https://indigenous.uwo.ca/
Western International:
https://international.uwo.ca/
Career Centre:
http://careerexperience.uwo.ca/

Appendix A: Suggested Grade Ranges in MIT, MPI and MTP

Guidelines to the MIT Grade Range

These guidelines are benchmarks, and are not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. As well, competency in English language usage (including spelling and grammar) may be taken into account in the assignment of grades by individual instructors. Note that the 70-79 grade range is broken into two divisions, as this is the grade range into which a large number of students fall.

90-100 (Outstanding, A+)
The report shows sparkling originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic. Sophisticated synthesis and analysis of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions of the topic are demonstrated. Mastery of complex material and ideas is immediately evident. The topic is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the writing and background research is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A)
The report shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical analysis of the topic; it gets to the heart of the matter with comments and/or questions. It is clearly focused and logically organized. The quality of writing makes the report immediately understandable. Mastery of complex material and ideas is demonstrated. The report is of appropriate length, while preserving the priorities and emphasis of the material, so that the result is meaningful, not simplistic.

75-79 (Very Good, B+)
The report shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. Claims are supported by ample evidence and the components of the topic are well-researched and presented. The topic is addressed in reasonable depth and/or breadth and covers material appropriate to the course. The analysis is organized around focal points and the argument is easily followed. The report demonstrates an above average ability to write in an intelligible style and to condense material meaningfully and with a concern for priorities of that material.

70-74 (Good, B)
The report shows an attempt at analysis and critical thinking. Claims are supported by reasonable evidence. The topic is addressed in some depth and/or breadth, with references to the appropriate literature and course material. The analysis is organized around focal points. The report is generally well written and well argued.

60-69 (Competent, C)
The report demonstrates adequate comprehension of the topic. The report is on topic and is a reasonable summary of material covered in the course, but goes no further. Facts are stated accurately; the quality of writing is sufficiently intelligible with enough elaboration and enough connections made between ideas to permit a reader to understand the point of the report.

50-59 (Marginal, D)
The report shows less than adequate comprehension of the topic and of the material covered by the course. The report is a less than adequate summary of sources and/or is considerably off-topic. Facts are stated inaccurately or ambiguously; the writing style is difficult to follow; there is insufficient elaboration to permit reader's comprehension of relations among ideas; little judgment is shown in selecting detail for inclusion in the report.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F)
The report demonstrates a failure to comprehend the topic. The material is disorganized and unintelligible. The report clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment.

Appendix B: Guidelines of Academic Appeals for FIMS Students

Grounds for Appeal:
The Faculty of Information and Media Studies does not view the appeals process as an opportunity for students to solicit a second opinion on a grade assigned to a particular piece of work. Appeals must pertain to the final grade in a course, and will only be entertained if sufficient grounds for appeal can be met, including: medical or compassionate circumstances, a defect in the evaluation process, bias, inaccuracy or unfairness.

Stages in the Appeals Process:
The first stage of the process is a discussion of the disputed grade with the appropriate Teaching Assistant (if applicable), and subsequently, the course Instructor. For grades assigned to individual assignments, essays, lab reports, projects and tests completed throughout the term, the student first must appeal to the Teaching Assistant or Instructor of the course, within three weeks of the date on which the Instructor or Teaching Assistant returned the assignments to the class. The Appeals Committee will not hear any further appeals about the final grade in any course unless this first step has been taken.

If completion of the first stage has not resolved the matter, the student may appeal the final grade in the course to the FIMS Appeals Committee. Appeals of final grades must be **within the time frame indicated in the Undergraduate Calendar.** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the appeal is submitted within the deadline. The student shall submit a formal letter to the FIMS Appeals Committee outlining the grounds for the appeal, the remedy sought and relevant materials including the information about when and with whom (Teaching Assistant and/or Instructor) the student met, as described in Stage 1. If the appeal involves a request for work to be regraded, the original marked work and a clean copy (if possible) must be included. If the appeal is commenced once the deadline has passed, it will not be considered either by the Appeals Committee or by the Associate Dean.

The FIMS Appeals Committee has the discretion to determine whether the grounds for appeal have been met.
If the Committee deems that the reasons for the appeal are not legitimate, the Associate Dean will be informed. The appeal will be terminated and the student will be informed.

If the Committee decides that the grounds for appeal have been met, the following steps will be taken:
1. the course Instructor will be shown the appeal letter and offered an opportunity to make a written response;
2..if work is to be regraded, a reader will be appointed who is competent in the area in question and was not involved in the assignment of the original mark. The reader will consider the work in question and will arrive at an independent evaluation. If there is a large discrepancy between the original mark and the regraded mark, a second reader may be appointed by the Committee. **If the appointed reader(s) arrive at a grade within five marks of the original, the original grade will stand.**

The FIMS Appeals Committee will review the evidence and will make a recommendation on the case to the Associate Dean Undergraduate.
The Associate Dean Undergraduate will consider the recommendation from the Appeals Committee, and will make a decision. The student and the instructor will be notified promptly and in writing by the Associate Dean of the decision and of the change in grade, if any. Within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Associate Dean's decision on the matter is final.
Further appeals are possible under certain circumstances to the Senate Review Board Academic (for Undergraduate students) or to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (for Graduate students) but the student should carefully consult the guidelines regarding such Appeals.