Rhetoric, Technology, & the Internet

Introduction

I'm Dawn M. Armfield, a doctoral student in Writing Studies at the University of Minnesota. My research interests are in online social networks and how identities are formed and maintained in these digital social spaces. You can find me on Facebook, Twitter (@dawn_armfield), Flickr, and other social networks often.

How to pass this class

- Read the Text. This sounds simple, but if you read the text when assigned, you will be in good shape to participate both in person and online.
- Write, of course. Keep on track with your writing. It will help you stay on task.
- Use your Peer Discussion Group. Your peers will be a primary resource in getting you through the class. Peer review might seem just another hoop to jump through, but as you enter the professional world, you will be surprised at how little honest constructive criticism you receive about your writing. Take advantage of the opportunity to have your work edited now. Remember: you are not competing with each other for grades. Quality editing practices improve everyone's grade. You will be assigned to a small editing group where you will post all of your drafts for peer editing. Discussion activities count for a significant part of your grade.
- Interact with me.
    - I have office hours on Skype (username: dawn.armfield) on Wednesdays from 10:00 am-11:00am, or by appointment. Be sure to note: I am not available during the weekends. For quick questions, use Twitter. Use the hashtag #writ3577 when commenting so others can follow the conversation.
    - As a last resort, email me at armfi002@umn.edu. ALWAYS include 3577 in the subject line, followed by a more specific subject. This helps me know this is a class email and to give it more attention.

Outcomes

This course is designed to provide you with:

- a grounding in elements of rhetorical theories focusing on analysis, critique, and comprehension of the Internet;

- a sense of the Internet as both a historical and cultural phenomenon;

- an opportunity to examine and understand the foundational technologies of the Internet, as well as the people developing and implementing these technologies;

- interpretation of the Internet as a communicative space(s), and consequences of use of this medium.

The class will depend on the energy you bring to it, so I ask you to make a commitment to your own work, and to your classmates. We will be conversing about rhetoric and communication from as many perspectives as can be reasonably managed. Please be prepared to articulate and support your particular view(s).

Policies

Requirements

Readings

Readings for this class are required. Please keep track of the assignments on the syllabus and be prepared to discuss the readings in class.

Attendance

The success of this course depends on student participation. Therefore, after three absences in this class, I may elect to drop your final course grade by one full letter grade for each subsequent absence. Anyone missing seven or more classes will not pass the course. Excessive tardiness may be treated as absenteeism. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to secure the assignments (either from me or one of your classmates) and complete the work.

Archives

Maintain an electronic archive of all of your work for this class. This will not only benefit you, if something is lost, but I may need to review the work at some point in the semester.

Computer Labs

Students can use the University's public computer labs, including the ones in Wilson, Walter, and McGrath Libraries. No fee is charged, except to use lab printers. Students may also use one of the 16 Macs in the Center for Writing in 15 Nicholson. University Technology Training Center http://uttc.umn.edu/training/ schedules regular training sessions. Students who think that computer access will present a serious difficulty should talk to the instructor immediately.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota Student Conduct Code governs all activities in the University, including this course. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment for others may be subject to disciplinary action under the Code. This includes any behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities. Students responsible for such behavior may be asked to cancel their registration (or have their registration canceled).

Scholastic Dishonesty

The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

"Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis."
http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/studentconduct.html

Plagiarism, representing someone else's intellectual work as your own, can result in a grade of F for the assignment, and may result in a grade of F for the course. Plagiarism can include submitting a paper:

- written by means of inappropriate collaboration;

- written by you for another course, submitted without the permission of both instructors;

- purchased, downloaded, or cut and pasted from the Internet;

- or that fails to properly acknowledge its sources through standard citations.

[For more ideas and resources, see: http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/plagarism_index.html]

Student Writing Support

Students can get one-to-one-consultations on any course paper or writing project at Student Writing Support. Student Writing Support has several campus locations, including the main location in 15 Nicholson Hall. See http://writing.umn.edu/sws/index.htm for details about locations, appointments, and online consultations.

Sexual Harassment

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.html

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action

The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/administrative/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.html.

Disability Accommodations

The University is committed to providing quality education to all students regardless of ability. Determining appropriate disability accommodations is a collaborative process. You as a student must register with Disability Services and provide documentation of your disability. The course instructor must provide information regarding a course's content, methods, and essential components. The combination of this information will be used by Disability Services to determine appropriate accommodations for a particular student in a particular course. For more information, please reference Disability Services: http://ds.umn.edu/Students/index.html.

Mental Health Services

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu.

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Grading

Assignment	Percentage of Grade
Topic Reflections (5)	10%
Paper: Internet Technology Review*	20%
Paper: Rhetorical Analysis of Internet Communication*	30%
Paper: The Future of Rhetoric, Technology, and the Internet*	20%
Presentation	10%
Participation**	10%

*Papers reflect on group projects and a part of the analysis of those projects.

**Includes such items as discussion, peer review, and other group work, informal writings. Note: negative, or disruptive participation may lower your grade. These points cannot be "made up."

NOTE: Late submissions are docked up to one full letter grade per day late.

The grading policy in this course conforms to CLA guidelines. Therefore a "C" is equivalent to basic fulfillment of requirements; to achieve a grade higher than a "C" a student must perform beyond the basic requirements. Please keep the following scale and criteria in mind:

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Grade	Criteria
A	Achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
B	Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
C	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
D	Achievement worthy of credit, even though it fails to meet course requirements fully
F	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either: (1) completed but at a level of achievement not worthy of credit; or (2) was not completed, and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an "I"

Schedule

I.   Introduction, Curriculum, and Rhetorical Foundations

    A.   January 18, 2011: Introductions & Resources

        1.   Discussion

            a)   Introductions

        2.   Readings

            a)   Peer-Review Guidelines (PDF)

            b)   Student-Led Curriculum: Demanding, Digital, Compelling (Site)

        3.   Writing Resources

            a)   University of Minnesota Resources

                (1)   Student Writing Support (Site)

                (2)   Student Writing Support (Video)

            b)   Cornell University Resources

                (1)   Classifying Publications (Site)

            c)   Purdue University Resources

                (1)   Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL) (Site)

            d)   Miscellaneous Sites

         (1)   Wikibook on Rhetoric & Composition (Site)

         (2)   Evaluating Internet Resources (Site)

         (3)   10 Tips on How to Write Less Badly (Site)

         (4)   Brush Up on Grammar Rules with these Light-Hearted Resources (Site)

    4.   Optional

       a)   Collaborative Online Media Use (Survey)

       b)   It Gets Better (Video)

       c)   How Does Violent Talk Lead to Violence? (Site)

       d)   My Blackberry is Not Working (Video)

B.   January 20, 2011: Curriculum & Rhetorical Foundations

    1.   Discussion

       a)   Student-Led Curriculum

       b)   Group discussions on project ideas (volunteer/service-oriented)

    2.   Readings

       a)   Silva Rhetorica: *What is Rhetoric?* (Site)

       b)   Plato's *Gorgias* (Introduction) (Site)

    3.   Project

       a)   Project discussion in online forum

II.   Rhetorical Foundations & Rhetorical Traditions

   A.   January 25, 2011: Rhetorical Foundations

     1.   Discussion

        a)   What is Rhetoric?

     2.   Readings

        a)   Plato's *Gorgias* (Site)

     3.   Activity

        a)   Vote on projects & how to develop it/them (groups, whole class, etc.)

   B.   January 27, 2011: Rhetorical Traditions

     1.   Discussion

        a)   Plato's *Gorgias*

        b)   Vote results, meet group members, discuss project ideas

     2.   Readings

      a)   Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

          (1)   Book 1, Chapter 1 (Site)

          (2)   Book 1, Chapter 2 (Site)

          (3)   Book 1, Chapter 3 (Site)

  3.   Assignment

      a)   Topic Reflection

          (1)   Prompt: Reflect on previous readings. What does rhetoric mean to you? How can it be used in your studies of other subjects?

                You can also apply your knowledge to a current subject. For instance, you can take some of our readings and apply them to the reports on the Tunisian violence (or any other topic -- even pop culture).

                1 single spaced page, submitted in .doc, .rtf, or .docx formats only.

III.   Rhetorical Canons

  A.   February 1, 2011

    1.   Discussion

      a)   Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

      b)   Rhetorical Triangles

      c)   Group organization

  B.   February 3, 2011

    1.   Discussion

      a)   Aristotle's *Rhetoric*

      b)   Internet Technology Review assignment

      c)   Group organization (Group discussions continue throughout the semester, but are not repeated in the schedule)

    2.   Readings

      a)   What is Rhetorical Theory (Site)

      b)   The Canons of Rhetoric (Site)

      c)   Bitzer: *The Rhetorical Situation* (PDF)

    3.   Assignment

      a)   email Dawn regarding group organization by 5pm on Friday

    4.   Project

      a)   Project DevelopmentForum

IV.   Rhetorical Situation & Semiotics

    A.   February 8, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   Rhetorical Theory

            b)   Rhetorical Canons

                (1)   Crazy (Video)

            c)   *The Rhetorical Situation*

        2.   Readings

            a)   Foucault: *What is an Author?* (PDF)

            b)   Intertextuality (Site)

    B.   February 10, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   *What Is an Author?*

            b)   Intertextuality

         2.   Readings

            a)   Introduction to Semiotics (Site)

            b)   Criticisms of Semiotic Analysis (Site)

            c)   Strengths of Semiotic Analysis (Site)

        3.   Assignment

            a)   Topic Reflection #2

                (1)   Prompt: Reflect on previous readings. What is the rhetorical situation? How can the rhetorical canons be applied to the Internet?

                      Tell me about your group. How are the group dynamics? What works, what doesn't? How do you solve for misunderstandings?

                      1 single spaced page, submitted in .doc, .rtf, or .docx formats only.

V.   Visual Rhetoric

    A.   February 15, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   Semiotics

        2.   Readings

            a)   Kimble & Olson: *Visual Rhetoric Representing Rosie the Riveter* (PDF)

          b)   Blair: *The Photograph's Last Word* (PDF)

    B.   February 17, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   *Visual Rhetoric Representing Rosie the Riveter*

            b)   *The Photograph's Last Word*

        2.   Readings

            a)   Periodic Table of Visualization Methods (Media)

            b)   Hocks: *Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments* (PDF)

            c)   Gurri, Denny, and Harms: *Our Visual Persuasion Gap* (PDF)

        3.   Assignment

            a)   Internet Technology Review (see Appendix A for description)

VI.   What is Technology?

    A.   February 22, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   Periodic Table of Visualization Methods

            b)   *Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments*

            c)   *Our Visual Persuasion Gap*

            d)   Johannes Gutenberg (Video)

        2.   Readings

            a)   Ong: *Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought* (PDF)

            b)   Layton: *Technology as Knowledge* (PDF)

    B.   February 24, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   *Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought*

            b)   *Technology as Knowledge*

    C.   Readings

        1.   Heidegger: *The Question Concerning Technology* (PDF)

        2.   Dinerstein: *Technology and Its Discontents* (PDF)

    D.   Assignment

        1.   Topic Reflection #3

      a) Prompt: Reflect on previous readings. What does technology mean to you? What does it mean in relation to rhetoric? What types of visual rhetoric do you see daily?

      1 single spaced page, submitted in .doc, .rtf, or .docx formats only.

VII. History of Technology

  A. March 1, 2011

    1. Discussion

      a) *The Question Concerning Technology*

      b) *Technology and Its Discontents*

    2. Readings

      a) Edgerton: *Innovation, Technology, or History* (PDF)

  B. March 3, 2011

    1. Discussion

      a) *Innovation, Technology, or History*

    2. Readings

      a) Schatzberg : *Technik Comes to America: Changing Meanings of Technology before 1930* (PDF)

      b) Ong: *Reading, Technology, and the Nature of Man: An Interpretation* (PDF)

VIII. Technology for Change

  A. March 8, 2011

    1. Discussion

      a) *Technik Comes to America: Changing Meanings of Technology before 1930*

      b) *Reading, Technology, and the Nature of Man: An Interpretation*

    2. Readings

      a) Beatty: *Approaches to Technology Transfer in History and the Case of Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (PDF)

      b) Borg: *The "Chauffeur Problem" in the Early Auto Era: Structuration Theory and the Users of Technology* (PDF)

  B. March 10, 2011

    1. Discussion

      a) *The "Chauffeur Problem" in the Early Auto Era: Structuration Theory and the Users of Technology*

      b) *Approaches to Technology Transfer in History and the Case of Nineteenth-Century Mexico*

    2. Assignment

        a)   Topic Reflection #4

            (1)   Prompt: Reflect on previous readings. What is the rhetorical application of technology? What is the technological application of rhetoric?

                  How is your group working? How have ideas changed since the beginning of the semester?

                  1 single spaced page, submitted in .doc, .rtf, or .docx formats only.

IX.   Spring Break: No Classes

    A.   March 14-18, 2011

X.   Technology in the Modern Age

    A.   March 22, 2011

        1.   Readings

            a)   Marx: *Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept* (PDF)

            b)   Cornell: *Electronic Publishing Issues in the USA: What Would Gutenberg Have Thought?* (PDF)

            c)   What Else is New? (Site)

    B.   March 24, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   *Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept*

            b)   *Electronic Publishing Issues in the USA: What Would Gutenberg Have Thought?*

            c)   What Else is New?

            d)   The Machine is Using Us (Video)

        2.   Readings

            a)   Walters & Kop: *Heidegger, Digital Technology, and Postmodern Education From Being in Cyberspace to Meeting on MySpace* (PDF)

            b)   I'll Google It! (Site)

        3.   Assignment

            a)   Rhetorical Analysis of Internet Communication (see Appendix B for description)

XI.   What is the Internet?

    A.   March 29, 2011

        1.   Discussion

            a)   *Heidegger, Digital Technology, and Postmodern Education From Being in Cyberspace to Meeting on MySpace*

      b)   *I'll Google It!*

      c)   What is the @? (Video)

   2. Readings

      a)   Licklider & Taylor: The Computer as a Communication Device (PDF)

      b)   Galegher, Sproull, and Kiesler: *Legitimacy, Authority, and Community in Electronic Support Groups* (PDF)

      c)   Science Friday, 1993: *The Future of the Internet* (Audio)

B. March 31, 2011

   1. Discussion

      a)   *The Computer as a Communication Device*

      b)   *Legitimacy, Authority, and Community in Electronic Support Groups*

      c)   *The Future of the Internet*

   2. Readings

      a)   Kiesler, Siegel, and McGuire: *Social Psychological Aspects of Computer-Mediated Communication* (PDF)

      b)   Gurak: Internet Studies in the Twenty-First Century (PDF)

XII. Privacy, Ownership, and Censorship

A. April 5, 2011

   1. Discussion

      a)   *Social Psychological Aspects of Computer-Mediated Communication*

      b)   *Internet Studies in the Twenty-First Century*

   2. Readings

      a)   Young & Quan-Haase: *Information Revelation and Internet Privacy Concerns on Social Network Sites: A Case Study of Facebook* (PDF)

      b)   Lothian: *Living in a Den of Thieves: Fan Video and Digital Challenges to Ownership* (PDF)

B. April 7, 2011

   1. Discussion

      a)   *Information Revelation and Internet Privacy Concerns on Social Network Sites: A Case Study of Facebook*

      b)   *Living in a Den of Thieves: Fan Video and Digital Challenges to Ownership*

   2. Readings

      a)   Boynton: *The Tyranny of Copyright?* (PDF)

b)   Meiss & Menczer: Visual Comparison of Search Results: A Censorship Case Study (PDF)

XIII. Communities & Networks

    A.   April 12, 2011

        1.   Discussion

           a)   *The Tyranny of Copyright?*

           b)   *Visual Comparison of Search Results: A Censorship Case Study*

        2.   Readings

           a)   Adams Parham: Internet, Place, and Public Sphere in Diaspora Communities (PDF)

    B.   April 14, 2011

        1.   Discussion

           a)   *Internet, Place, and Public Sphere in Diaspora Communities*

        2.   Readings

           a)   Goodings, Locke, & Brown: *Social Networking Technology: Place and Identity in Mediated Communities* (PDF)

           b)   Dutton: *The Social Informatics of the Internet: An Ecology of Games* (PDF)

        3.   Assignment

           a)   Internet Research: What's Next? (see Appendix C for description)

XIV. Social Media

    A.   April 19, 2011

        1.   Discussion

           a)   *Social Networking Technology: Place and Identity in Mediated Communities*

           b)   *The Social Informatics of the Internet: An Ecology of Games*

        2.   Readings

           a)   boyd & Ellison: *Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship* (PDF)

           b)   Crawford: *Following you: Disciplines of listening in social media* (PDF)

    B.   April 21, 2011

        1.   Discussion

           a)   *Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship*

           b)   *Following you: Disciplines of listening in social media*

        2.   Readings

    a)   Mandavilli: *Trial By Twitter* (PDF)

    b)   Taekke: *Facebook: Networking the Community of Society* (PDF)

3.   Assignment

    a)   Topic Reflection #5

        (1)   Prompt: For this final reflection, I want you to reflect on the class, your participation, and my participation. Tell me how you think this class went, how interactions affected your success in this class, what I did well or could have done better. Make this constructive feedback for both of us.

               Whatever you say will not affect your grades, but help me become a better instructor.

               I appreciate your feedback on this topic.

XV.   Making a Difference

   A.   April 26, 2011

      1.   Discussion

         a)   *Trial by Twitter?*

         b)   *Facebook: Networking the Community of Society*

      2.   Readings

         a)   Etling, Faris, and Palfrey: *Political Change in the Digital Age: The Fragility and Promise of Online Organizing* (PDF)

         b)   Dean: *Integration of Art, Language and Technology as a Vehicle of Change for the Internet* (PDF)

   B.   April 28, 2011

      1.   Discussion

         a)   *Political Change in the Digital Age: The Fragility and Promise of Online Organizing*

         b)   *Integration of Art, Language and Technology as a Vehicle of Change for the Internet*

      2.   Readings

         a)   Kling: *Learning About Information Technologies and Social Change: The Contribution of Social Informatics* (PDF)

         b)   Gladwell: *Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted* (PDF)

XVI. Presentations

   A.   May 3, 2011

      1.   Discussion

      a) *Learning About Information Technologies and Social Change: The Contribution of Social Informatics*

      b) *Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted*

    2. Assignment

      a) Presentations

  B. May 5, 2011

    1. Assignment

      a) Presentations

Appendix A

Internet Technology Review

For this assignment, please start by choosing an Internet technology your group is using for its project. Once you've selected a particular Internet technology, please research how the technology works, consulting a minimum of three sources (which may include howstuffworks.com and Wikipedia) and prepare a brief report in which you:

1. Explain the way the technology works to a potential lay audience, synthesizing and expanding upon the approaches found in your research;

2. Critically assess the technology with en eye toward what activities are made possible by the technology, and what activities or approaches might be excluded or discouraged by the technology.

I expect the report to be fairly brief. My guideline for length is 1000 words, which will translate to four or five pages, providing you do not have too many visual components. Visuals are required to show you understand visual rhetoric principles.

Visuals

This written report requires some significant visual content.

First, you must strip out the text associated with the illustrations and write your own. Second, you must prominently credit the source of the illustrations both within your presentation, and in a "works cited" displayed on screen, overhead, or blackboard.

Please exercise considerable care to properly acknowledge source materials. Refer to the resources in Week 1 to review how to cite sources.

Appendix B

Rhetorical Analysis of Internet Communication

For this assignment, please begin by identifying a complex instance of persuasive communication within your project that depends, in part, on the features of the Internet in order to persuade.

Once you've selected your Internet-based communication, examine it using recognized tools for rhetorical analysis. Among these tools are: the Aristotelian appeals (ethos, logos, and pathos); concepts in visual rhetoric; and focused audience analysis developed as a by-product of working to understand the relationships underpinning the rhetorical situation (composer/topic/audience).

Using these tools, develop a sustained evaluative argument in which you determine whether your chosen site is successful or not. Be sure to support your argument with illustrative examples drawn from your site, and to select representative persuasive efforts for focused analysis. You will be expected to quote (or paraphrase or summarize) frequently and to analyze, interpret, and explain the persuasive effect of the quoted material.

Please shoot for 1,500 words, exclusive of bibliographical material. Use at least 3 primary source materials.

Appendix C

Internet Research: What's Next?

For this assignment, please chose a research article in a peer-reviewed journal to serve as a "springboard" for an investigation into current arguments addressing the Internet. Journals to consider would include First Monday, Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, Kairos, Computers and Composition, and the journals cited in the bibliographies for the articles in Into the Blogosphere. Identify the particular topic (or network of topics) at the heart of this article, and find two additional substantive articles addressing the same or similar topics in substantive publications or sites dating from the last three years.

Once you have established your pool of three articles, briefly summarize the articles, making sure to quote important passages. Offer critical assessments of the articles, using analysis, interpretation, and reasoned judgment.

Based on your conclusions about the successes and weaknesses of these articles, develop an argument in which you identify an appropriate next step for academic Internet research.

The summaries and your argument for a particular, specific next step, should then be developed into a focused argument with the paper as a whole encompassing approximately 749 words.