

# Writing in & for Digital Environments

Dickinson College, Fall 2014

TR 10:30-11:45, East College 312

<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/wrpg211> #DigitalEnv

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## **Course Description and Objectives**

In this course, students will think about the stakes of writing in a range of digital environments—blogs, online forums, personal collections (Pinterest, Tumblr, Twitter, Facebook, etc), as well as the politics and history of publishing, copyright, and the public domain. In addition, students will examine archives and the responsibility of holdings within a library or other institution. Finally, students will learn the technical skills to create a class website as well as their own personal website as they consider writing across different environments.

The learning objectives for this class, and all other English 212/Writing Program 211 courses, are as follows. By the end of this course, students will understand how to:

1. frame a topic and establish a thesis for short expository essays on a range of topics relevant to specific course section: typically 3 to 5 essays during the term
2. revise draft essays based on self-revision and input from student and faculty comments on draft versions
3. correct essays for grammar, spelling, structure, and proper format (departmental and/or MLA style)
4. thoughtfully edit the critical writing of their peers
5. critique essays by acknowledged masters of the genre

## **Course Materials**

The following texts are required for the course and are available at the college bookstore:

- ***How to Be an Explorer of the World: Portable Life Museum***, by Kerri Smith (Perigee Trade, 2008) ISBN: 0399534601
- ***Writing Analytically***, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen (Cengage Learning, 2011) ISBN#: 978-0495910084 \*NOTE: This text is listed recommended in the bookstore. You will be required to read from the book, but if you cannot afford to purchase a copy, one is on reserve for the class in the library. You will be expected to have the assigned pages with you in class.
- Any notebook of your choice. You will use this as a journal and as a place to complete activities from *How to Be an Explorer of the World*.

In addition, you will need to be able to access various other texts online. Most of these can be found on our class website, however, you may be required to purchase an eBook or access to other online tools. More details TBA.

## **Attendance and Participation**

**Preparation, attendance, and participation are crucial to this course and your success in it.** Regular attendance and conscientious preparation for class are assumed and expected. That said I recognize things sometimes come up, and as such, I give you up to *three* absences throughout the course of the semester without penalty. Missing classes beyond that will result in a reduction of your participation grade. Just showing up for class, however, is not enough to guarantee a high participation grade. Your participation grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

- You come to class having done the day's reading.
- You prompt discussion and/or respond to your peers.
- You enter the conversation without dominating or silencing others.
- You offer more than just personal opinion or anecdote – that is, you root your comments in the text we are discussing. (In other words, people who try to comment on things they have not read will lose points.)
- You attend peer review sessions with a complete rough draft.
- You work collaboratively with people to achieve learning goals when you are placed in a small group.
- You are present and engaged in every class. Therefore, you take care of your needs before you come to class. You will lose all of your participation points if you make a regular habit of excusing yourself in the middle of class to take a phone call or to use the restroom.

I recognize that some students are hesitant to speak in front of class. If this is the case, please come talk with me during office hours early in the semester. In addition, if extenuating circumstances arise that are interfering with your ability to attend and/or participate in this class or others, please come see me as soon as possible. Dickinson has many resources available to you that might help you navigate a challenging a time or situation and I can help you locate those resources. As a general rule of thumb, if you are struggling in some way, please see me as soon as possible.

## **Papers**

Each paper will go through the invention, drafting, feedback, and revising process. The process of revision and the ultimate success of the paper depend upon a thoughtful first draft as well as a polished final draft. For each longer paper, you will have ample time for writing the first version and for revising after receiving feedback on the draft. All papers (first and final versions) must be word-processed and meet standard format practices (either double-spaced, 12 point font, pages numbered in the right hand corner, title and name on first page, and date of submission OR an online equivalent). Throughout the paper, the citations and documentation style should be consistent. Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade.

### **Evaluation Policies for Writing Assignments**

In general, I will evaluate your writing by considering how well you have achieved the following goals (developed by the Writing Program):

1. The author crafts an introduction that identifies a question, frames the question, and states a thesis.
2. The author organizes the writing, demonstrates a progression of ideas, and maintains a consistent focus or thread.
3. The author contextualizes the question and supports it with evidence.
4. The author sustains analytical inquiry throughout the assignment.

5. The author effectively incorporates relevant outside information.
6. The author engages the intended audience with a consistent, distinctive voice appropriate to the task.
7. The author adheres to appropriate standards for language use.
8. The author conforms to appropriate formats for citation of source material.

**Requirements and Grading**

Beyond participation, your grade will be based on regular short writing assignments and two more formal essays. The relative weight of each component is as follows:

Attendance and Participation	10%	
Paper #1	15%	Proposal and annotated bibliography of blogs
Paper #2	20%	Analytical Essay
Blog Posts and other short writing	30%	
Final Project and Class Presentation	25%	Presentations in class Final Project

Final letter grades will be assigned in the following way:

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82	D = 60-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 77-79	F = 0-59
B+ = 87-89	C = 73-76	
B = 83-86	C- = 70-72	

**Grade Calculations:**

I use an excel worksheet to calculate my grades. If you would like to discuss graded work, please take at least two days to review my comments, along with the grading criteria for the assignment. While I don't negotiate grades, I am happy to discuss strategies for improving your writing.

**Extra Credit:**

If you attend any Dickinson College screening, workshop, or lecture and write a 1-2 page reflection stating how the event related to this class and what was interesting about it for you, I will award 1 point extra credit. You may complete up to 5 extra credit reflections. These points will be added to your lowest paper grade at the end of the semester. I will reject any reflection I feel is insufficient or unsuitable.

**Lateness, Cell Phones, and Other Disruptions:**

Please make an effort to be on time. Class begins promptly and if you are more than ten minutes late, I will record you as absent. If you have a reason that may cause you to be late from time to time, please let me know. Please remember to turn OFF all cell phones unless otherwise directed. If you are a student athlete or member of a student group that requires you to miss class for a university-sanctioned event, please let me know as soon as possible.

### **Technology in the Classroom:**

Since thoughtful listening and responding will be instrumental to the success of our course, I will limit the use of laptop/tablets/etc. to particular in-class assignments. **In other words, I do not like for students to use laptops for general note taking in class.** Of course, if you feel this will harm your ability to succeed in the class, please see me; there are reasons to make an exception.

When working on an in-class assignment which requires you to access online texts and/or various social media, I expect **all students to stay on-task and not stray from our class focus.** To put it simply, I do not tolerate students surfing the web or chatting online during class.

### **Blog Posts & How to be an Explorer of the World:**

You will complete a number of blog posts (500 words per post) over the course of the semester as well as comment on other posts made by your classmates. These posts will be in response to prompts handed out in class or of your own direction. Over the course of the posts, I expect you to engage with the readings and discussions and not simply summarize them. I also expect you to make connections to other sources, media, and class texts so please add quotations, images, links, videos, etc that relate to the week's topics and your interpretation of them. For these blog posts, you may be asked to do prewriting or brainstorming exercises taken from Kerri Smith's *How to be an Explorer of the World*. Please keep all prewriting exercises because I will either collect them and/or they will become a part of your final project portfolio.

### **Presentations:**

All students will give an oral presentation about their final project before the close of the semester. Further details TBA.

### **Deadlines:**

Deadlines are firm. Unless you have asked for and received prior permission to extend the deadline or you have extraneous, extenuating circumstances, late assignments will lose one grade increment per day late. I cannot accept assignments more than one week late.

**“How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” – E.M. Forster**

### **Norman M. Eberly Writing Center:**

Writers of all levels and abilities need feedback in order to develop their ideas and grow as writers. Dickinson's trained writing tutors can help you generate ideas, begin drafting, revise a rough draft, figure out your professor's preferred documentation style, understand and respond to professor feedback, edit your writing – among other things. You can walk in or call and make an appointment at (717) 245-1620 (or 245-1767 for foreign language writing). For more information about hours and procedures, visit the web: <http://www.dickinson.edu/academics/resources/writing-program/content/Writing-Center/>

### **Academic Integrity**

**Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.** Consistent with Dickinson College's Student Code of Conduct, cheating of any kind may lead to disciplinary action, which often includes failing the course. Submission of someone else's written work or using sources without proper credit is unacceptable. Enrollment at Dickinson represents a commitment to abide by

the College's principles of academic integrity. Please read Dickinson's plagiarism and academic integrity policy, available at:

[http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/2976/academic\\_integrity\\_and\\_how\\_to\\_avoid\\_plagiarism](http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/2976/academic_integrity_and_how_to_avoid_plagiarism)

With respect to all assignments in this course, I expect you to do your own work. You are certainly encouraged to discuss course content and readings with your fellow classmates, but your work in papers must be your own. Regarding outside sources, you will need to cite and/or somehow credit *all* of your sources. We will discuss ways of doing this before your first written assignment is due. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please feel free to ask.

From Dickinson College's Community Standards:

"Respect for ideas — our own and others' — is a hallmark of academic integrity. We show respect by acknowledging when we have used another's words or ideas in our work. We expect others to acknowledge when they use our ideas or words in their work. Students are expected to do their own work on quizzes, papers, examinations, class assignments, etc. Normally, a paper may be submitted in fulfillment of an assignment in only one course. Exceptions require permission from the instructors. Collaboration must be noted in writing and requires the consent of all instructors."

From: [http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/3694/2014-2015\\_community\\_standardspdf](http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/3694/2014-2015_community_standardspdf)

### **Accommodations**

I am committed to including all students in this course and am happy to discuss accommodations with students, provided that this conversation happens **early** in the semester and definitely before any papers/projects are due. From Dickinson College's Disability Services:

Dickinson College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities, according to equal access laws. I am available to discuss the implementation of those accommodations. Students requesting accommodations must first register with Disability Services to verify their eligibility. After documentation review, Marni Jones, Director of Learning Skills and Disability Services, will provide eligible students with accommodation letters for their professors. Students must obtain a new letter every semester and meet with each relevant professor prior to any accommodations being implemented. These meetings should occur as soon as possible in the semester, and at least five days before any testing accommodations. Disability Services is located in Biddle House. Address inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at 717-245-1734 or email [disabilityservices@dickinson.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@dickinson.edu). For more information, see the Disability Services website: [www.dickinson.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.dickinson.edu/disabilityservices).

### **Other Needs:**

If you have a concern or issue regarding this class, your ability to participate in it, or the material we are covering, please stop by my office hours or email me to set up an appointment. The sooner we can talk about your concerns, the better I will be able to help you negotiate a solution. I am committed to providing equal educational opportunity to all students.

## **Login Information and Passwords**

Over the course of the semester, you will be required to create online accounts in order to use platforms such as Wordpress, Twitter, Zotero, etc. You DO NOT need to use your full name or real name. In fact, I suggest you come up with an online alias for this class. Below, please write down your login information and something to help you remember your password so that you do not lose access to the work you have done.

<b>Platform</b>	<b>My Login</b>	<b>PW prompt</b>
Wordpress		
Twitter		

## **Class Contacts:**

If you miss class for ANY reason it is YOUR responsibility to contact another member of the class to see what you may have missed. Please make sure you have at least three contacts:

1. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

2. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

3. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

4. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: The policies, procedures, schedules, and requirements in this syllabus are subject to change—should any occur I will make every effort to give you plenty of notice.