

# Writing in and for Digital Environments

Dickinson College, Fall 2013

TR 9:00-10:15, East College 406

Class website: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/wrpg211>

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Office: East College 308

Office Hours: Monday & Friday 10-11; Tuesday 10:30-11:30;

and by appointment

## **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.

## **Course Materials**

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

*Writing for Digital Media* by Brian Carroll (Routledge, 2010) ISBN: 978-0415992015

*Finish This Book* by Kerri Smith (Perigee Trade, 2011) ISBN: 978-0399536892

Additional readings are available on our class website unless otherwise specified in the syllabus.

## **Class Participation and Attendance:**

This class is a workshop/seminar and therefore depends on the participation of its members. Failure to attend undermines the class as a whole. Attendance, therefore, will be a substantial part of your participation grade. You may miss *up to three* class periods without penalty. If you miss the class for any reason, you are responsible for what went on in the class, including changes of assignments. I will not answer emails asking me to describe what went on in class. You are responsible for contacting one of your classmates to find out what went on, including changes of any assignments. **If you miss more than three classes, for whatever reason, your overall participation grade will decrease per missed class.** If you have extenuating circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible.

I also expect you to read the assigned material and prepared to ask questions and offer opinions about it during class. Attendance alone with little or no contribution will only earn you approximately a C in participation. 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.

## **Requirements and Grading**

Beyond participation, your grade will be based on weekly response paper and two more formal papers. The relative weight of each component is as follows:

Attendance and Participation	10%	
Paper #1	15%	Proposal and annotated bibliography of blogs. Due 9/19
Paper #2	20%	Analysis of <i>Web Writing: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning</i> , Peer Review Due 10/3 Final Draft Due 10/10
Blog Posts and other writing	30%	
Final Project and Class Presentation	25%	Presentations in class Final Project Due 12/9

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.

### **Electronics:**

Since thoughtful listening and responding will be instrumental to the success of our course, I prefer students not rely on electronic instruments in class. **In other words, I do not like for students to use laptops for general note taking in class.** If we do in-class writing assignments you may use a laptop. (For these assignments, I will give advance notice.) If this presents a problem, please see me.

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

### **Blog Posts & Finish this Book:**

You will complete 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 *Finish this Book*. 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 a signed medical excuse, late assignments will lose one grade increment per day late. I cannot accept assignments more than one week late.

### **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**

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 all of your sources. We will discuss ways of doing this before your first paper 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."

([http://www.dickinson.edu/uploadedFiles/student\\_life/resources/dean\\_of\\_students/content/2012-2013%20Community%20Standards.pdf](http://www.dickinson.edu/uploadedFiles/student_life/resources/dean_of_students/content/2012-2013%20Community%20Standards.pdf))

### **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. 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 during the first three weeks of the semester (except for unusual circumstances), and at least one week 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.

**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.

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	<u>Date</u>	<u>In-class Topic</u>	<u>Reading and Writing Due IN CLASS</u>
<b><u>Week 1</u></b>			
	<b>T 8/27</b>	<i>course introduction and overview</i>	
	<b>R 8/29</b>	<i>Why write?</i>	+ Join class blog + <b>Writer's Questionnaire Due</b> + Read Chapter 1 in <i>Writing Analytically</i> (PDF)
<b><u>Week 2</u></b>			
	<b>T 9/3</b>	<i>Why write online?</i>	+ Read Chapter 1, pp 3-7, and Chapter 2, pp 23-44 in <i>Writing for Digital Media</i> . Come prepared to share 3 facts/tips you find illuminating and any questions + Plus, please bring in examples of blogs you like and be prepared to answer why (No ideas? Take a poll of your friends. What blogs do they read? Why?)
	<b>R 9/5</b>		+ " <a href="#">Digital Writing Uprising: Third-order Thinking in the Digital Humanities</a> " (online article) + " <a href="#">Organic Writing and Digital Media: Seeds and Organs</a> " (online article) + exercise from <i>Finish This Book</i> (see handout) + <b>Blog post #1 due by Sunday, 9/8 at midnight</b> (see handout)
<b><u>Week 3</u></b>			
	<b>T 9/10</b>	<i>Choose a topic blog and begin research</i>	+ Read Chapter 7 in <i>Writing for Digital Media</i> , "Blogito, Ergo Sum"
	<b>R 9/12</b>	<b>* meet in library *</b>	+ Speaker: Elise Ferer (Dickinson Librarian) + <b>Blog post #2 due by Sunday, 9/15 at midnight</b>
<b><u>Week 4</u></b>			
	<b>T 9/17</b>	<i>Design and analysis</i>	+ Read <i>Writing for Digital Media</i> Chapter 5, "Designing Places and Spaces" + " <a href="#">Why we Love Beautiful Things</a> " by Lance Hosey (NYT article)
	<b>R 9/19</b>	<b>*meet in Bosler*</b>	+ <b>Read and comment on 2 posts in class blog</b> + Speaker: Brenda Landis (Dickinson Multimedia Specialist) + <b>Paper #1: Blog Proposal and Annotated Bibliography due by Sun, 9/22 at midnight</b> (via email; see prompt)
<b><u>Week 5</u></b>			
	<b>T 9/24</b>	<b>* meet in library *</b>	+ Speaker: Elise Ferer (Dickinson Librarian) + read: " <a href="#">Creating an Environment for Student Engagement and Web Writing: The 'We Just Want Stephen Colbert to Come to Our College' Super PAC</a> ", by Susan Grogan (online article)
	<b>R 9/26</b>	<i>Application to Liberal Arts and Civic Duty</i>	+ read 2 chapters of your choice in <a href="#">Web Writing: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning</a> . + Come prepared to share a short summary of your two articles with the class
<b><u>Week 6</u></b>			
	<b>T 10/1</b>	<i>Revision: On Writing Well</i>	+ complete 4 more explorations from <i>Finish This Book</i>
	<b>R 10/3</b>	<b>*in class peer review*</b>	+ <b>Paper #2 Draft: Peer Review in class</b>
<b><u>Week 7</u></b>			
	<b>T 10/8</b>	<b>*meet in Bosler*</b> <i>Cross Publication</i>	+ Speaker: Brenda Landis (Dickinson Multimedia Specialist) + Read <i>Writing for Digital Media</i> , Chapter 3, "Screen Writing"

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	<b>R 10/10</b>		+ Read <a href="#">"What Makes a Good Web Essay?"</a> by Jack Dougherty (online article) + <b>Final Draft Paper#2 due by Sunday, 10/13 at midnight</b> <i>Note: final draft includes posting your comments to Web Writing (4 comments/chapter, see prompt)</i>
<b>Week 8</b>			
	<b>T 10/15</b>	<i>Website Workshop</i>	+ Read <i>Writing Analytically</i> on making personal writing more analytical, Chapter 7 (PDF) + Workshop- share what you have built and written
	<b>R 10/17</b>		+ Read <i>Writing for Digital Media</i> , Chapter 8 + Workshop- share what you have built and written + <b>Blog Post to Class Blog: Unveiling of Your Site (see prompt, at the latest please post class on Thurs, 10/24)</b>
<b>Week 9</b>			
	<b>T 10/22</b>	NO CLASS	FALL BREAK
	<b>R 10/24</b>		+ <b>Blog Post to Class Blog: Unveiling of Your Site (see prompt, at the latest please post class on Thurs, 10/24)</b> + <b>Read and comment on 2 of your peer's blogs, due Sun, 10/27 by midnight</b>
<b>Week 10</b>			
	<b>T 10/29</b>		+ Speaker: Jennifer Dary + Read <i>Writing for Digital Media</i> , Chapter 9
	<b>R 10/31</b>		+ <b>Blog post by Sun, 11/3 at Midnight</b>
<b>Week 11</b>			
	<b>T 11/5</b>	<b>*meet in Bosler*</b>	+ workshop with Brenda Landis (Dickinson Multimedia Specialist)
	<b>R 11/7</b>		+ complete 3 more explorations from <i>Finish This Book</i> and bring to hand in (10 total) + <b>Blog post by Sun, 11/10 at Midnight</b>
<b>Week 12</b>			
	<b>T 11/12</b>	<i>Copyright &amp; Who owns information?</i>	+Read Chapter 11, "Learning the Legal Landscape" in <i>Writing for Digital Media</i>
	<b>R 11/14</b>		+ Speaker: Malinda Triller (Dickinson Special Collections Librarian) + <b>Blog post by Sun, 11/17 at Midnight</b>
<b>Week 13</b>			
	<b>T 11/19</b>		+ Individual presentations
	<b>R 11/21</b>		+ Individual presentations + <b>Blog post by Sun, 11/24 at Midnight</b>
<b>Week 14</b>			
	<b>T 11/26</b>		Individual presentations + <b>Blog post by Monday, 12/2 at Midnight</b>
	<b>R 11/28</b>	NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING BREAK
<b>Week 15</b>			
	<b>T 12/3</b>	<i>Writing and Sustainability</i>	+ Read the Afterward, "Core Values of Online Journalism" in <i>Writing for Digital Media</i>
	<b>R 12/5</b>		Final class, wrap up
	<b>M 12/9</b>		<b>Final Project Due</b>