In 2008 when Barack Obama was elected as the President of the United States, he had over 2.5 million Facebook supporters, more than four times that of his opponents (Aaker 16); this is one of many illustrations of how new media, specifically social media, has altered public involvement and civic engagement as well as modes of circulation and composition. This course will focus on intersections between civic engagement and new media with topics such as: new media literacies, digital ethics, collective identity, digital tools for composition and research, civic participation, transparency of media, and authority in digital realms. In exploring these issues students will generate both scholarly and digital-based creative work throughout four main projects.

This course is meant to develop students' writing skills as well as rhetorical analysis, research skills and understanding of academic writing. Each week is organized with specific readings to which we will apply theoretical concepts and rhetorical analysis through annotation assignments, in class exercises and discussions. Further new forms of academic writing are emerging through digital media; blog posts and class websites can supplement formal papers and class inboxes; therefore our class will endeavor to use these new forms of media while also critiquing them and their prominence in the academy. The goal of this course is to prepare you as best as possible for new academic learning while teaching grounded writing skills. Over the course of the semester, we’ll look at texts that use digital media theory for the purpose of exploring ontological and axiomatic questions. Inquiries we plan to make include:

• How are various types of digital/new media articles rhetorically constructed/presented?
• How do changing rhetorical practices (due to digital media) apply to specific important issues surrounding gender, race and politics?
• Who assigns value in the institutions and how is value allocated in regards to writing?
• How do we encounter digital text?
• What counts as digital text?
What is the discourse community surrounding digital media studies?

The goal of this exploration is for us all to be more savvy, more informed, and more intentional readers and writers so that we can engage in the important political, environmental, economic, and social challenges of our time through new technology.

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

- Laptop or tablet with word processing capabilities for every class. Since this class uses new technology for advanced writing techniques we will do all our work online and using programs to best emulate your writing process at home. Therefore you are asked to bring your laptop or device to every class unless specified by the teacher.
- Emerson, Lori. *Reading Writing Interfaces: From the Digital to the Bookbound.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. Print. I have ordered this book at the bookstore; however you may purchase it used online or through Amazon Kindle. I have both versions so I can refer to them.
- Nealon, Jeffrey and Susan Giroux. *The Theory Toolbox: Critical Concepts for the New Humanities (Culture and Politics Series) 2nd Edition.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012. Print. I have ordered this book at the bookstore; however you may purchase it used online or through Amazon Kindle. I have both versions so I can refer to them. A PDF copy will be made available in order for you to annotate.
- Reading assignments on the class website or emailed from me. These reading assignments will introduce you to key course concepts and provide a grounding for group discussions. All reading assignments are required and you will be expected to have completed the readings before class.
- Hypothes.is plug-in for Google Chrome. We will use this to share our annotations. It is free and open source.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Comparative Analysis** – Students will choose a form of media that has endured changes from ‘old’ to ‘new’ media, ranging from comic books to movies to communication technologies. Students will then create a comparative analysis (4-5 pages) of these two forms of representation. For example, students could compare writing on a typewriter versus writing on a computer, or how comic book characters were animated by hand versus by technologies today. This comparative analysis will draw specifically from Lev Manovich’s and David Golumbia’s writing on new and digital media. This assignment is meant to develop awareness about genre, audience, form and other contexts, as well as see work as a critical dialogue and develop this thought.

2. **Annotations** – Students will respond to the weekly readings for a total of seven weeks. These weeks, specified on the schedule, will be theme specific. Students will use the annotation plug-in Hypothes.is in order to mark up the text. Annotations will consist of embedded comments, highlighting and replies to fellow student’s notes. They must provide a student's original thoughts on the readings and are used to practice critical thinking as well as develop writing skills. Each annotation will have a specific focus on analyzing the readings, such as responding to the use of rhetorical devices or illustrating the logic of the argument. Annotations are to be
written in a semi-formal personal narrative. For example, a sentence from a comment might state: “I thought the author's use of pathos to involved the audience...”. Students will share their annotations in class and these will serve to develop skills regarding editing, revision, and mastery of language and conventions. Further it will develop an analytical voice and present students with an opportunity to question diction, tonality and other choices in writing. Lastly, it offers the chance for reflection on the student's own writing and abilities.

3. **Digital Archive** - In a group of 2-3 students will choose a topic or object, such as phones, laptops, anything physical thing, to archive using digital tools from the Media Archaeology Lab. Students will construct a digital archive of the chosen object with their group. The archive will be approximately 750-800 words per person in each group. The archive will encourage students to use visual rhetoric as well as consider the social, political and economic implications of the object. Further it will introduce students into creating multimodal arguments using common digital tools. It emphasizes writing for a broad audience and as such focuses on genre, concise writing and developing multimodal arguments. Students will also have to consider audience and adjust their writing to a wider base of readers. This object will then be used as a case study for the students in their research paper.

4. **Research Paper** – Students will compose a traditional, long form essay (approx. 10 pages). This essay will use theory from the Theory Toolbox book and then apply it to issues with technology. Furthermore, students will use their digital archive object as a location for a case study. For example, a student would consider post-structuralism and technology in high school classrooms as a way of illustrating the limitations of new forms of education. This would use the case study of the One Laptop Per Child computer in the MAL (from the digital archive) as well as other learning technologies and arguments. Things to consider/possible areas for discussion: ephemerality of the technology, the limitations of new media, and scholarly research on the topic. (10+ sources) This project is meant to develop advanced writing skills, information literacy, critical thinking, information literacy and use of evidence.

5. **Media Presentation** – Students will create a multimodal presentation using the Pecha Kucha format. This presentation will be a summation of their research paper and thus students will have to effectively choose their main points and find ways to use visual rhetoric to argue for their point. This is important as it is meant to emphasize concise writing skills and the ability to effectively use multimodal formats. After the presentation students will compose a short essay (2-3 pages) reflecting on the challenges of using multimodality and theory in writing, as well as how their presentation went.

**GRADING**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Draft/Final Version</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>Draft</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative Analysis</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotations</td>
<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Archive</td>
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<td>Media Presentation</td>
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AN OVERVIEW: PWR COURSE GOALS

COURSE CONTEXT AND SUMMARY
Open to Juniors and Seniors in the College of Arts and Sciences, WRTG-3020 (Topics in Writing) sharpens critical thinking and critical writing skills. The course focuses upon rhetorical forms students will use in academia, in the workplace, and in the civic domain, across a full spectrum of persuasive strategies, including analysis and argument. This course reinforces skills taught in first-year writing classes and builds upon them, with a greater emphasis upon the situational quality of writing or upon rhetorical context: the relationship between writer, reader, subject, and purpose in the formation of a text.

Topics in Writing courses focus upon specific subjects; the topic serves as a means to an end—to create a knowledgeable audience and a context for discussion and writing: a discourse community. In a workshop setting, students engage in a dialogue with their audience, working out meaningful theses, testing rhetorical strategies, responding to objections and potential objections, and revising to meet the needs of their readers. Instructors expect a high level of student participation and emphasize each student’s role as both writer and as audience: observant, inquisitive readers of the writings of others. Students should leave a 3020 class as more sophisticated writers who understand that the rhetorical situation—rather than a rule book—will invite unique responses based upon their particular goals.

In addition to practicing insightful reading and critical thinking, students in this course will work toward analyzing discussing topics in cogent fashion; in written work, they will practice supporting insights and arguments with textual evidence, while avoiding summary and uncritical repetition of ideas. From our examining materials both collectively and individually, students will ultimately be able to discuss cultural forms and rhetorical issues with new understanding. While the course does not assume familiarity with the topic, engagement with new material at sophisticated levels is expected, working toward advanced content knowledge: as an examination of technology and culture, class objectives focus mainly on efforts to extend rhetorical and apply media-studies perspectives—practical application, engagement efforts, motivated attempts, and participation are key expectations for students’ work throughout the term.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (adapted from the Program for Writing and Rhetoric and CCHE)
Offered through the Program for Writing and Rhetoric, WRTG 3020 is designed to fulfill curricular requirements established by the University of Colorado at Boulder and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. The course is approved for College of Arts and Sciences core upper-division curriculum for written communication, building on skills practiced in the first-year writing core requirement by applying advanced understanding of rhetorical concepts to communication within specialized fields. WRTG 3020 also meets The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) criteria for an Advanced Writing Course (GT-CO3) in the Colorado system of higher education, with goals in four key areas related to PWR objectives:

**Extend Rhetorical Knowledge // Rhetorical Situation**
Rhetoric is the art of shaping words and images to move a particular audience to a specific purpose. An advanced knowledge of the rhetoric used within specialized disciplines sharpens the ability of a communicator to choose the most effective evidence, reasoning, and communication strategies for a
professional audience and purpose.

Readings will introduce the rhetorical concepts that serve as the framework for the course; articles and case studies will place networked communication about technology and culture into specific rhetorical contexts: discourse communities that involve positioning yourself within a particular context and addressing an imagined audience (readership).

Students should learn to exercise extended rhetorical skills:

- Frame issues, define and defend theses, invent and arrange appeals, answer counterarguments, and contextualize conclusions.
- Make decisions about form, argumentation, and style from the expectations of different audiences.
- Value writing as a collaborative dialogue between authors and audiences, critics, and colleagues.
- Develop topic-specific language that is appropriate for the defined audience while also intelligible to a non-expert audience.
- Address an audience; anticipate the thinking, questions, and possible objections of readers in academic and public contexts.

Extend Experience in Writing Processes

Writing—including the writing involved in speaking—is an ongoing process that requires multiple drafts as well as a range of strategies for developing, revising, and editing texts. Advanced skill in engaging the writing process increases both efficiency and effectiveness in generating work for networked communication. The prevalence of participation online also requires advanced skill in reciprocal critique of compositions by classmates.

As writers, students should be able to:

- Understand writing as an ongoing process that requires multiple drafts and various strategies for developing, revising and editing texts.
- Understand that revision is informed by critical dialogue; see the critical analysis of others’ work as relevant to one’s own writing.
- Develop skills in giving constructive feedback and incorporating feedback into your work, from workshops and online forums (Class Website)
- Practice effectively using composing technologies such as multimedia, research tools, networked communication, and online platforms.

Extend Mastery of Writing Conventions // Mechanics and Style

The sequence of assignments will give you practice in analyzing and developing several forms of online communication; in interpreting and using the language of several discourse communities; and in designing strategies that effectively meet the expectations of specialized readers.

Students in WRTG 3020 should learn to:

- Convey meaning through concise, precise, highly readable language.
- Apply the basics of grammar, sentence-structure, and other mechanics integral to analytical and persuasive writing.
- Refine skills in editing and proofreading for presentation to audience.
- Use paragraph structure and transitional devices to aid the reader in following even a complex train of thought.
- Use voice, style, and diction appropriate to the discipline and rhetorical context, across varied writing forms.
Advance Content Knowledge // Critical Thinking and Its Written Application

The range of assignments as well as your examining the compositions of writers and your peers will heighten your awareness of the relationship between specialized content and various audiences, particularly those engaged with technology and culture. This awareness will aid your skillfully adapting content from readings and research to the expertise and expectations of a particular audience, through composition strategies that effectively communicate critical thinking about and knowledge of the course topic.

As writers and as readers, students should leave 3020 able to:

- Pose and develop questions about issues studied in academic readings, example articles, and case studies.
- Locate resources and use information for inquiry; critically evaluate sources for credibility, validity, timeliness, and relevance.
- Draw inferences from evidence; distinguish flawed from sound reasoning and premise; recognize, challenge, and respond to claims.
- Recognize a thesis and understand the relationship between thesis and support; distinguish description from analysis and argument.
- Structure and develop points of argument in coherent order to build case; as readers, recognize this structure and development within texts.
- See writing as form of personal engagement, demanding an awareness of inherent power of language and ability to bring about change.

COURSE POLICIES

TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

To complete this course successfully, you must attend class, complete assignments on time, and participate in class activities and discussions. All assignment will be submitted online to Google Drive folders unless specified otherwise. All drafts will be uploaded to the specified folder in Google Docs and D2L. All final assignment will be uploaded to the specified folder in D2L, except for annotations which will be done via hypothes.is. D2L submissions areo assignments can be run through turnitin.com. If you have a question about your grade, please ask me about it.

Please remember: even if you feel you have done poorly on an assignment, turn it in anyway! If you turn the assignment in, you will at least receive some points that count toward your final grade. Otherwise, you will not receive any points for the assignment.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments are, well, late. Unless you have spoken with me beforehand to arrange for an extension, I will subtract a half letter grade from the total grade for each day the paper is late. I will not grant extensions just for any reason, but if you absolutely cannot meet the deadline because of something unavoidable, contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss the situation. Computer problems are not an acceptable excuse for a late assignment—with the variety of resources on campus, you should have ample opportunity to complete your work on time.

ATTENDANCE

I’ve created an attendance system as follows: each class is worth 2 points, if you arrive on time you will receive the full 2 points, if you are significantly late you will receive 1 point and absences equals 0. All of these will be totaled and then contribute to your attendance mark. Furthermore missing more than 3 classes will result in penalization and missing
more than 5 will result in failure.

This may seem harsh, but the reasoning is simple—if you are absent more than five times, you have missed a significant amount of the course material and it will be difficult for you to achieve the goals of this course. Of course, there are always exceptions. If you have a valid reason for being absent for more periods, contact me and we can discuss the situation: **however, if you are absent, you cannot make up in-class work for the class period you missed.**

If you are absent, contact a classmate for the information and assignments you missed.

**ALWAYS EMAIL ME IF YOU ARE GOING TO MISS A CLASS.** I understand illness and personal issues happen. The earlier you tell me, the faster and easier it will be to adjust assignments/grading. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL AFTER AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE OR THE NIGHT BEFORE.

**OTHER INFORMATION & POLICIES**

**Writing Center**
If you want additional help with your writing, the Writing Center in Norlin Library is a great place to go to talk about ideas, improve your thesis or essay organization, or just generally work on your writing skills. Check the Writing Center website for more information about hours and services, or request an appointment online at: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html.

**Disabilities***
If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu.
If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links at Disability Services website (http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/) and discuss your needs with your professor.

**Religious Observances***
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, I ask that you contact me at least one week ahead of the date(s) that you will be absent so that we can discuss any assignments/class material that you will miss. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

**Classroom Behavior***
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to
discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

**Discrimination and Harassment***

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh.

**Honor Code***

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-7352273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

*University of Colorado - Boulder recommended syllabus statement*

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is a violation of the honor code. It is a portrayal of another’s work or ideas as one’s own and includes:

- Buying a paper off the internet and turning it in as if it were your own work
- Improperly citing references on a works cited page or within the text of a paper

If you have any questions about what plagiarism is please contact me or any of your professors or the writing centre.