

Hu 520: The Rhetorics of A Print/Digital Culture

Mon. 1-3:30

Dickie Selfe <rselfe@mtu.edu>

Bill Powers <wjpowers@mtu.edu>

Teaching Assistant: Tracy Bridgeford <tbridge@mtu.edu>

RATIONALE:

Graduate students and graduate faculty in English studies programs straddle the print and digital worlds in a very real way because their intellectual interests, professional prospects, and teaching approaches depend on how they accommodate, resist, and make use of both worlds.

DESCRIPTION:

More generally, these two central modes of discourse in our culture combine to influence the way we think, work, and create. This course will review historical representations of print and digital technologies and combine those with current critical speculations about where they are taking our profession (broadly defined as English Studies), our private/public lives, and our culture. The object of this exploration will be to construct critical rhetorics of media use.

PRIMARY READINGS:

Chartier, Roger. (1992). *The Order of Books*.

Deibert, Ronald. (1997). *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia: Communication in World Order Transformation*.

Nunberg, Geoffrey. (1996). *The Future of the Book*.

COURSE LIBRARY :

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY THESE BOOKS! (unless you want to ;-)

Aarseth, Espen. (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. (1983). *The printing revolution in early modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kalmbach, James. (1997). *The Computer and the Page: Publishing, Technology, & the Classroom*

Kernan, Alvin. *Samuel Johnson and the Impact of Print*

Levy, Pierre. *Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emerging World in Cyberspace*. Trans. Robert Bononno. New York: Plenum Press, 1997.

Mattelart, Armand. (1996). *The Invention of Communication*

McLuhan, Marshall. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*

O'Donnell, James. (1998). *Avatars of the Word: From Papyrus to Cyberspace*

Ong, Walter. (1982). *Orality & Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*

Zboray, Ronald. (1993). *The Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public*

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week One (Nov. 30)

- * Class Introduction: The Technology of the Seminar
 - Reading discussions
 - Writing projects
 - Book reviews
- * Introductions (online writing in the CCLI)
- * Interest Inventory (email--public/private--in the CCLI)
- * Deibert, Chapter 1, Theory review, Selfe

- * ASSIGNMENT: Read Deibert, Intro. & Chapters 1-4 for week two.

Week Two (Dec. 7)

- * Revisiting the introductions, interest inventories, and writing projects
- * Rhetorical "moves" of Deibert, Chapter 2-4, Selfe
- * Project brainstorming session (online in the CCLI) with invited guests

- * ASSIGNMENT: Read Deibert, Chapters 5-8 for week three.
Write a project proposal (email)

Week Three (Dec. 14)

- * Rhetorical "moves" of Deibert, Chapter 5-8, Selfe
- * Proposal Presentations
- * Book Review Discussions (student led)
- * Research strategies:
 - interviews,
 - theory reading,
 - cybersearching,
 - text analysis,
 - others

- * ASSIGNMENT: Read Chartier (whole book)

(Christmas/New Years break starts Dec. 18 and returns ...

...Week Four (Jan. 4)

- * Review of Chartier by ??????? & ???????
- * ASSIGNMENT: Read Nunberg, Preface - Chpt. 4

Week Five (Jan. 11)

- * Review Nunberg by ???????, ???????
- * ASSIGNMENT: Read Nunberg, Chpt. 5 - 8

Week Six (Jan. 18)

- * Project reviews (feedback) via WWW forums or CommonSpace (in CCLI)
- * Review Nunberg Chpts. 5-8
by ???????, ???????
- * ASSIGNMENT: Read Anne Wysocki's Kairos publication: "?????"
Read Nunberg, Chpts. 9 - Afterword

Week Seven (Jan. 25)

- * Virtual discussion w/ Anne Wysocki (from San Diego)
- * Review Nunberg Chpts. 9 - Afterword
by ????????, ????????

Week Eight (Feb. 1)

- * Book Reviews
- * Individual Project Reviews (w/ teachers)

(Winter Carnival is the week/weekend before ...

...Week Nine (Feb. 8)

- * Individual Project Reviews (w/ teachers)
- * Book Reviews
- * Project Presentations

Week Ten (Feb. 15)

- * Book Reviews
- * Project Presentations

Finals Week (Feb. 22)

- * Hand in Projects

ASSIGNMENTS:

1) Reading groups: This is an optional assignment, but we would like to encourage people to form reading groups and spend time refining their understanding of the class readings outside of class time. To that end, we are willing assign some portion of your grade to this activity. But in order to receive that credit though you should

PhD--prepare for and attend reading group meetings, and record/report on discussions

MA--prepare for, attend, and contribute to group discussions

If you want credit, each member should be willing to prepare a short report at the end of the term on the successes and failures of your group. How would you do it differently next time? Who were the most helpful and productive group members? Why?

Please get your group together or send a representative to make an appointment with Bill or Dickie to negotiate this portion of your grade.

2) Chapter Reviews

PhDs only--prepare extensive annotations on assigned chapters including both the content and rhetorical moves made by the author. Be prepared to lead a discussion in class, elicit comments from other participants, and generate a short "active learning experience" for those attending. (That is, have the rest of us "do" something with the material--write, generate examples, relate it to other readings or experiences,) Masters students are welcome to do this for extra credit.

3) Book Reviews

Everyone--Choose one of the books/readings from the class library (see list above) or suggest a relevant book-length reading of your own (subject to approval) and write a substantial (3-7 page) review of that piece, some web sites might also be appropriate for review. Be sure to include the strengths and weaknesses you noticed, and suggest how you might use, in your own work, the theory, observations, evidence, or practices developed in the reading. Let us know who you might benefit from reading the piece. Prepare materials for a short presentation.

4) Projects

Almost every aspect of our culture is apparently being changed and challenged by the "digital revolution." A short list of some "sites for exploration" might include:

VERY SPECIFIC SITES:

- * A Holocaust video archive
- * Online video library of science information for high schools across Texas
- * Forestry and GPS systems, imaging systems
- * Internationally distributed production of made objects: like cars

MORE GENERAL SITES OF EXPLORATION

- * Full text, online public libraries
- * Sailing competitions
- * Intellectual property
- * Educational practices and institutions
- * Legal studies

- * Sports training
- * Distance Education and the University
- * and, of course, many others

The object of this course is to begin, as a community of scholars, to make sense of the impact that print technology has had on our culture and, subsequently, speculate about what impact the digital revolution (it's scope, characteristics, importance, dynamics, . . .) might be having on a particular component of our culture.

Choose an area of interest to which you are attracted (a cultural site) and which you are planning to investigate in the near future. Collect some form of "data" (a term we will define quite loosely for the purposes of this course) and apply appropriate theory and concepts from our readings, from your past studies, and from our discussions to your cultural data. (Of course we'll elaborate on this approach in class.)

We are hoping that your work on this project can be useful in two ways: it should help in the development of your graduate theses, course-work papers, projects, comprehensives or dissertations. We're convinced that these projects, and the speculations on which they are based, are imminently publishable. Last year, following a similar undergraduate course last spring, Dickie was able to co-author a book chapter with those students. We are certain that individuals or groups working as a collective in this class can eventually find a publishing venue (online or print) for the work they do in HU 520. Of course this is NOT a requirement of the class.