

ENG 411 Writing in the Digital Age  
Syllabus – Term

Professor: Dr. Kristin LaFollette  
 Contact: klafollett@usi.edu, 812-228-5136  
 Office: Orr Center 3007  
 Office hours: (or by appointment)

Credits: 3 credit hours  
 Meeting time/location:  
 Pre-requisite: ENG 301

### Course Description

A course in the kinds of writing made possible by computer-based composing with attention to the impact of technology and computers upon the writer's process and product. The course will cover word processing, document design, desktop publishing, hypertext, email, Internet information access, and multimedia presentation.

### Course Learning Outcomes

- Understand social and material theories of how texts make meaning digitally and apply those theories to digital texts
- Analyze how composition changes as it is enacted in different contexts, situations, genres, and modes for different audiences and purposes
- Produce sophisticated digital texts through the composition process, including learning new digital literacies, practicing accommodation and collaboration, and engaging with drafting, revising, and editing.

### Program Learning Outcomes

Mission: "Through the study of literature and writing, the Department of English prepares students to communicate effectively, think imaginatively, and live wisely in a diverse world."

### Textbook/Course Materials

- *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects* by Ball, Sheppard, and Arola
- Access to Blackboard

### Assessment

#### Grading Events

Project #1 (Digital Literacy Narrative)	50 points
Project #2 (Photo Essay/Digital Storytelling)	50 points
Project #3 (Infographic)	50 points
Project #4 (Digital portfolio/website)	100 points
Attendance/participation	50 points

Total 300 points

#### Grading Scale

A	270-300
B+	261-269
B	240-260
C+	231-239

C	210-230
D+	201-209
D	180-200
F	0-179

All assignments will be turned in to the appropriate submission area on Blackboard. Feedback and grades will also be provided via Blackboard.

### **Course Policies**

#### *Late Work*

In general, I do not accept late work. If you submit an assignment late, you will not receive credit. If you are not able to complete an assignment on time, you must contact me before the assignment is due to receive an extension. Failure of computer technology is not an acceptable reason for late written work. You should start your written work early and “back up” your drafts and revisions. **YOU MUST SUBMIT EVERY MAJOR PROJECT IN THIS CLASS TO PASS. IF YOU FAIL TO SUBMIT ANY OF THE PROJECTS, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.**

#### *Participation*

Students are expected to attend all classes, and it is crucial that all students have done the reading(s) for each class period. Class participation through discussion is required and necessary. We will also be doing studio reviews, which requires that students be in attendance and participate in class. Your participation/attendance score is worth 50 points at the end of the semester. You will lose 3 points for every class session missed (please see the full attendance policy below). Your participation score will be given holistically at the end of the course and will be based on your interactions in class (contributing to class discussion, asking questions, participating in group work, etc.).

#### *Professionalism*

Students should listen, engage, and appreciate an atmosphere of diversity and open discussion. Class discussion must be respectful; whenever students speak, they should be considerate of other students' feelings, use appropriate language, and make their points without being combative or confrontational. Students should not use discriminatory language regarding their fellow students' gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or anything else. Students should listen to one another, ask questions, and explain their disagreements without attacking others.

#### *Attendance*

I will take attendance each class session. Students may miss up to 4 class sessions; if a student misses more than 4 class sessions, they will be ineligible to pass the course. According to the University Handbook, “Students who expect to be absent from classes should confer with their instructors prior to the absence. Students who miss classes are not excused from their obligations to instructors” (84). University-sanctioned absences will count toward the total number of excused absences. Students who believe they cannot complete the semester without missing 4 class sessions should either seek another section that poses fewer conflicts with their extracurricular schedules or drop the course and enroll in it during another semester. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor in the case of an absence before class. Since we are all connected to our electronic devices, it is almost always possible to send an email or text message indicating that you will be absent from class.

### *Late Arrivals/Early Departures*

Late arrivals/early departures are defined as follows: if you arrive after the first 10 minutes of class or leave with 10 or more minutes left in the class session. Every 3 times you are late or leave early, you will receive 1 absence.

### *Technology*

I appreciate technology and think cell phones, tablets, computers, etc. can be great tools for learning and composing. In addition, much of what we do in this class will require us to use laptops and other digital tools. Please be respectful of the instructor and the rest of the class; cell phones, tablets, and computers are permitted (and are welcomed and encouraged), but they should be used for in-class activities and assignments and shouldn't distract you or your classmates.

### *Communication*

Contact me and/or make an appointment to come see me in my office if you have questions or need help with your writing. You should always use your USI email address (be sure to check your USI email frequently) and contact me using my USI email address (which is available at the top of the syllabus). You should also be checking Blackboard regularly to stay on track.

### *Names/Pronouns*

I want to refer to you by your preferred name/pronouns. Please let me know if what is listed on my roster is not what you prefer.

### *Campus Resources*

- Academic Skills (ED 1111) – tutors, supplemental instruction, writing help ([usi.edu/university-division/academicskills](http://usi.edu/university-division/academicskills))
- The Writer's Room (ED 1102) – one-on-one sessions with a writing consultant (812-461-5359)
- Rice Library – help with research, finding resources, etc. ([usi.edu/library](http://usi.edu/library))
- Information Technology (IT) – help with computers, email, etc. ([usi.edu/it](http://usi.edu/it))

## **University Policies**

### *Academic Continuity*

In the event of an announced campus closure or emergency, it may be necessary for the university to suspend normal operations. During this time, the university may opt to continue instruction through online or alternative modes of delivery. Each student is responsible for monitoring the USI homepage at [www.usi.edu](http://www.usi.edu) and USI email for important general information and instructions regarding classes.

### *Academic Integrity*

Students have the right and responsibility to pursue their educational goals with academic integrity, which is the hallmark of truth and honesty in an engaged university community. Please view the [Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures](#).

### *Accessibility*

If you have a disability for which you may require academic accommodations for this class, please register with [Disability Resources](#) as soon as possible by contacting 812-464-1961, [usi1disres@usi.edu](mailto:usi1disres@usi.edu), or Science Center Room 2206.

*Civility and Inclusion*

The university is dedicated to a culture of civility among students, faculty, and staff. The university embraces and celebrates the many differences that exist among its members and strives to maintain an environment that respects differences and provides a sense of belonging and inclusion for everyone. Please view [Student Rights and Responsibilities: Code of Student Behavior](#) and [Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination policy](#).

*Title IX – Sexual Misconduct*

USI does not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, you may seek help by contacting USI's Title IX Coordinator, Carrie Lynn, at 812-464-1703 or at [cnlynn@usi.edu](mailto:cnlynn@usi.edu). Find more information and resources about [Sexual Assault Prevention and Response](#).

*Student Basic Needs*

Students who have difficulty affording food on a regular basis or lack a safe place to live and believe this may affect their class performance are encouraged to contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) and view a [list of resources](#).

*Syllabus Change Policy*

This syllabus is a guide to the course and is subject to change with reasonable advanced notice as course needs arise.

## Projects

### *Project #1 – Digital Literacy Narrative*

A literacy narrative is a reflective, personal story about learning how to read and write and it focuses on events, texts, and/or individuals (“literacy sponsors”) that have influenced your literacy practices. For this assignment, you will create a digital literacy narrative that provides a brief history of your literacy development and a few highlights that shaped you as a reader and writer. You should also include reflections on how your attitudes about literacy developed through and because of your experiences. Your literacy narrative can take any digital form (like an Instagram or Twitter page, a blog page, a video, a voiceover, etc.). Be as creative as possible; this is an opportunity for you to “think outside the box”!

Consider the following as you craft your digital literacy narrative:

- Did your parents and/or teachers read to you when you were young? What did they read to you? Which books or stories influenced you in a positive way?
- Did any one person stand out as your “literacy sponsor” (the person who guided you and encouraged you in your efforts to learn to read and write)?
- When did you begin to read on your own? What did you read as an early reader?
- How often do you read now? What do you read?
- How did you learn to write?
- Do you enjoy writing? Why or why not? What do you write now?
- Have you ever used your literacy skills to achieve something?
- How important are your reading and writing abilities to your life? Do you think your literacy skills will develop or change in the future? How?

### *Project #2 – Photo Essay/Digital Storytelling*

Your goal with this project is to tell your audience a story using imagery, and this imagery will take the form of photographs. These photographs must be original to this project, meaning they must be new and must have been specifically taken for use in this project. The photos must be high quality and show thoughtfulness and precision. The library has cameras available for checkout, and I highly suggest you take advantage of this free tool (unless you already have a camera in your possession or can borrow one from a friend or family member).

The subject of your photo essay/digital storytelling project is completely up to you, but you should tell the story of something important to you. For example, you could tell a story about someone important to you (ex. family or your family tree, friends, significant other, pet), a concept or social issue you are interested in exploring (ex. feminism, suicide awareness, sustainability, gentrification), a condition or illness (ex. eating disorders, chronic pain, hearing loss, diabetes), or you could even talk about yourself (ex. an accomplishment, interest or hobby, how you ended up in your field of study at USI, how you overcame an obstacle). The options are endless, and I want you to be creative in selecting a subject for this project. Think of this photo essay as informing your audience about something you’d like them to know (more) about. Using photography rather than words opens up new possibilities for storytelling and conveying information; first decide what you want to focus on for this project and then think about the best way to take and compile your photographs to tell the story or tell your audience about this subject.

Your photo essay should contain at least 10 photographs and they should be arranged to tell the story you wish to convey in the best way possible (you can cut and paste them into a Word or Publisher document, but you should save the document as a .pdf before submitting to maintain the formatting). Your photographs can be in color, black and white, and/or can be

edited. In addition to the photo component, you will also have a 2-page context essay (this can be in any format and can be before or after your photo essay or separate) where you will describe the story your photo essay is telling or the information your photo essay is conveying. Further, you should also explain why you took the photos you did and how the content of the photos and the arrangement of the photos effectively communicates your story/information (i.e. articulate your rhetorical strategizing processes). We will review several samples of photo essays and context essays in class. Both the photo essay and the context essay will be submitted on Blackboard.

### *Project #3 – Infographic*

An infographic is a visual representation of information, data, and/or knowledge, and the process of creating an infographic can be referred to as “data visualization” or “information design.” Infographics contain visuals (colors and graphics), content (data, statistics, and/or facts), and knowledge (analysis or insight into the data). To create your infographic for this assignment, you will conduct your own primary research through a survey (survey as many people as you can, although you should aim to survey at least fifteen). The questions you ask in your survey can be yes/no questions, multiple choice, short answer, or a combination of all these. Since you want plenty of data to work with, you should have at least five questions in your survey. Depending on the focus of your research, you may want to gear your survey toward students at USI, people from a particular age group or demographic, etc. You should conduct your survey using a tool like Google Forms or Survey Monkey (and you can advertise your survey via social media, email, etc.). Before you make your survey available, you will need to create an informed consent document for your participants to review (we will look at examples of informed consent documents in class). The informed consent should be pasted before the start of your survey so participants can read it before proceeding. [A link to your survey and the informed consent document will need to be submitted along with your infographic.](#)

After you close your survey, you will review the data you've collected and will work on conveying that data. An infographic should use as much visual imagery as possible, so use charts, graphs, diagrams, flowcharts, and other visual elements where you can. Based on our in-class discussions on design strategies, you should have a consistent color scheme, structure, and font. You should have a title, clear sections, readable charts/graphs, and a follow-up paragraph or conclusion (in the infographic) that offers some insight into the results of your primary research. Here are some questions you can respond to in the follow-up paragraph:

- What do the results communicate?
- What commonalities or differences do you notice?
- Did you have a hypothesis prior to starting this research? Did the results confirm your hypothesis?
- Why is this research important? What can people learn from these results? What did you learn? What action can we take?

There are several free tools you can use to create an infographic, including Publisher, Piktochart, Canva, Venngage, etc. Based on what program you use, you will either submit a .pdf version of your infographic or a link to your infographic on Blackboard. If you submit a link, make sure your infographic is marked “public,” otherwise I won't be able to view it.

In short, you should follow these steps to complete the assignment:

- 1) Choose a topic and develop a research question. What are you trying to learn through this research?
- 2) Develop your survey questions. Several people should review your survey questions before you make the survey available to participants.
- 3) Create your informed consent document (see the template and sample on Blackboard).
- 4) Have participants complete the survey. When you have enough results, you will read and interpret those results.
- 5) Create your infographic and convey the results of your survey in visual form. Add a follow-up paragraph to the infographic that provides insight into the results (see questions above).
- 6) Submit your infographic, a link to your survey, and your informed consent document on Blackboard.

#### *Project #4 – Digital Portfolio/Website*

For the final project of the semester, you will create a well-designed website (using a free platform like Wordpress, Wix, or Blogspot) to showcase your scholarly and professional identity. This portfolio should include your name, an “about me” section, a CV or résumé, some projects from this semester, and a reflection (that outlines your experiences in the class, what you learned, how you can improve, and how you will use what you learned moving forward). The rest is up to you!

You should imagine future employers as your audience, so convey your best professional self. In addition to completing your digital portfolio/website, each student in the class will give a brief, low-stakes presentation (about five minutes in length) to the class during our final exam period. You should show us your website and explain the rhetorical and design strategizing you used in creating your portfolio.

## Course Schedule

Day	Class/Due Dates	Readings/Homework
<b>Week #1</b>		
Tuesday, 8/25	Introduction to course, review syllabus and course schedule, Blackboard overview	Introductory questionnaire (Blackboard, extra credit), read pp. 3-11 (1: What Are Multimodal Projects?)
Thursday, 8/27	Introduce Project #1 assignment, discuss reading, watch "What is a Literacy Narrative?" on YouTube, overview of digital tools for Project #1	Read pp. 12-29 (1: What Are Multimodal Projects? cont.), visit the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (thedaln.org) and view two sample literacy narratives
<b>Week #2</b>		
Tuesday, 9/1	Discuss reading, share sample literacy narratives, rhetorical analysis of samples	Read pp. 34-44 (2: How Does Rhetoric Work in Multimodal Projects?)
Thursday, 9/3	Discuss reading, rhetoric and rhetorical strategizing, audience awareness	Read "Sponsors of Literacy" by Brandt (Blackboard), think about digital literacy narrative format
<b>Week #3</b>		
Tuesday, 9/8	<b>Decide on digital literacy narrative format</b> , discuss reading, practice using digital tools, create literacy narrative outline	Read pp. 124-127 and 134-135 (5: How Do You Design and Revise with Multiple Audiences?)
Thursday, 9/10	Discuss reading, studio review practices and expectations, studio review sample digital projects	Work on Project #1 rough "draft"
<b>Week #4</b>		
Tuesday, 9/15	<b>Project #1 rough "draft" due</b> , studio review	Revise rough "draft" based on studio review feedback
Thursday, 9/17	<b>Project #1 final "draft" due</b> , introduce Project #2 assignment, discuss digital storytelling, review sample photo essay, developing a topic	Read pp. 45-56 (2: How Does Rhetoric Work in Multimodal Projects? cont.), do a quick Google search for photo essays and review two samples (for example, BuzzFeed has an interesting collection of photo essays)
<b>Week #5</b>		
Tuesday, 9/22	Sign up for conferences, discuss reading, share	

Thursday, 9/24	sample photo essays, rhetorical analysis of samples  Discuss captions vs. context, use sample photos to practice creating a photo and context essay	Be prepared to share your Project #2 topic idea during conference
<b>Week #6</b>		
Tuesday, 9/29	<b>Project #2 topic due</b> Conferences, sign up for a time slot to meet in my office	
Thursday, 10/1	Conferences, sign up for a time slot to meet in my office	Take photos
<b>Week #7</b>		
Tuesday, 10/6	<b>Take photos for Project #2 by this day</b> , groups share photos and discuss purpose and audience, studio review sample photo essays	Work on Project #2 rough “draft”
Thursday, 10/8	<b>Project #2 rough “draft” due</b> , studio review	Revise Project #2 based on studio review feedback
<b>Week #8</b>		
Tuesday, 10/13	Fall Break, no class	
Thursday, 10/15	<b>Project #2 final “draft” due</b> , introduce Project #3, review informed consent template and sample, discuss topics and research questions	
<b>Week #9</b>		
Tuesday, 10/20	Developing survey questions and informed consent documents, use sample topics to create survey questions, discuss design strategies with sample infographic	Read pp. 60-71 (3: Why is Genre Important in Multimodal Projects?), work on informed consent document
Thursday, 10/22	Discuss reading, develop survey questions, informed consent documents	Work on informed consent document
<b>Week #10</b>		
Tuesday, 10/27	<b>Informed consent document due</b> , peer review survey questions, take surveys	Conduct surveys
Thursday, 10/29	<b>Complete surveys for</b>	Analyze and organize data

	<b>Project #3 by this day</b> , discuss organizing data, work on designing/outlining infographic, take surveys	from surveys
<b>Week #11</b>		
Tuesday, 11/3	Groups discuss survey results, rhetorical analysis of sample infographics	
Thursday, 11/5	Project #3 work day	Work on Project #3 rough draft
<b>Week #12</b>		
Tuesday, 11/10	<b>Project #3 rough "draft" due</b> , studio review	Revise Project #3 based on studio review feedback
Thursday, 11/12	<b>Project #3 final "draft" due</b> , introduce Project #4, review free website platforms, review sample websites	Choose Project #4 platform
<b>Week #13</b>		
Tuesday, 11/17	Developing materials and creating sections for website, discuss arrangement, adding photographs and graphics	Read pp. 73-77 and 83-85 (3: Why is Genre Important in Multimodal Projects? cont.)
Thursday, 11/19	Discuss reading, review sample digital portfolios and websites	
<b>Week #14</b>		
Tuesday, 11/24	Thanksgiving Break, no class	
Thursday, 11/26	Thanksgiving Break, no class	
<b>Week #15</b>		
Tuesday, 12/1	Rhetorical analysis of sample websites	
Thursday, 12/3	Project #4 work day	Work on Project #4 rough "draft"
<b>Week #16</b>		
Tuesday, 12/8	<b>Project #4 rough "draft" due</b> , studio review	Revise Project #4 based on studio review feedback
Thursday, 12/10	<b>Project #4 final "draft" due</b> , submit a link to your website via Blackboard	
<b>Final Exams</b>		
Tuesday, 12/15	No final exam, class will meet during assigned final exam time for digital portfolio presentations	

Thursday, 12/17	Last day of Fall 2020 semester	
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