

COMM 270, Introduction to Multimedia Production: Artists, Rhetors, and/as Content Creators

Section 001/

MWF, 10:10 - 11:00/

Luerrsen 120

Professor: Dr. Chloe Milligan

Email: cmm6663@psu.edu

Office Hours: MWF, 1:25 - 2:15, or by appointment

Location: via Zoom

Office Policy:

Office hours describe time set aside to meet with students outside of class. Please make an appointment to discuss any class related concerns, questions, or clarification. You can email anytime to suggest some dates and times and set a meeting time that will work.

Course Description

In an increasingly digital world that expects fluency in the “language” of new media, multimedia production is an essential literacy. This course will teach some of the building blocks of a multimodal skillset with an emphasis on rhetorical artistry and content creation. After all, “Content Is King” (Bill Gates).

Given that commercial industries often follow the lead of creative innovations, principles of effective communication will be established in this course through interaction with artistic media as rhetorical artifacts, or, as *content*. We will survey a variety of texts that span multiple modes of image, video, sound, and web. As we read, watch, listen, play, and learn from works both creative and scholarly, regular in-class participation in discussions of their critical ideas and workshops adapting their crafts should create the academic environment worthy of them. Major assignments will include a webcomic, a video essay, a collaborative podcast project, and a creative text-based game.

Required Texts

All required texts for this course will be made available via Canvas, unless otherwise notified and alternatively provided.

All born-digital texts we will study in this course are, as of this writing, compatible with current versions of macOS and Windows operating systems.

Students are **required** to have access to a working computer with a reliable internet connection.

Assignments

(1000 total points possible)

150 Webcomic

You will create a webcomic in [Canva](#) (or an equivalent graphic design software). Your comic should present an original argument in dialogue with creative and scholarly work assigned for class. Its argument should be expressed through both form and content in a composition of your choosing. Your webcomic should include effects representative of the principles of comics writing and graphic design, and be turned in alongside a brief 500 word artist's statement.

200 Video Essay

You will compose a video essay in [Adobe Premiere Pro](#) (or an equivalent video editing software). Your video should present an original argument in dialogue with creative and scholarly work assigned for class. Its argument should be expressed through a combination of video production techniques incorporating multiple scenes. Your video should be five to seven minutes long and be turned in alongside its script.

250 Podcast Project

You and a classmate will collaborate on a podcast project made with [Audacity](#). Your podcast can be either fictional or journalistic in nature, as long as it presents an original argument inspired by creative and scholarly work assigned for class, as well as creative and scholarly work discovered through your own research. Its argument should be expressed through voiceover and interview of/with at least each other, in addition to other sound recording techniques. Your podcast should be at least ten minutes long and be turned in alongside its transcript.

300 Text-Based Game

You will design a text-based game through [Twine](#). Your game should present an original argument inspired by creative and scholarly works assigned for class, as well as creative and scholarly works discovered through your own research. Its argument should be expressed through creative (fictional) writing, effective procedural rhetoric, and hybrid multimodal appeals incorporating text, image and/or video, sound, etc. Your game should acknowledge critical considerations broached throughout the semester as it tells its own innovative story through interactive, aesthetically compelling format—and, finally, be turned in alongside a brief 500 word artist's statement.

100 Participation

You must be an active and engaged part of the course to not only receive participation credit but to ensure that our course will be an academically fruitful experience. This grade will be gauged by not only your attendance and engagement in class, but your contribution to asynchronous group activities and larger conversations that may take place on our course discussion board on Canvas. To guarantee receipt of a full grade, you must contribute to class regularly throughout each week.

Course Schedule (Subject to Change):

UNIT 0: INTRODUCTION TO INTRODUCTION TO...

Week 1:

8/23 Course Introduction

8/25 Rhetoric(al Situations), Art, and “Content”

8/27 *On Multimodality*, “Introduction,” Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes

UNIT 1: COMICS AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Week 2:

8/30 *Understanding Comics* (1994), “Chapter Two: The Vocabulary of Comics”, “Chapter 3: Blood in the Gutter”, *Reinventing Comics* (2000), “The Infinite Canvas”, Scott McCloud

9/1 “[His Face All Red](#)” (2010), “[Margot’s Room](#)” (2011), Emily Carroll

9/3 Canva Tutorial

Week 3:

9/6 (Labor Day)

9/8 “Re-Theorizing the Infinite Canvas: A Space for Comics and Rhetorical Theories,” Rich Shivener

9/10 [The Boat](#) (2015), Nam Le & Matt Huynh

Week 4:

9/13 [Check, Please!](#) (2017 - 2020), Ngozi Ukazu

9/15 “Conceptual Art or Readable Contract: The Use of Comics in Technical Communication,” Han Yu

9/17 Peer Review

UNIT 2: FILM AND VIDEO PRODUCTION

Week 5:

9/20 "[Animated Gifs: A Throwback to Cinema's Beginnings](#)," Kelli Marshall

- **Webcomic DUE**

9/22 "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," André Bazin; "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," Andrew Sarris

9/24 [Man with a Movie Camera](#) (1929), Dziga Vertov

Week 6:

9/27 [Every Frame a Painting](#) (2014 - 2017), Taylor Ramos & Tony Zhou

9/29 [I Am Not Your Negro](#) (2016), Raoul Peck

10/1 Adobe Premiere Pro-seminar

Week 7:

10/4 *Cruel Auteursim*, "Introduction," Bonnie Lenore Kyburz

10/6 [La Jetée](#) (1962), Chris Marker

10/8 [The Morning After](#) (2018), Lauren Minnerath

Week 8:

10/11 [Marble Hornets](#) (2009 - 2014), Troy Wagner

10/13 "[The Filmmakers of Tomorrow Are on TikTok Today](#)," Jourdan Aldredge

10/15 Peer Review

UNIT 3: PODCASTS AND SOUND RECORDING

Week 9:

10/18 "[Inside the Podcast Brain: Why Do Audio Stories Captivate?](#)", Tiffanie Wen

- **Video Essay DUE**

10/20 "[The War of the Worlds](#)" (1938), *The Mercury Theater on the Air*, Orson Welles

10/22 Audacity Workshop

Week 10:

10/25 *Digital Sound Studies*, "Introduction," Mary Caton Lingold, Darren Mueller, and Whitney Trettien

10/27 [Limetown](#) (2015 - 2018), Zack Akers

10/29 "[Relaxation Cassettes](#)" (2016), *Within the Wires*, Jeffrey Cranor & Janina Matthewson

Week 11:

11/1 "[How One QAnon Believer Escaped The 'Grand Unified Theory Of All Conspiracy Theories'](#)" and "[Bonding or Brainwashing? How A Girls Trip To The Mountains—And QAnon—Tore One Family Apart](#)" (2020), *Endless Thread*, Ben Brock Johnson & Amory Sivertson

11/3 "[Sensational Sounds: Steph Ceraso on Sonic Composition and Pedagogy](#)" (2016), *Rhetoricity*, Eric Detweiler

11/5 Peer Review

UNIT 4: VIDEOGAMES AND TEXTUAL PLAY

Week 12:

11/8 "[Persuasive Games: The Proceduralist Style](#)," Ian Bogost

- **Podcast Project DUE**

11/10 [Intimate, Infinite](#) (2014), Robert Yang

11/12 [Dr. Langeskov, The Tiger, and The Terribly Cursed Emerald: A Whirlwind Heist](#) (2015), Crows Crows Crows

Week 13:

11/15 [Blocked In](#) (2019), Anastasia Salter & John Murray

11/17 "[Creation Under Capitalism and the Twine Revolution](#)", [With Those We Love Alive](#) (2014), Porpentine
Charity Heartscape

11/19 Twine Practicum

Week 14:

11/22 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

11/24 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

11/26 (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week 15:

11/29 "Empathy and Its Alternatives: Deconstructing the Rhetoric of 'Empathy' in Video Games," Bonnie (Bo) Ruberg

12/1 [*Yume Nikki*](#) (2004), Kikiyama

12/3 [*Butterfly Soup*](#) (2017), Brianna Lei

Week 16:

12/6 "[Twitch and YouTube are blurring the lines between consumers and content creators](#)," Digital Surgeons

12/8 Peer Review

12/10 Course Conclusion

Text-Based Game DUE 12/13, 11:59PM