

VPAS 3340.501 (81942)

Writing in the Arts

Fall 2020

Dr. Charissa N. Terranova

University of Texas at Dallas

Arts & Humanities

Office Hours: Online by appointment

Contact: terranova@utdallas.edu

www.charissaterranova.com

Module 1 Course Introduction

Tuesday August 18 4 pm

Description:

This is a writing-intensive course focusing on the history and theory of art and technology. The act of “writing” in this course is conceptually expanded, meaning that it includes acts of reading, discussion, and editing, in addition to creating expository prose. There is special emphasis on *the act of editing* since it is integral to the process of good writing.

The class consists of ten modules, each of which requires students to watch a lecture by the professor and complete reading, writing, and editing assignments. In the writing assignments, students recount the main ideas of the assigned reading while also taking a position and developing a thesis statement in relationship to the text. The thesis statement might or might not support the main ideas of the assigned readings. The goal of these writing assignments is threefold: to show reading comprehension of a text about art; write critically about that information; and persuade the would-be audience of that critical position.

Be aware that, due to the probability of unforeseen shifts and transformations in public health, any aspect of this class could change abruptly.

Modality and Platform

This course's modality is "fully online," which means that instruction is delivered online synchronously and asynchronously according to a specified schedule. The instructor delivers the instruction from home or the office. Students complete the course at a distance. Attendance at the professor's online lecture and the following discussions is encouraged but optional. Classes will meet through Microsoft Teams and recorded lectures will be available at elearning.

Organizational Elements:

Course activities are organized around ten week-and-a-half long modules with the following four elements.

- **Element 1:**
 - complete the assigned reading
 - watch professor's 50-minute lecture either live or recorded
 - questions and discussion
- **Element 2:**
 - 500-word essays due to peer-editor assigned by professor
- **Element 3:**
 - peer-editors return essays to students
- **Element 4:**
 - submit polished 500-word essays to professor

Goals:

Students enrolled in this class gain the following:

- 1.) The ability to clearly and concisely write about art.
- 2.) Improvement of writing.
- 3.) Improvement of English grammar.
- 4.) Improvement of editing and copyediting skills.
- 5.) Knowledge of the history of art and technology.

Readings:

The reading assignments are available in your textbook and at elearning reserves.

Textbook: Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn, *Mainframe Experimentalism: Early Computing and the Foundations of the Digital Arts*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012.

Writing Short Essays:

For each thematic module, students write a 500-word essay. Essays that exceed or fall short of this length will be marked down accordingly. To repeat, in these essays students recount the main ideas of the assigned reading while also taking a position and developing a thesis statement in relationship to the text. In weeks where there are more than one assigned reading, students choose only one essay on which to focus. The goals of these papers are to: 1.) show that you have completed and understood the reading assignment and 2.) improve your writing skills. Each assignment should be formatted according to the following requirements:

- Documents should be written in Word Perfect. Do not save files in any other format.
- Left-hand justified heading with name of student, course number, professor's name, date
- Followed by your question as a title, center justified underlined or italicized
- Double spaced
- 12 pt. font
- 500 words
- Do not use the first person or passive voice. Write objectively using the active voice.
 - Passive voice: "The lecture was given by Cynthia."
 - Active voice: "Cynthia gave the lecture."
- Model your writing after that of sophisticated journalism outlets.
- Avoid hyperbole.
- Read your paper out loud to ensure clarity
- Upload your final Word document at elearning on specified due date

Peer-Editing Short Essays:

For each module, the professor will post at elearning a list of two-person peer-editing teams. Students then submit each two-page essay to the peer-editor assigned by professor.

For editing exercises, peer-editors use “track changes” tool under “Tools” in menu bar of Word software to edit a peer’s essay. Please see optional proofreading marks in appendix below. Peer-editors might use some of the following terms or suggestions when editing:

- Syntax
- Grammar
- Active voice rather than Passive voice
- WC = word choice
- Proofread / spellcheck
- Avoid hyperbole
- Vary language; do not repeat yourself
- Be certain to orient your reader
- Avoid colloquialisms
- Avoid stilted language

Peer-editors return edited essays to students via email, cc’ing professor. The goals of these editing exercises are to: 1.) teach students the importance of editing within the process of writing; and 2.) to reinforce for both writer and editor the knowledge of the rules of grammar, good syntax, and clear and understandable prose within writing.

Meaning and Symbol	Example	Corrected Example
Capitalize 	Jack London wrote <i>Call of the wild</i> .	Jack London wrote <i>Call of the Wild</i> .
Make Lowercase 	Buck is the hard-working sled dog in the Novel .	Buck is the hard-working sled dog in the novel.
Delete 	This dog he had a strong will to live.	This dog had a strong will to live.
Insert (add) letter, word, or punctuation 	He would not be be by his life of toil.	He would not be defeated by his life of toil.
Insert Space 	If Buck was not so strong he would have died.	If Buck was not so strong, he would have died.
Delete Space 	Buck was home sick.	Buck was homesick.
Spelling Error 	Dave, the wheeler dog, nipped and snarled at Buck.	Dave, the wheeler dog, nipped and snarled at Buck.
Spell Out 	Buck, who was from CA ^{sp} , had a thing or two to learn.	Buck, who was from California, had a thing or two to learn.
Run-on sentence, comma splice, or sentence fragment. RO CS Frag.	RO Spitz was Buck's main threat each dog wanted to be the leader.	Spitz was Buck's main threat; each dog wanted to be the leader.
Grammatically Awkward 	Two dogs fight, it was a dramatic struggle.	Two dogs fought. It was a dramatic struggle.
Move left, right, up, or down 	Buck used his incredible strength to defeat his rival.	Buck used his incredible strength to defeat his rival.
Start a new paragraph 	He then was truly the lead dog. Another important character...	He then was truly the lead dog. Another important character...
End punctuation needed 	Two dogs fought to earn the position of leader.	Two dogs fought to earn the position of leader.
Change word order 	The two (dogs strong) fought over the bone.	The two strong dogs fought over the bone.
Choose a better word [word choice]	The dog [nibbled] ferociously on the bone.	The dog chomped ferociously on the bone.

Questions and Discussion:

Students pose questions and discuss the lecture and readings after each lecture given in Microsoft Teams. Students may also pose questions and discuss the lecture and readings at elearning.

NOTE ON DATES AND ASSIGNMENTS: Essays submitted late will not be accepted.

Grading:

The final grade in the course is calculated from the following percentages:

- Peer-editing exercises: 50%
- Final written essays: 50%

Schedule:

Module 1 Course Introduction 08/18/2020

Tuesday August 18 4 pm

Module 2 From Painting to Daguerreotype 08/20/2020-08/31/2020

Thursday August 20 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: Sarah Kate Gillespie, “Mechanical Imitation,” in *Samuel F. B. Morse’s Gallery of the Louvre and the Art of Invention*, ed. Peter John Brownlee (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press/Terra Foundation for American Art, 2014) 100-110.
- Questions and Discussion

Monday August 24 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Thursday August 27 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Monday August 31 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 3 Photograph: The Construction of Vision 09/01/2020-09/09/2020

Tuesday September 1 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 2001) 3-26.
- Questions and Discussion

Friday September 4 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Monday September 7 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Wednesday September 9 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 4 Chronophotography: Capturing Time and Movement in Image 09/10/2020-09/21/2020

Thursday September 10 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: Dimitrios Latsis, "Landscape in Motion: Muybridge and the Origins of Chronophotography," *Film History* Vol. 27, No. 3 (2015) 1-40.
- Questions and Discussion

Monday September 14 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Thursday September 17 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Monday September 21 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 5 Introduction to Mainframe Experimentalism 09/22/2020-09/30/2020

Tuesday September 22 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading:
 - Hannah B. Higgins and Douglas Kahn, Introduction, *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 1-16.
 - Grant Taylor, "The Soulless Usurpers: Reception and Criticism of Early Computer Art," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 17-37.
- Questions and Discussion

Friday September 25 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Monday September 28 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Wednesday September 31 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 6 Thinking Machines 10/01/2020-10/12/2020

Thursday October 1 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: David Bellos, "Georges Perec's Thinking Machines," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 38-50.
- Questions and Discussion

Monday October 5 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Thursday October 8 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Monday October 12 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 7 New Tendencies, Op Art, and Gestalt Psychology 10/13/2020-10/21/2020

Tuesday October 13 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: Margit Rosen, “ ‘They Have All Dreamt of the Machines – and Now the Machines Have Arrived’: New Tendencies – Computers and Visual Research, Zagreb, 1968-1969,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 90-111.
- Questions and Discussion

Friday October 16 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Monday October 19 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Wednesday October 21 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 8 Fluxus and Computers 10/22/2020-11/02/2020

Thursday October 22 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading:
 - Hannah B. Higgins, “An Introduction to Alison Knowles’s *The House of Dust*,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 195-199.
 - Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, “The Book of the Future: Alison Knowles’s *The House of Dust*,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 200-208.
- Questions and Discussion

Monday October 26 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Thursday October 29 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Monday November 2 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 9 Early Computer Art: The Stuttgart School 11/03/2020-11/11/2020

Tuesday November 3 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: Christopher Klütsch, “Information Aesthetics and the Stuttgart School,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 65-89.
- Questions and Discussion

Friday November 6 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Monday November 9 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Wednesday November 11 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor

Module 10 Mainframe Experimentalism, TVs, and Distributed Networks 11/12/2020-11/23/2020

Thursday November 12 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Reading: William Kaizen, “Computer Participator: Situating Nam June Paik’s Work in Computing,” *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 229-242.
- Questions and Discussion

Monday November 16 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Thursday November 19 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Monday November 23 10 am

- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor