



English 693.01: Digital Literature  
Spring 2020  
TR 3:40- 5:00 PM  
Hamilton Smith Digital Writing Studio 336

## Instructor

Dr. Melinda M. White  
she/her/hers  
330G Hamilton Smith  
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## Course Objectives

As literature and literary analysis move into the digital age, we look to apply traditional literary components and analysis, as well as expand and shift these to fit electronic literature and other multimodal texts. This course will bring together theory, analysis, and production through the in-depth study of multimodal literacies, digital rhetoric, and electronic literature. Students will gain an understanding of multimodal affordances, media theory, and the analysis of more complex digital works, including immersive and embodied narrative spaces, such as installation art and augmented and virtual realities. The course will center around the medium as message, and how “digital born” texts rely on multimodal affordances to convey their meaning; students will discuss and consider how and why author/composers utilize multiple modes, informing their own media choices. This course would allow for more advanced projects: in-depth video essays, map projects, hypertext pieces, potentially even off-screen projects like projected installation or virtual reality work.

After participation in this course you will be expected to:

- Recognize that “the medium is the message,” that the meaning in “digital-born” texts is created through multiple modes, including visuals, audio, & reader interaction
- Demonstrate an understanding of multiple genres of electronic literature
- Participate in formal and informal academic discourse and effectively communicate, verbally and in writing, ideas around digital texts and their multimodal affordances
- Analyze digital literature, applying both traditional narrative concepts, as well as analysis of their design, movement, and interactivity
- Hone creative and critical thinking, literary analysis, presentation, and group-work skills
- Understand the basics of several e-lit authoring tools and software
- Compose a meaningful, in-depth work of electronic literature and situate it historically

## Course Texts

*Electronic Literature* by Scott Rettberg (available in paperback on Amazon, etc.)

All other readings will be available on the course website: <http://multimodalmel.com/693>

Course blog: <https://693digitallit.blogspot.com/>

You will also need a writing journal for reader response notes, in-class writing, and storyboards, and a UNH box or Google Drive, or a USB for storage.

## Assignments

There will be two major assignments in the course, one at mid-term and one final project. In addition, there will be (10) weekly blog posts, “bring it to the table” reading discussions, and in-class assignments. Work must be professional and turned in on time. No excuses. I am available for help, but not on the day a paper/project is due. It is difficult (and never a good idea) to procrastinate work that requires technology (this includes printers!). AND ALWAYS BACK UP YOUR FILES.

### **Electronic literature analysis, presentation, & ELD entry:**

You will choose a work of electronic literature from the Electronic Literature Directory list, compose a literary analysis on the work, give a presentation, and submit an ELD entry for publication. Besides the chapters that should be of help to you, we will be looking at examples of e-lit in class and discussing terms (in addition to traditional lit. analysis) used to analyze multimodal works. In this type of literary analysis, attention must be paid to multimodal affordances, the medium, design, audio, interactivity, etc. In the class presentation, you will show your piece to the class, summarize, provide context, and share some of your analysis. You will have an instructor conference to discuss your draft and receive ELD entry feedback, with polished ELD entries submitted after spring break. This assignment is **25% of your course grade.**

**Electronic literature project:** The final assignment will be a substantial, original work of electronic literature in any of the genres (and medium of your choice) we’ve explored throughout the semester. It should express multimodal affordances and how the message needs the medium, similar to other works we have read. There will be technical assistance provided but you may have to research your chosen software as well. This assignment includes a reflective analytical essay, situating your work within the field of electronic literature. This assignment is **25% of your course grade.**

### **Blog posts, “bring it to the table” discussion, and in-class assignments:**

Approximately every week (total of 10), we will have a blog response, “bring it to the table” discussion, and in-class group or individual assignment to explore technology. This is a literature course and readings are not optional. Besides the textbook, course readings will be provided by the instructor and posted to the course website. The readings we will be doing will serve as a theoretical and practical overview of digital rhetoric and electronic literature. You will find them helpful not only for understanding the history and justification for multimodal and electronic

texts, but also a foundation for your own writing and projects. You are responsible for completing readings on time, composing a blog response and responding to your peers in a timely manner, and bringing something to class discussion every Tuesday. Your thoughts and opinions are a vital part of this class. I do not like to lecture and will only do so when absolutely necessary. What I want to know is what you think and what you want to create. Verbal responses to the material in the course are also a vital part of your response grade. These assignments make up **50% of your course grade**.

The course will focus on both reading, experimenting, and composing in an electronic medium. More detailed assignment descriptions will be provided online and when assignments are introduced. Paper and project proposals, in-class work, workshop, conference, and presentations will be counted in the final percentage for that specific assignment.

Due dates and percentage breakdowns are as follows:

<b>Bring it (read &amp; discuss)</b>	Weekly blog posts & “bring it to the table” participation	Ongoing	30%
<b>&lt;Play&gt;</b>	A series of small, mostly in-class assignments to explore technology. Group & individual	Ongoing	20%
<b>Respond &amp; write (Lit. analysis but different)</b>	Analysis paper, presentation, & ELD entry	March 10 <sup>th</sup> / 24 <sup>th</sup>	25%
<b>Compose &amp; create (&amp; situate)</b>	Substantial work of electronic literature & accompanying analysis	April 28 <sup>th</sup> / May 7 <sup>th</sup>	25%
<b>Total</b>			<b>100%</b>

### Formatting

Format all non-electronic essays with the following specifications:

- 12 point font
- 1 inch margins
- Double spaced
- Black ink
- Left margin justified
- Documentation done in MLA

In addition: All files for electronic projects will be easily accessible (and instructions provided if applicable).

## Course & University Policies

### Course disruptions

Turn off all cell phones, pagers, or other noise-making items before coming to class. These devices are not to be used in a classroom setting. If your cell phone rings you will be asked to leave class. **Texting**, instant messaging, e-mail checking, and web surfing are also not allowed during class time. In order to avoid disrupting other students in class, **you will lose a discussion point** each time you are seen texting, etc. without verbal warning.

### Deadlines

All due dates are listed in this syllabus. You will be reminded of due dates well in advance. Assignments are always due at the beginning of class. I do not accept late work. I will return your graded papers/projects within two weeks of receiving them.

### Participation

Be advised that a good portion of your grade for each unit is dependent upon on your attendance, participation, and compliance with work schedule. Reading and discussions are what make an interesting learning environment. Your thoughts and opinions are a large part of this course. Also, most projects will have work time and workshop during class time. That means that you must be present every day in both body and mind.

### Resources

Online tutorials will be posted to the course website, but you will be expected to research and learn some software for your particular needs by finding tutorials and resources on the web. Books will also be made available to you by the instructor if applicable. You may also make appointments for individual or group conferences for any project or software concern.

Under student-use, images and/or text found on the web is available to you without copyright restrictions. Be aware, however, that this does not hold true if you want your work published outside an academic environment. Creative Commons also has resources available for fair use.

**Always acknowledge your sources.**

The Connors Writing Center is located in the library (behind the reference desk). I encourage each of you to visit at least once during the semester to obtain help or advice with anything from brainstorming topics to grammar and punctuation. Appointments are preferred and can be made by telephone or in person. (<http://www.unh.edu/writing/cwc>; 862-3272; 329 Dimond Library).

All software that we have in the lab (except Eastgate stories) is available on the library cluster computers. You may check out equipment from the digital writing studio through me: cameras, audio recorders, Google Cardboards, etc.. The Parker Media Lab (a MAC lab) is also located in the library. You can sign up for lab time to work on projects, receive help with projects, and also

check out equipment here. (Dimond 237; 862-1747; <https://www.unh.edu/it/media-collaboration-services>).

## Attendance

Attendance is required as this is a discussion and workshop-based course. Missing more than three class periods will impact your course grade. Each student is allowed to miss up to three meetings (classes or conferences) regardless of the reason; there is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. **Each additional absence beyond the three deductibles may lower your final grade by one-third letter grade.** (For example, if you earned a B but missed five classes, your final grade will be a C+.) Missing a scheduled conference or more than 50% of a class meeting also counts as an absence. Exceptions will not be made unless extenuating circumstances can be documented for all absences.

## Academic Integrity

Academic Honesty is a core value at the University of New Hampshire. The [Student Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities](#) handbook defines academic honesty both inside and outside the classroom. The handbook specifically defines plagiarism in article 09.3:

### "09.3 Plagiarism

The unattributed use of the ideas, evidence, or words of another person, or the conveying of the false impression that the arguments and writing in a paper are the student's own. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. The acquisition by purchase or otherwise of a part or the whole of a piece of work which is represented as the student's own;
2. The representation of the ideas, data, or writing of another person as the student's own work, even though some wording, methods of citation, or arrangement of evidence, ideas, or arguments have been altered;
3. Concealment of the true sources of information, ideas, or argument in any piece of work."

The penalties for plagiarism can be stiff: from an "F" for an assignment to an "F" for a course, or, in some cases, expulsion from the University. It is in your best interest to make sure you understand the UNH policy. Please take a moment to complete the UNH Plagiarism tutorial: <http://www.unh.edu/liberal-arts/plagiarism/tutorial.cfm>

## Confidentiality & mandatory reporting

Because you may be sharing some very personal information with me in your essays or in conferences, please be aware of the following: in some circumstances in which you mention crimes/harm committed against you/by you or even secondhand in your writing or in a conference, I will have to share what you revealed. For example, **as a faculty member, I am required to report any disclosure of sexual harassment, sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact, domestic violence, relationship abuse, dating violence, and stalking to UNH police and university administrators.** Consider carefully what you share with me, and if you do not

want this information reported, seek the assistance of the non-mandatory reporters available at Health Services and SHARPP (Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program). Note that SHARPP is available to you 24 hours a day should you seek advice or just want to talk (Crisis Line: 862-7233).

## Services

**Student Accessibility Services (SAS).** If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with SAS in developing a plan to address your academic needs. I will be unable to make any accommodations without a letter from SAS (201 Smith Hall; 2-2607). I cannot provide retroactive accommodations.

**Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS).** Your academic success in this course is very important to me. If during the semester, emotional or mental health issues are affecting that success, please contact Psychological and Counseling Services (PACS) (3rd floor, Smith Hall; 862-2090), which provides counseling appointments and other mental health services.

**Additional Services.** Military & Veterans Services (862-0643; 3rd floor of Thompson Hall). Center for Academic Resources (2nd floor, Smith Hall; 2-3698). IT Help via Phone (2-4242). IT Help in Person: Academic Technology Support Center (ATSC) (Diamond Library, Level 3).

### And...

I am dedicated to your learning, but you must be dedicated as well. Come to class prepared, complete your assignments, participate in class discussions and group work, be respectful to your peers and their ideas and you will succeed academically. Discriminatory behavior based on race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or age will not be tolerated. I am committed to your success and hope this class helps you to become a better writer, thinker and academic.

I will be available in class, during office hours, and by appointment to answer any questions that you may have. If you are having any problems, please talk to me before due dates, etc. Please feel free to e-mail me or to call me to arrange an appointment. E-mail is usually the best way to contact me. As a general rule, please allow me at least **24 hours** to acknowledge and/or respond to your queries.

The following schedule is tentative and subject to changes depending on class dynamics and instructor mood. 😊

## Schedule

“Never forget that. Always remember the fun.” -Robert Coover

### Introductions all around

#### Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>

Introduction to the class & each other

Show your neighbor your neighborhood...

Read: syllabus & course website, post an intro/image to the course blog

#### Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>

Situating electronic literature

Class planning: blog & discussion assignments

Read: *Electronic Literature* Chapter 1 & “electronic literature: what is it?” by N. Katherine Hayles

### Electronic literature form & genres: how did we get here?

#### Tuesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>

“bring it to the table”: What is e-lit? Why should we read it? Write it?

Multimodal affordances & Medium is the message

Read: “The Medium is the Message” by Marshall McLuhan (& Multiliteracies, The New London Group?)

#### Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>

**Play: How do we read this thing? (or potential art museum visit)**

Read: EL Chp. 2 & *Cent Mille milliards de poems* (Hundred thousand billion poems) by Raymond Queneau (& ELD entry & assemble your own poem)

#### Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>

“bring it to the table”: combinatory poetics

Exquisite corpse about you (but really about all of us)

Read: *Storyland* by Nanette Wylde & *Taroko Gorge* by Nick Montfort (ppg256?)

#### Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup>

**Play: Dada & Oulipo**

Read: EL Chp. 3 & “The Garden of Forking Paths” by Jorge Luis Borges

### Down the rabbit hole... hypertext & games & how things work

#### Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>

“bring it to the table”: POMO to e-lit

Read *afternoon, a story* or *Patchwork Girl* (in-class)

Read: “Strachey’s nineteen-fifties love machine” by Siobhan Roberts & “An Account of Randomness in Literary Computing” by Mark Sample

**Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Play: Love letters <3**

Read: *These Waves of Girls* by Caitlin Fisher & *Red Riding Hood* by Donna Leishman & *Entre Ville* by JR Carpenter (“A Cyborg Manifesto”?)

**Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>**

“bring it to the table”: hypertext

*Lexia to Perplexia* & preservation of “old media” (ELMCIP & Traversals)

Introduce midterm analysis essay/presentation ELD entries

**Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup>**

**PLAY: hypertext**

Optional proposal conferences

Read: EL Chp. 4 & Zork & “The Enduring Legacy of Zork”

**Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>**

“bring it to the table”: Games or literature?

Play/Read *The Bafflement Fires*, *DWTD*, *The Stanley Parable* in class

**Proposals due**

Read: “Good literature can come in digital forms – just look to the world of video games” by James O’Sullivan

**Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Play: Twine**

Read: EL Chp. 5 & *i love you/last night* by e.e. cummings, & *dear e.e.* by Lori Janis and Ingrid Ankerson

**Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

“bring it to the table”: the medium is the metaphor

*Cruising* & *ii in the white darkness*

**Draft conferences this week**

Read: “The Dreamlife of Letters” & “Star Wars One Letter at a Time” by Brian Kim Stefans

**Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Play: Movement**

Workshop/revisions on analysis/presentations

**Respond: Lit. analysis (but different)**

**Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>**

**E-lit analysis essays & presentations due!**



**Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Presentations continued**

Workshop/ revisions on ELD entries

Read: EL chp. 6 & *Poems about Trees* by K. Silem Mohammad & “Flight Paths” by Kate Pullinger & Chris Joseph

**March 16-20—SPRING BREAK!!!**

**Here’s where things start to get weird... collaborative & immersive spaces**

**Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

“bring it to the table”: collaboration & networks

**Final ELD entries due/submitted!**

**Read:** *The Unknown* by Scott Rettberg & co. & Occupy MLA

**Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>**

**Play: Collaboration**

Read: EL chp. 7 & *P.o.E.M.M.* by Jason Lewis and Bruno Nadeau (download Speak) & *Strange Rain* & *Text Rain* by Camille Utterback

**Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**

“bring it to the table”: mobile & touch & immersive spaces

Read *Pearl* in class or outside of class

Introduce final projects

**Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Play: Virtual**

Read: “VR is the ultimate empathy machine” by Chris Milk & *Queerskins: A Love Story* by Illya Szilak and Cyril Tsiboulski (& Stanford VHIL)

**Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>**

“bring it to the table”: VR & empathy

Complications of embodied narratives

**Proposals due**

**Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

Multimodal affordances

**Play: technology review**

Project planning

**Compose & create: “Never forget that. Always remember the fun.” -Robert Coover**

**Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>**

“bring it to the table”: Your project/technology  
Worktime

**Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Play: learning your medium**  
Worktime

**Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>**

Worktime

**Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Worktime/workshop

**Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**

**E-lit project drafts due!**

last week!

Project presentations!

**Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Project presentations continued!

Revisions

**Final project revisions/analysis due Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>!**