

Rhetoric, Literacy, & Technology

RWS 696

Dr. Jenny Sheppard
SDSU- Fall 2015

Class Days: Mondays
Class Times: 4:00-6:40
Class Location: SH 126

Office Hours: T & TH 9:30-10:30, W 9:30-12:30 & by appt.
Office Hours Location: SH 120B
Email: jsheppard@mail.sdsu.edu

Course Overview

This course is about looking closely at what people say and do in digital spaces and how they make meaning with the different communication resources at their disposal. We'll investigate the social, communicative and rhetorical strategies they use and the impact this has on our broader culture. Through a lens of literacy studies, we will explore the everyday reading, writing, and communication practices people engage in online and the ways in which this impacts identity, social relationships, and participation in public spaces. We will also draw on rhetorical perspectives to better understand audience, persuasion and the use of digital tools to create rhetorically effective texts in digital environments.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to :

- identify a range of effects digital technologies have on contemporary literacy and rhetorical practices
- demonstrate an understanding of how multimodality changes conceptions of literacy, meaning making, and persuasive practices
- explore critically a range of digital tools to understand their affordances and constraints for various contexts
- utilize theory, research, and analytical practices for investigating the implications of digital technologies on literacy and rhetoric in specific online spaces

Course Materials

Required Texts:

- Jones, Rodney H. and Christof A. Hafner. *Understanding Digital Literacies: A Practical Introduction*. Routledge, 2012.
- Eyman, Douglas, *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015.
- Additional readings in PDF format will be provided by me via Blackboard
- Note: Each student is required to bring his or her own annotated copy (that is, a copy that you read and took notes on) to class on days readings are assigned. You can use a tablet or laptop for course readings as long as you are able to take notes on the screen.

Attendance, Participation, and Professional Etiquette

This course is run as a **seminar and you are expected to be present and engaged for all class sessions** (except in the case of illness, emergency, or official university-related activity). Learning in a seminar format depends upon **preparation and active participation** by the students as well as the professor. Therefore, it is very important that you not only **read assigned texts** but that you also **think critically about the arguments, concepts, and potential applications of the materials we study**. To do well in this course, you will need to **read all assigned material prior to class**, respond to assigned writing prompts, and engage in thoughtful, critical dialog with your classmates. Although this does not mean speaking up and contributing deep insights during every class session, it does mean arriving on time, being prepared, asking questions, and being attentive to the activities at hand.

In order to explore a breadth of perspectives on digital literacy and rhetoric, we will need to rely on the work and resources each of us brings to this experience. Throughout the semester, we will discuss readings, share collected materials and reading responses, and provide feedback on drafts of one another's work. Your sustained engagement in this process will create a rich learning environment for yourself and your classmates and will help to construct a network of support for your intellectual and professional development.

My goal is to create a comfortable, inviting environment for all students so learning can take place. To this end, **I expect professional and respectful behavior in class.** Please be mindful of your behavior, language, and tone in all interactions with classmates and me. Behavior that detracts from the culture of respect and professionalism a class such as this requires will not be tolerated. **Please do not text or talk on cell phones, use computers for reasons outside of our classwork, or engage in any other behavior that distracts from our work.**

Late Work

With the exception of presentations or in-class activities (which cannot be made-up), I will accept late work **only if prior arrangements have been made.** Both major projects (1 & 2) must be completed to pass this class.

Assignments

To help create productive discussions of assigned readings, I will ask you to respond in writing nearly every week. This practice will not only help you think critically about the arguments, concepts, and potential applications of our readings, but will also help us identify points of confusion, conflict, and consensus for discussion. These small assignments are a significant part of your final grade because they are designed as the heart of our class. They will provide you with an opportunity to apply reading concepts to concrete digital practices and examples. They will also help you to unpack the scholarly work we read and to explore connections to areas of interest to you.

In addition to the short writing assignments, you will also complete two longer seminar projects. Both projects, one on digital literacy and one on digital rhetoric, are flexible in focus and approach. That means you will have considerable latitude in choosing your specific topic of inquiry and method of investigation. We will discuss options and grading criteria in detail in class.

When assigned, I will ask that you respond to the day's readings in 1-3 single-spaced pages. A good response will also do at least a few of the following:

- addressing the day's specific prompt
- connect the reading to other readings and/or larger conversations in the field
- reference specific passages (with page numbers)
- provide summation when necessary to clarify points
- focus on unpacking the meaning/implication of key ideas
- pose questions to stimulate discussion

Assignments and Points

ASSIGNMENTS	%
Project # 1: Examining Digital Literacies	25
Project #2: Investigating Digital Rhetorics	25
Weekly writing assignments/reading responses	40
Participation	10
Total	100

Students with Disabilities

Every attempt will be made to offer reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in this course. Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor privately and to contact Student

Disability Services (SDS) as soon as possible. SDS staff are available in the Capulli Center in Suite 3101 or by phone at (619) 594-6473 (voice) or (619) 594-2929 (TTD/TTY).

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Counseling

There are many events and situations that put additional stress on being a student. SDSU has an excellent center for Counseling & Psychological Services that is open to students Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. To set up an initial consultation, call (619) 594-5220. For immediate or emergency help, you are welcome to use San Diego's free 24-hour counseling access line at (800) 479-3339. C&PS on campus also has a "Center for Well-Being" with multiple stations for relaxation if you are feeling stressed during the semester. C&PS is located in the Capulli Center, Room 4401.

Academic Honesty

All work in this course must be original. Plagiarism will result in serious consequences ranging from grade reduction to failure in the class to expulsion from the college. For more information on the university cheating and plagiarism policy, please visit: <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html>. SDSU's library also has an excellent tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism.

Discrimination and Harassment

SDSU complies with all federal and state laws regarding discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, medical status, veteran status, and disability. Further, the expectation for our classroom is that it is a safe, collegial space where differences of background and perspective are treated with consideration and respect. Disagreement on some issues is expected as part of the learning process, but should always be expressed within a framework of collegiality.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change based on student needs and other circumstances. Please check it regularly to stay up-to-date.

Date	In-Class	What's Due by the Beginning of Class
WEEK 1		
M 8/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Introductions * Why rhetoric and literacy in looking at technology? (refer to Barton and Lee ch1) * Syllabus * In class writing and discussion about Barton and Hamilton's "Ten Reasons" 	
WEEK 2		
Language and Literacy Online		
M 8/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss readings * Define and map key terms * Strolling for text/signs/semiotic modes in the everyday world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o For this activity, walk outside of class in any direction for 20 minutes. Write down every thing you see as communicating, making meaning , or influencing your activities/experience through texts. o Share and discuss observations as they relate to today's readings and possible research topics * Directions for Project #1 * Directions for mini-analysis 	<p>Read PDFs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Barton and Lee- ch 1 "Language in the Digital World" * Barton and Lee- ch 2 "Ten Reasons Why Studying the Online World is Crucial for Understanding Language" * Barton and Lee- ch 3 "Acting in a Textually Mediated Social World" <p>Reading response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Choose three of the concepts from chapter 3 and come up with examples and possible research questions for each. In your response, please try to address the "so what" question. That is, why does it matter or what is significant/useful about investigating this issue/area/problem/question? What can be gained through close study of literacy practices in this domain/community/modality?
WEEK 3		
M 9/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Class cancelled for Labor Day 	
WEEK 4		
Literacies of Online Identities		
M 9/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss readings * Share and discuss mini-analyses 	<p>Read PDFs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Barton and Lee- ch 6 "'This Is Me': Writing the Self Online" <p>Mini-analysis due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Using one or more of the six observations on pages 84-85 of Barton and Lee, write an analysis of the relationships between literacies, language, and identity at play in one of your online social networks. Support your argument with quotes and/or screenshots to illustrate and make references to relevant concepts in Barton and Lee.

WEEK 5	Literacies of Online Vernacular Practices	
M 9/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading and responses * Mini-presentations 	<p>Read PDFs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Barton and Lee- ch10 "Language Online as New Vernacular Practices" <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Choose one of the six changes in vernacular activity inspired by online technologies that Barton and Lee identify on pages 141-142. Reflect on how your practices in online and offline spaces has changed over time in relation to technology.
WEEK 6	Mediation and Information Overload	
M 9/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading and responses * Mini-presentations 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Jones and Hafner, Ch 1 "Mediated Me" * Jones and Hafner, Ch 2 "Information Everywhere" <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Choose one and respond: activity 1.1 OR activity 2.1 (A, B, or C section, not all) OR activity 2.2 (focusing primarily on the second set of questions)
WEEK 7	Attending to Critical Digital Literacies	
M 10/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading and responses * Do Activity 6.2B and discuss 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Jones and Hafner, Ch 6 "Attention Structures" * Jones and Hafner, Ch 7 "Critical Literacy" <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Choose one and respond: Activity 6.2A OR any of activities listed in 7.1
WEEK 8		
M 10/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lightning presentations * Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Project #1 due
WEEK 9	Digital Practices and Games in Literacy	
M 10/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading and responses * Spend 30 minutes playing an online or mobile game and respond to questions in 9.1 * Discuss game literacies 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Jones and Hafner, Ch 8 "Digital Practices" * Jones and Hafner, Ch 9 "Games, Learning, and Literacy" <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Activity 8.1

WEEK 10	Social Media, Collaboration, and the Digital at Work	
M 10/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading and responses 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Jones and Hafner, Ch 10 "Social Networking" * Jones and Hafner, Ch 11 "Collaboration and Peer Production" * Jones and Hafner, Ch 12 "Digital Literacies at Work" * Jones and Hafner, "Afterword: Mediated Me 2.0" <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 10.2 OR 12.1 OR 12.2
WEEK 11	Digital Rhetorics	
M 11/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading and responses * Directions for Project #2 * Coming up with a research question 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Eyman "Introduction" * Eyman, Ch 1 "Defining and Locating Digital Rhetoric" <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Drawing on Eyman's introduction and chapter 1, write a short definition of "digital rhetoric" in your own terms. What should be included and excluded and why? Also, come up with three possible research questions/projects on digital rhetoric that interest you. Briefly explain what you would look at, how, and why.
WEEK 12	Digital Rhetorics	
M 11/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue discussing Eyman ch 1 * Peer review of mini-proposals/research questions 	<p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Eyman ch 1 <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Choose one of the subsections in Eyman chapter 1, discuss the argument made, its significance, and any connections to rhetoric and/or literacy that can help us better understand the concept. <p>Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mini-proposal and research question for project #2
WEEK 13	Digital Rhetorics- Theory	
M 11/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading and responses 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Eyman, Ch 2 "Digital Rhetoric: Theory" <p>Reading Response due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * TBA

WEEK 14	Digital Rhetorics- Method	
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M 11/23	* Discuss reading and responses	Read: * Eyman, Ch 3 "Digital Rhetoric: Method" Reading Response due: * TBA
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WEEK 15	Digital Rhetorics- Practice	
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M 11/30	* Discuss reading and responses	Read: * Eyman, Ch 4 "Digital Rhetoric: Practice" Reading Response due: * Choose one of the three "areas of digital rhetoric as practice" identified by Eyman. Discuss your interest in that approach and why it would contribute to the larger field of digital rhetoric. In other words, why should scholars care about this area and what is significant about understanding it further?
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WEEK 16	What We've Learned so Far	
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M 12/7	* Review key concepts from the semester * Peer review of project #2 draft	Due: * Draft of project #2
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FINALS WEEK		
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M 12/14 4:00-6:00		Due: * Final version of Project #2
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