

## COMM 361 New Media Criticism (WI)

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18 January - 29 April

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### Course Description

While it seems obvious that many of the objects we interact with on the Internet were designed by somebody, it is less obvious how that design creates networks of relationships within which those digital objects are entangled. This entanglement impacts our interaction with those objects, our expectations of them, and their role in larger society. We shape them, and they, in turn, shape us.

In this course students will explore, from specific critical theoretical perspectives, the ways in which we shape our new media tools and the ways in which they then shape us. Students will be introduced to fundamental questions about new media objects of all sorts, and provided with a critical language for thinking about the design of digital objects, their relations, and the digital environments within which they live. We will look at how the technical aspects of new media affects the range of social interactions that are possible through new media. We'll also explore how social structures inhabit and transform design in digital environments.

Students will learn to think critically about the world of new media and apply different theoretical frameworks to help explain the impact/effect of design on users. More specifically, students will explore theories in Political Economy, Representation, and the Social Study of Science and Technology. They'll use these theories as a framework to critically examine new media objects of their choice. (e.g., apps, art, content, websites, programs, platforms, etc.)

Students who have taken COMM 201, 200, or 280 will see similar themes and have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of media theory and criticism, and digital media ecology, expand their theoretical thinking, and sharpen their ability to critique media landscapes.

This course is designated Writing Intensive (WI). Above all else, students will have the opportunity to improve their writing skills. Students will experiment with different writing exercises, ask for and provide peer review of others' writing, and have multiple opportunities to revise, expand, and rewrite.

This course is online and asynchronous. Log in using your UVID to find all course content.

## Important Dates

Spring Break Week 8 | 7-11 March

Easter Break Week 13/14 | 13-18 April

Reading Days/Catch-Up Week Week 15 | 25-29 April | The week of second chances - catch-up or redo anything

Final Exam Week 2-7 May Final Papers due 7 May.

No assignments will be due during breaks; no new material will be posted; no discussion forums will be read. You are expected to Take A Break during break weeks. Use this time to rest and reflect. Writing, thinking and learning all benefit from resting your brain with intention.

You may use break weeks to time-shift if you want/need. If it makes your schedule easier, you may use break weeks to catch up on work. Please email me with requests to shift deadlines to after break weeks. No Questions Asked.

This course will be broken into Three Phases: Intro/Theory, Writing/Data, and Review/Revision.

**Intro/Theory Phase:** in this early phase of class you'll get your bearings straight. Get familiar with how this class is organized, find some friends, get a sense of the assignments and all the course materials you'll be working with. Then start working with the Theory Lessons - this is where you'll learn the subject matter of the course that you'll work with in the next two phases. You'll dabble in all of our class Theories, but choose ONE to focus on for your final critique paper. During this Phase you will write 3 short casual essays - one on each of the three theories we'll consider in this class.

**Writing/Data Phase:** In this second phase of class you'll start writing regularly and collecting data. You'll choose a digital object (a text, a website, an app, a platform, a social media profile, etc.) to critique from the theoretical stance you chose back in Phase 1. Complete the Data Collection Lesson to start systematically studying your digital object. Work through the Writing Lesson to reflect on the process of writing and play with silly and constructive writing exercises. During this phase you will write a 4-6 page paper applying your chosen theory to summarize, evaluate, and begin analyzing your chosen digital media object. (Expand on your essays from Phase 1 to write this paper.)

**Review/Revision Phase:** In this final phase of class you'll continue writing and collecting data. You will use writing exercises to build an argument for your final paper based on data collected and analyzed through your chosen theoretical framework. You will engage in a peer review process in which you ask for feedback on your writing from your peers, and give feedback on your peers' writing. During this phase you will expand your 4-6 page paper into a 7-10 page final paper applying your chosen theory to summarize, evaluate, analyze, and make a strong argument about your chosen digital media object.

There is a Hard Stop deadline at the end of each Phase in class. Complete writing assignments during each phase that will build up to a final paper due at the end of finals week.

Visit the [COURSE CHECKLIST](#) to see a detailed sample schedule to pace yourself through the course Phases.

## Schedule

The rough schedule below provides an overview of how our Phases play out over 15-weeks. Despite the chronological Phases, you will need to go back and revisit Lessons repeatedly. Think of the Assignments as the things that drive the course forward. Think of the Lessons as buckets of resources or tools you'll go back to over and over again as you work on your assignments over time.

### Phase 1 Intro/Theory

Weeks 1-5 | 18 January - 18 February

18 February | Hard Stop deadline for all three QTC Theory Essays

You have the first five weeks to get settled into class, read and discuss theory, and write three short essays. Do not leave it all until week 5. Give yourself time to read, time to learn, time to write, and time to rewrite. Plan your five weeks carefully. Plan to hand in your essays early, one at a time, to give me time to respond with valuable comments you can use to improve your writing in essay 2 and 3. You get to make your own schedule here - your success in the course will depend on you making yourself a schedule to follow.

### Phase 2 Writing/Data

Weeks 6-10 | 21 February - 25 March

7-11 March | Spring Break | Week 8 | Plan a break during Phase 2. Writing is really tiring and you'll be doing a lot of it. Give yourself time to step away from the writing to let your ideas settle in and make connections.

25 March | Hard Stop deadline for the Short Paper

### Phase 3 Review/Revision

Weeks 11-14 | 28 March - 22 April

13 April | Hard stop deadline for Submitting peer review of classmates' writing. This is not a deadline you can put off or miss or make up later. Your classmates' revisions to their final paper depend on you giving timely feedback in this assignment. Hand it in on time.

13-18 Apr | Easter | Week 13/14 | Plan a break during Phase 3. Reading others' writing is rewarding and eye-opening, but also really tiring, and you'll be doing a lot of it. Give yourself time to step away from the feedback and revisions to let your ideas settle in and make connections.

19-22 April | Use this week to sort through and organize the feedback you received on your writing, and make a plan for your revising work next week.

### Catch-Up/Revision Week

Week 15 | 25-29 April Use this week to revise your final paper based on feedback from Peer Review. OR Use this week to catch up on anything and everything. Redo any assignments you missed or earned a low grade on. No Late Penalties. No Questions Asked.

### Finals Week

2-7 May | Use this week to finish up your final paper. At this point you should be formatting and proof-reading only; revising too-long and too-choppy sentences; maybe playing with minor organizational changes. Use this week to spend a few minutes here and there to add finishing touches.

Final Paper due 7 May.

### Expectations

Students should expect...

- ...to write. A lot. And over and over again. You will write in a number of different ways: fun, serious, high-stakes, low-stakes, silly, timed, gibberish, revising, editing, etc.
- ...that your writing will build over time; Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle applies to writing!
- ...the writing exercises you participate in throughout the semester will help you build up writing you can use in other places.
- ...a reduced amount of course material than normally found in regular classes to accommodate for the amount of time and effort spent writing.
- ...to sneak in writing for this class in-between the work you do for other classes. Students should NOT expect to spend long chunks of time focusing solely on this class.
- ...to dabble in each of the four course Lessons a little bit at a time to build up knowledge in all areas simultaneously.
- ...to choose one Theory Lesson to focus on for a final paper, and spend more time/energy on that than the other two Theory Lessons. (Students should expect to spend time in all Lessons, but the quality of your attention and time should not be equal across Theory Lessons. Choose one Theory to focus on and skim the other two.)
- ...to read the prof's responses to their classmates' posts in the forums. Even if I didn't reply to \*you\* my reply to someone else will likely be helpful to you in some way.
- ...Quality feedback from the Prof on writing of all kinds. Students should not expect that I will respond to everything they write, but should expect that the feedback I do offer will be high quality and will include suggestions for future improvement.
- ...to ask the Prof if they really want specific feedback on a specific piece of writing.
- ...to learn how to ask for that kind of feedback clearly and concisely.
- ...flexibility from the Prof. If at any time you need an extension, or help, or suggestions on how to manage your online learning workload, Please Do Not Hesitate to ask, and you shall receive

individualized suggestions on how to move forward in a way that will help you get the most out of the class without breaking you.

Graduate Students should also expect...

- ...to participate more in discussion forums. Grad students will have double the forum post requirements as undergrads.
- ...use those extra discussion forum posts to really dig into theories, and explore ideas.
- ...engage with each of the three Theory Lessons more equally, though still choosing one to focus on for a final paper.
- ...less forgiveness from the Prof on their application of theory. Grad students should be engaging with theory on a grad-student level of critical thinking. Lots of guidance will be provided, but grad students will not be permitted to play fast and loose with theory. Undergrads will be cut a little more slack.

As the prof, I will expect:

- ... students to improve with each successive bit of writing. Your overall course grade will be strongly influenced by the improvement you've demonstrated over time.
- ...that this class is not your priority. ...that you have other classes and other assignments and other profs to deal with. ...that those other things may not be as flexible as I am able to be.
- ...online learning is probably pretty new to you, and that your standing as "digital native" does not mean you automatically know how to navigate confusing learning management systems, multiple differently designed classes, or have expertise in digital ecology. I can help you learn How To Learn Online as much as I will help you learn the content of the course.

## Assignments and Grading

All assignments in the class are writing assignments.

Deadlines listed are all Hard Stop Deadlines. You are strongly encouraged to set up interim deadlines for yourself to move through the assignments efficiently - using content you write for one to begin building the next.

Assignments will be graded on a 4-point scale: 0 is an F, up to 4 which is an A. (Sakai does not allow me to enter letter grades into the gradebook, so here we are....).

## Assignment Quick Reference and Advice

Discussion Board Posts (3 posts per lesson / 6 per lesson for grad students). All posts due by 30 April. These posts are meant to help you practice writing and thinking. For each Lesson Discussion post one original post and reply to two classmates (double that if you are a grad student). Spread them out through all three Phases of the course. Discussion Board posts will be graded by quota: post the required number to earn an A. The fewer you post total, the lower your letter grade. There is no such thing as a "poor quality post" if you are actively and authentically starting or engaging in a conversation. Discussion Board posts will be graded as a batch on a 4-point scale.

QTC essays (3 essays). All essays due by 19 February. These short structured essays are meant to help you think through theory. Write your best QTC essay about the theory you choose to focus on. Spread these essays out over the Phase 1 of the course. These essays will be graded on a 4-point scale.

HowToWrite Exercise Reflection (1 reflection essay). All posts due by 30 April. This exercise is meant to help you reflect on your own writing process, and help you assess your own improvement over time. Complete this exercise some time during Phase 2 or 3. These exercises are graded Pass/Fail. If you complete the exercise, you earn an A. If not, you earn an F.

Mid-Term Paper (you'll submit this paper for a grade AND for peer review). Paper due by 26 March. This paper will be graded on a 4-point scale.

Peer Reviews (3 reviews plus 1 request for review). All reviews due by 16 April. These reviews are graded Pass/Fail. If you complete the exercise, you earn an A. If not, you earn an F. The quality of these reviews should be driven by karma - give the quality of feedback you would like to receive.

Final Paper. Due 8 May. This paper will be graded on a 4-point scale.

Writing Lesson Exercises These exercises are meant to help you practice writing. They will help you build writing skills and help you develop content you can reuse in other writing assignments. Spread them out throughout Phase 2 of the course. These exercises are not graded - you do not need to submit any writing, but you should practice some of these exercises as they will improve your other assignments.

Data Collection Field Note Exercises These exercises are meant to help you collect data systematically for your Mid-Term and Final papers. They will help you build analysis skills and help you develop content you build an argument that you will use in your final paper. Spread them out throughout Phase 2 of the course. These exercises are not graded - you do not need to submit any writing, but you should practice some of these exercises as they will improve your other assignments.

The best way to get better at writing is to read and write a lot. Like, A Lot. You will practice writing in four categories that I made up: Gibberish, Short-Attention-Span Theater, Goldilocks, and Serious.

Gibberish Writing: This category is writing is something you will practice throughout the semester. Gibberish writing is the kind of writing you do to figure out what you are thinking. Some of it is true gibberish, and some of it is organized and structured, but very short (less than 750 words). These are your Discussion Board Posts, your Writing Lesson Exercises, your Data Collection Field Note Exercises, and your HowToWrite Reflections. This is writing you do for discovery. It is meant to be sloppy, wild, conversational, and just practice. These assignments are graded Pass/Fail (Done or Not Done).

Short-Attention-Span-Theater Writing: This category is writing you do to explain, summarize, or evaluate something for an imaginary audience with a very short attention span. These are short, but highly organized essays (a clear introduction, a strong thesis statement, organized evidence supporting your thesis claim, and a meaningful conclusion all in 500-750 words). These are your QTC essays that articulate your Questions, Thoughts and Contentions about class content.

Goldilocks Writing: ...is writing that is not too long, and not too short. It falls somewhere in between, and it is the most difficult length to write. If it is not written with skill, it is too short to clearly articulate all the ideas you intend to communicate, or too long to keep the attention of your reader. Expanding a short piece to a mid-length piece takes more than just adding more words. Organizing your ideas is the

key. Good luck with this one. You only have one assignment here - the Mid-Term Paper. We'll get through it together.

Serious Writing: ...is for serious. It's long enough to really say what you mean. In serious writing you take your reader on a long walk guiding them by the hand step-by step through your argument. Serious writing is also how you review and respond to others' writing. In this category you have 2 assignments: the Final Paper and your Peer Reviews of classmates' writing.

## Policies

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Loyola University Chicago is situated on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Kiikaapoi, Peoria, Bodéwadmiakiwen, Myaamia, and Očhéthi Šakówiŋ peoples.

### CENTER FOR STUDENT ASSISTANCE AND ADVOCACY

Should you encounter any unexpected crisis during the semester (e.g., securing food or housing, addressing mental health concerns, managing a concerns, managing a financial crisis, and/or dealing with a family emergency, etc.), please contact the Office of the Dean of Students by submitting a CARE referral ([LUC.edu/csaa](http://LUC.edu/csaa)) for yourself or a peer in need of support. If you are uncomfortable doing so on your own, please know that I can submit a referral on your behalf – just email me or schedule a meeting with me during office hours. To learn more about the Office of the Dean of Students, please find their websites here: [LUC.edu/dos](http://LUC.edu/dos) or [LUC.edu/csaa](http://LUC.edu/csaa).

### STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY

Any student who may need special accommodation for accessibility to learning during exams or class periods should provide documentation from the Student Accessibility Office confidentially to the instructor. The instructor will accommodate that student's needs in the best way possible, given the constraints of the course content and processes. It is the student's responsibility to plan in advance in order to meet their own needs and assignment due dates.

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Plagiarism in your work will result in a minimum of a failing grade for that assignment. The case may carry further sanctions from the School of Communication or the University, the most serious being permanent expulsion. Avoid turning in work that could be interpreted as plagiarism or academically dishonest.

This is an academic community; being uninformed or naïve is not an acceptable excuse for not properly referencing your sources.

It is dishonest to:

turn in the same work for two classes without speaking to your profs first;

turn in a paper you have not written yourself; or copy from another student or use a "cheat sheet" during an exam, unless otherwise allowed by the course professor.

### DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

Communication and social science are subjective and is historically built on a small subset of privileged voices. In this class, we will make an effort to read papers from a diverse group of authors, but limits still exist on this diversity. I acknowledge that it is possible that there may be both overt and covert biases in

the material due to the lens with which it was written, even though the material is primarily of a scientific or journalistic nature. Integrating a diverse set of experiences is important for a more comprehensive understanding of Communication. Please contact me or submit anonymous feedback in the class Forums if you have any suggestions to improve the quality of the course materials.

Let me know if you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official university records.

I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it. (Again, anonymous feedback is always an option.) As a participant in course discussions, I expect you to strive to honor the diversity of your classmates.

#### CLASSROOM CITIZENSHIP

Students are expected to respect each other. When you enter a classroom, you are a member of a cohort - a community of learning. Your success depends on your neighbors' success. Learning is a collaborative effort - in discussion, group work, and even lecture, understanding is co-produced. Your questions and perspectives matter, and so do your classmates'. Treat each other with tolerance and understanding. The people you'll interact with in class are your peers and future colleagues. Strive to do better on your own, but also strive to help your classmates to elevate the level of conversation in the classroom. You are responsible for your own work, but you are also responsible to your teacher and your peers - your positive substantive participation in discussion and group work is a valuable aspect of the class.

#### LATE WORK/ LOST WORK

Learning to learn online is really hard. It is going to take time to adjust. If you are struggling with deadlines or managing your own work, please contact me at any time during the semester. It is never too late to find some way to complete the class well, or to earn credit.

### Detailed Assignment Requirements

#### *Discussion Forum Posts*

You are asked to participate in discussion forums to comment on and puzzle through topics in class with others.

Think of discussion forum posts as the things you would say in a face-to-face class. Questions you might ask, comments you might make in response to classmates' questions and comments. These are open-ended, free-for-all discussions. Because they are meant to be a virtual version of class discussion, you need not craft your posts carefully. Consider what you are trying to say seriously, but write your posts as if you were speaking out loud.

Take advantage of the asynchronous mode of discussion in forums - you can take your time to think about your comment and to think about your reply to a classmate. Discussion may be similar to in-class discussions but online they can be longer, consider deeper concerns that we might normally need to pass over due to time constraints on lectures, And you can come back to them over and over as you learn new material.



Use discussion board posts to think through your ideas about class content. Writing is an act of thinking. Use your discussion board posts to help you discover what you are thinking about class content. Use discussion board posts to seed your QTC and other writing.

Discussion boards and forums are some of the oldest and most sustaining forms of digital communication we have. Discussion boards have a long and rich history. They are much more complex and rich than sms or texting or comments. Use discussion boards to be discerning in your engagement with ideas, and to be thoughtful in your replies.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

Graduate Students Post 6 comments in each Lesson Discussion: 2 original posts plus 4 replies to classmates.

Undergraduate Students Post 3 comments in each Lesson Discussion: 1 original post plus 2 replies to classmates.

#### *QTC Essays*

In Phase 1 of this course you will submit 3 short written responses to readings and topics - One essay for each Theory Lesson. These written "Questions, Thoughts, and Contentions" (QTCs) are a valuable learning experience for several reasons:

- If you're submitting a response to the readings before class forum discussions, you'll naturally be more prepared for discussions. If you're submitting after forum discussions, you'll be able to practice synthesizing your ideas in discussion classmates.
- Because you're writing and thinking about the readings or concepts in informal writing assignments, you'll be better able to put your thoughts together for more formal essay writing in the final exam. (Hint: you can expand a QTC essay for any other assignment.)
- Because you are interpreting, comparing, and questioning the class concepts in context with your own experience, you will better comprehend the material.
- Because you are using a critical approach (if you read and use the QTC-writing Pro-Tips posted in the Forums), you will hone your critical thinking and critical writing skills.

As well as being valuable for you, these reflections are very valuable for co-learning with your classmates. Your Questions, Thoughts, and Contentions will be used to help guide forum discussions, and may help others learn through your experiences.

- QTCs should be between 350-550 words.
- QTCs must be submitted to the QTC forum as a post. (Do not upload a document.)
- QTC posts must include a title and your name.

Be creative in form and/or content of your QTCs. The key to writing these reflections is to demonstrate critical thinking and reflection and to provide in-depth, thought-provoking responses to course content. This is a unique class; each of you will have unique reflections on the course, the readings, and your experiences. These are your questions, thoughts, and contentions.

QTCs will be graded Pass/Fail.

To receive credit (Pass) on each QTC assignment:

- You will submit an essay of at least 350-550 words, on the correct day in the correct QTC Forum as a post.
- Your essay will be proofread and will not look like a first draft.
- Your essay will display a reasonable grasp of the concept, including an accurate, basic introduction to the concept, and a clear articulation of your thought-provoking questions, thoughts, or contentions with the concept.
- Your essay will be critical (as in “critical thinking”, not as in “food critic”), and will synthesize concepts and experience.
- Your thoughts will be clearly written and adequately detailed, properly citing readings when necessary.
- Your essay will be well-organized.
- Your essay will include a strong thesis statement, evidence supporting your claim, and a clear introduction and conclusion.

If your post is missing any of the above criteria, your essay will earn a Fail.

### *HowToWrite Reflection*

In any Writing Intensive class it is important to reflect on your own writing. In Phase 2 of this class we will discuss writing as a practice and experiment with different exercises to practice.

In this assignment you will write about writing. This assignment is meant to be a loose reflection on writing from any angle of your choice. You may choose to write about:

- your experience experimenting with a writing exercise from the Writing or Data Collection Lessons
- your perceptions about your own writing improvement over the course of the semester
- your own fears, apprehensions about writing (or your excitement and enthusiasm about writing)
- past writing experiences that shaped you as a writer
- a topic of interest from the Write Now! podcast episodes in the Writing Lesson.
- a topic of interest from the readings from the Writing or Data Collection Lessons.
- Etc. The choice is yours. Write about what you are interested in.

Your essay is meant to be a personal reflection on a rather academic practice. While there are few rules about what you write about, there are rules about how you write it.

Reflections will be graded Pass/Fail.

To receive credit (Pass) on your Reflection:

- You will submit an essay of at least 350-550 words, on the correct day in the correct Forum as a post.
- Your essay will be proofread and will not look like a first draft.

- Your essay will display a reasonable grasp of the concept, including an accurate, basic introduction to the concept, and a clear articulation of your reflections on your personal experience with the concept.
- Your essay will be critical (as in “critical thinking”, not as in “food critic”), and will synthesize concepts and experience.
- Your thoughts will be clearly written and adequately detailed, properly citing readings when necessary.
- Your essay will be well-organized.
- Your essay will include a strong thesis statement, evidence supporting your claim, and a clear introduction and conclusion.

While it may be a personal reflection, it should not resemble a diary entry, or a stream-of-consciousness rant, or a first draft.

If your post is missing any of the above criteria, your essay will earn a Fail.

### *Mid-Term Paper*

Your Mid-Term Paper is your in-between paper. It’s the paper that fleshes out one of your QTC arguments a bit further, and applies your theoretical framework to your digital object, but leaves room for more expansion for your Final Paper. It sits in-between your QTC and your Final Paper. The goal of your Mid-Term Paper is to move from summary in your QTCs to summary, synthesis, and argument. Your paper should introduce a theoretical framework, make a clear argument for how that framework applies to the digital object you’ve chosen, and synthesize writing from others who have written about your chosen theory, and/or about your digital object. (For reference, your final paper will take all of this summary, synthesis and argument in the Mid-Term Paper and add to it research, evidence, and analysis.)

The three writing assignments build on each other. QTCs summarize and give you an opportunity to start thinking, questioning, and developing possible arguments about a theory. The Mid-Term Paper gives you an opportunity to take that summary and synthesize it with other author’s ideas and your questions/thoughts, and apply it to a cultural object for critique. Your Final Paper will add to all of that your analysis of your digital object based on evidence from field notes to support your theory application (your argument).

Keep in mind that this paper is a stepping stone from early-thinking-stages (QTCs and discussion board posts) to end-analysis-argument-stages (Final Paper). You are going to make mistakes in this paper. That’s the point of it. Your goal is NOT to earn a grade here. Your goal is to think through and build scaffolding for your argument which you will present in a final paper. Your goal in this assignment is to get comments from me, to get reviews from peers, and to take those lessons through to your final paper to improve your writing.

### REQUIREMENTS

Your paper must...

- 2000-3000 words. Not longer. This is roughly 4-6 single-spaces pages - I do not care about font or spacing - these choices will impact your page numbers. There is a skill to writing a complete and compelling synthesis in only 2000-3000 words.

- Include a clear introduction, a strong thesis statement, synthesis of your ideas with other authors' ideas, and a clear conclusion. You must provide a clear path for readers to follow your argument from beginning to end.
- Pace the reader carefully through your idea.
- include properly formatted references to other authors' s work. APA, MLA, Chicago - use whatever formal formatting you like. Be Consistent!
- show your thesis statement in bold.
- Be organized. Your reader should be able to easily imagine a clear outline of your ideas from your writing.
- Be submitted to the Mid-Term Paper Forum as an attachment to a post by midnight on 26 March.
- Include a title, your name, and page numbers.

#### FAQs

I do not care how many references you include in your paper. You need as many as you need to clearly flesh out your synthesis in this paper - which means you need some number more than zero. I will be giving comments specifically around this issue, so you may see how to improve and learn what content actually needs citation and what does not. This is a tricky concern that really only get easier to understand with experience. I will grade easy, but comment heavy with regard to citations/references.

I do not care how many pages your paper is. I do not care about margins, or font, or font size. I do not care where the staple goes, or where the numbers appear on your pages. I do not care where you name is, or where your title is. I do not need a title page, or table of contents. You do not need to format your References list on a separate page. Don't waste your writing/thinking time on document design. There is a place in the world for document design, but it is not in this class. Focus on hitting 2000-3000 words, then add in your reference list.

Your thesis statement should be (roughly) the last sentence of your introduction. Your thesis statement for your QTCs, your Mid-Term Paper, and your Final Paper should be different! They are different styles of writing with different goals. The thesis statement should reflect that and signal to the reader the scope of the writing at hand.

#### *Peer Review*

Request due 9 April \ Reviews due 16 April

This Peer Review assignment is designed in to part to help you: 1. Learn to ask for feedback on your writing, and 2. Give constructive feedback on others' writing. You will ask for classmates to review your Mid-Term Paper, and give feedback to three other classmates.

Step One: Request review of your writing.

To formally request a review of your writing, you will post a request in the Peer Review Forum. Your request must:

- Be posted in the Peer Request Forum by 9 April
- Include your Mid-Term Paper as an attachment to your post
- Include in the body of the text: an introduction to you, your paper, and your main area of concern - explain to your would-be reviewer what you need from them.

- Include in your subject line your Name and a 1-2 word summary on what your main review request is.

For example ...

REQUEST: MDougherty requesting feedback on thesis statement and evidence

REQUEST: MDougherty requesting feedback on introductions/conclusions

REQUEST: MDougherty requesting feedback on application of critical theory

REQUEST: MDougherty requesting feedback on scholarly quotes and paraphrases

REQUEST: MDougherty requesting feedback on clarity and sentence length variety

REQUEST: MDougherty requesting feedback on organization

That means you need to have done some reflection and revisions to your own paper - you need to have a clear sense of at least one thing you need help with. Everyone needs help with something in their papers... choose one to direct the energies of (and possibly entice) your would be reviewer.

#### Step Two: Review classmates' writing

Choose THREE Request posts to reply to. Write a short reply to CLAIM your review. In your short reply to each author, introduce yourself and let them know you'll be reviewing their work. Ask any clarification questions you may have about their request. You may review a paper someone else has claimed. There may be multiple reviewers per paper - this is a good thing. Please look around - if you see a paper with no claims, please choose that one. Spread the reviewing love around. Don't leave anyone hanging.

Download and review your three papers using the criteria below.

When finished with your reviews, post them as a reply to the original Request message. You may write your review directly into the post, or you may upload a document.

Post all three of your reviews by 16 April.

Reviews will be graded Pass/Fail.

#### *Final Paper*

Your Final Paper is the presentation of your full argument. You've spent the semester learning about some theories, observing a digital media object, collecting field notes about that object, and considering that object through the lens or frame of your chosen critical theory. You know a lot now! You understand who has written about this theoretical framework and how they've applied it to other cultural objects. You know all about your digital object, how it works, what it is connected to, how other people interact with it, what activities it enables and constrains, who it favors, who it marginalizes, etc. You have lots of notes about your own personal interactions with that object, newspaper articles and other reviews of that object, and much more. You also have practice writing; you have lots of words already written, and you have feedback on your writing from me and classmates. You have everything you need to write a final paper.

Your Final Paper should merge together the summary of your chosen theory QTC, the synthesis and argument of your Mid-Term Paper, and add to that research and analysis from your field notes. Your Final Paper should expand your Mid-Term Paper to add evidence you've collected in your field notes. Synthesis of that evidence and other authors' writings about your digital media object will set you up to analyze the object through your theoretical framework (your chosen theory lens).

## REQUIREMENTS

Your paper must...

- Be 4000-5000 words. Not longer. This is roughly 8-10 single-spaced pages - I do not care about font or spacing - these choices will impact your page numbers.
- Include a clear introduction, a strong thesis statement, synthesis of your ideas with other authors' ideas, evidence, analysis of evidence in light of your chosen theoretical framework, and a clear conclusion. You must provide a clear path for readers to follow your argument from beginning to end.
- Pace the reader carefully through your idea.
- include properly formatted references to other authors' work. APA, MLA, Chicago - use whatever formal formatting you like. Be Consistent!
- show your thesis statement in bold.
- Be organized. Your reader should be able to easily imagine a clear outline of your ideas from your writing.
- Be submitted to the Final Paper Forum as an attachment to a post by midnight on 30 April or 8 May. (Choose Your Own Adventure Deadline!)
- Include a title, your name, and page numbers.

## FAQs

I do not care how many references you include in your paper. You need as many as you need to clearly flesh out your synthesis and analysis in this paper - which means you need some number more than zero. Refer back to the comments on your Mid-Term Paper.

I do not care how many pages your paper is. I do not care about margins, or font, or font size. I do not care where the staple goes, or where the numbers appear on your pages. I do not care where your name is, or where your title is. I do not need a title page, or table of contents. You do not need to format your References list on a separate page. Don't waste your writing/thinking time on document design. There is a place in the world for document design, but it is not in this class. Focus on hitting 4000-5000 words, then add in your reference list.

Your thesis statement should be (roughly) the last sentence of your introduction. Your thesis statement for your QTCs, your Mid-Term Paper, and your Final Paper should be different! They are different styles of writing with different goals. The thesis statement should reflect that and signal to the reader the scope of the writing at hand.