

NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study- First Year Writing Seminar  
**Thinking and Writing Through New Media**

Our society has a complex relationship with technology, one that is persistent and evolving, beneficial and dangerous. This course will focus specifically on how technology affects the writing process. By engaging in comparative media studies, we will use our own experience to understand and question historical information revolutions since the invention of the alphabet. Students will work in small learning communities to investigate issues of censorship and surveillance or the paradox of the synthetic life by employing critical theory of Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, and Kevin Kelly. Similarly, using new media theory from critics Johanna Drucker and Matthew Kirschenbaum, we will explore issues of labor and education in these literary works. Together, we will also undertake a series of new media experiments, using digital tools to communicate our research to a public audience. On the course blog, students will compose their own digital literacy narratives and analyze the digital objects on which they are dependent by applying the insights gained from engaging with the literary texts and theory. Students will express the results of their exploration in well-developed, thesis-driven, analytical essays accompanied by digital representations of their findings.

### **Course Objectives**

- Students will engage in both informal and formal writing. The variety of writing assignments will give students the opportunity to experience writing through various media and to reflect on the writing process.
- Students will explore and refine their ideas through classroom discussions and in conversation with their peers. Further, students will practice in-class peer review to grow increasingly aware of audience, readers' expectations, and the rhetorical devices necessary to convey ideas clearly.
- Students will learn about techniques of research and how to develop a research agenda and carry out a research project.
- Students will engage in group work that will prepare them to develop and execute collaborative projects effectively.

### **Academic Honesty**

Do not plagiarize. Our course site will be public, and you could face legal consequences for stealing other people's work. Besides that, you can be dismissed from NYU for cheating:

“As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [[www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html](http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html)] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.”

I will go over proper documentation style in the course of the semester in conjunction with OWL at Purdue (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>) and Writer/Designer. If you have questions regarding proper citation practices PLEASE ask me or contact a librarian for help.

### **Disability Accommodations:**

If you have a disability, please come speak with me at the beginning of the term and contact NYU's Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

Note: I may need to adjust this syllabus and course schedule to accommodate pedagogical needs as they arise. We will discuss all changes as a class and the new schedule will be reflected on our course blog.

### **Course Requirements:**

Active Class and Online Participation 25%

Short Writing Assignments 20%

Digital Midterm Project 25%

Group Design Fiction Project 30%

\*Please be aware that these are approximate calculations that reflect the importance of each assignment. There will be smaller assignments and extra credit added. Every assignments will be explained at length in class and through assignment sheets posted to the site.

### **Required Texts:**

*These are the texts that have been ordered from the NYU bookstore, however, any edition – including e-books of the full texts – may be acceptable if you consult me first. I encourage you to find the format that works best for you.*

Margaret Atwood. *Oryx and Crake*. <http://www.oryxandcrake.co.uk/home.asp>

Kristen Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, Cheryl Ball. *Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects*. <http://www.macmillanhigher.com/Catalog/product/writerdesigner-firstedition-arola>

Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451*.

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13259307-fahrenheit-451>

Kevin Kelly. *What Technology Wants*.

<http://www.amazon.com/What-Technology-Wants-Kevin-Kelly/dp/B004Y6MT6O>

E. M. Forster. "The Machine Stops." (full text online)

<http://archive.ncsa.illinois.edu/prajlich/forster.html>

### **Optional texts:**

*The required selections/excerpts will be provided, however you are encouraged to purchase the full text if financially able and if applicable to your future studies.*

Katherine Hayles. *How We Think*.

<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/H/bo5437533.html>

Lisa Gitelman. *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*.

[http://www.amazon.com/Paper-Knowledge-History-Documents-](http://www.amazon.com/Paper-Knowledge-History-Documents-Transmission/dp/0822356570/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1407357835&sr=1)

[Transmission/dp/0822356570/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1407357835&sr=1](http://www.amazon.com/Paper-Knowledge-History-Documents-Transmission/dp/0822356570/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1407357835&sr=1) -  
1&keywords=Lisa+Gitelman.+Paper+Knowledge.

Lev Manovich. *The Language of New Media*.

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Language-Media-Leonardo-Books/dp/0262632551>

## Text Selections Posted on NYU Classes:

### Articles:

- W. Brian Arthur. "Evolution 2.0: on the origin of technologies." *The New Scientist*.  
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20327225.600-evolution-20-on-the-origin-of-technologies.html>
- Jason Ponti. "How Authors Write." *MIT Technology Review*.  
<http://www.technologyreview.com/review/429654/how-authors-write/>

### Selections/Chapters:

- Matthew Kirschenbaum. *Track Changes*. <http://trackchangesbook.tumblr.com/>  
---. *New Mechanisms*. (PDF selections)
- Hannah Sullivan. *The Work of Revision*.  
<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674073128>  
Summary: <http://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2013/06/29/revising-your-writing-again-blame-modernists/WhoH6Ih2kat2RE9DZV3DjP/story.html>
- Jill Anne Morris. "A Maker Convergence Composition and Participatory Culture in the Open Enrollment Environment."  
[http://www2.bgsu.edu/departments/english/cconline/new\\_media\\_cc/Morris/framework.html](http://www2.bgsu.edu/departments/english/cconline/new_media_cc/Morris/framework.html)

### Course Schedule

*The activities listed here are due before the next class begins.*

- 9/3: Class: Welcome! "Google Me" and syllabus review.  
Home: E-Introductions of your partner posted to the blog. Get your books.
- 9/8: Class: Present Introductions, discuss blog.  
Home: Read E. M. Forster. "The Machine Stops." (full text online)  
<http://archive.ncsa.illinois.edu/prajlich/forster.html>
- 9/10: Class: Annotate "The Machine Stops."  
Home: Finish annotations. Read W. Brian Arthur. "Evolution 2.0: on the origin of technologies." *The New Scientist*. <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20327225.600-evolution-20-on-the-origin-of-technologies.html>
- 9/15: Class: The History of New Media. Digital Literacy Narratives.  
Home: Post narratives. Read Jason Ponti. "How Authors Write." *MIT Technology Review*.  
<http://www.technologyreview.com/review/429654/how-authors-write/>
- 9/17: Class: Present narratives. Bring *Writer/Designer*.  
Home: Read Lev Manovich. "What is New Media?" from *The Language of New Media*. (pages 11-62). Research definitions of "new media," post summary.
- 9/22 Class: Defining "new media."  
Home: Read Kevin Kelly. *What Technology Wants*. (Introduction – Origins, 1-73) Post provocations.
- 9/24 Class: Fishbowl. Midterm instructions.  
Home: Read Kevin Kelly. *What Technology Wants*. (Imperatives – Listen to Tech, 73-175) Post provocations.
- 9/29 Class: Library Session.

- Home: Read Kevin Kelly. *What Technology Wants*. (Choosing the Inevitable – Choices, 175-239) Post provocations.
- 10/1 Class: Fishbowl. Bring *Writer/Designer*. Website analysis.  
Home: Finish Kevin Kelly. Read Lisa Gitelman. *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*. (Introduction 1-21). Work on midterm.
- 10/6 Class: Bring *Writer/Designer*. More web design analysis.  
Home: Midterm draft. Read Lisa Gitelman. *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*. (Short History, 21-53)
- 10/8 Class: Midterm workshop. Bring *Writer/Designer*.  
Home: Post midterm draft by Monday, read *Fahrenheit 451*. Part 1.
- 10/13 No Class. Read Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451*. Part 2.
- 10/15 Class: Movie.  
Home: Read Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451*. Part 3.
- 10/20 Class: Finish movie. Design Fiction.  
Home: Read Margaret Atwood. *Oryx and Crake*. Parts 1-5. Post provocation.
- 10/22 Class: Fishbowl.  
Home: Read Margaret Atwood. *Oryx and Crake*. Parts 6-10. Respond/Post provocation.
- 10/27 Class: Fishbowl.  
Home: Finish Margaret Atwood. *Oryx and Crake*. Parts 11-15. Respond/Post provocation.
- 10/29 Class: Fishbowl. Dystopias.  
Home: Respond to provocations. Read Katherine Hayles. *How We Think*. Selection from pdf, 1-19. Optional: How we read.
- 11/3 Class: Makerism. Final assignment.  
Home: Read Katherine Hayles. *How We Think*. Selection from pdf, Tech TOC, 85-123. Optional: Chapter 5. Post close readings.
- 11/5 Class: Comparative Media Studies.  
Home: Write pitch, post by FRIDAY. Read all pitches by Monday. Read Matthew Kirschenbaum. *New Mechanisms*. Selection, pdf.
- 11/10 Class: The Future of Thinking.  
Home: Read Anthony T. Atkins. “Collaborating Online: Digital Strategies for Group Work.”
- 11/12 Class: Choose groups, write contract.  
Home: Develop proposal. Read Sullivan/ Kirschenbaum interview online:  
[http://harvardpress.typepad.com/hup\\_publicity/2014/01/hannah-sullivan-matthew-kirschenbaum-in-conversation.html](http://harvardpress.typepad.com/hup_publicity/2014/01/hannah-sullivan-matthew-kirschenbaum-in-conversation.html)
- 11/17 Class: Revision. Bring your proposals to class on paper.  
Home: Revise and post proposals. Review Matthew Kirschenbaum. *Track Changes*.  
<http://trackchangesbook.tumblr.com/>
- 11/19 Class: Annotated Bibliographies.  
Home: Post 2 annotated bibliography entries.
- 11/24 Class: Group work.

Home: Post 2 annotated bibliography entries. Respond to 4 entries. Work on final project. 11/26  
CLASS CANCELLED. Happy Thanksgiving!

12/1 Class: Designing time. Conferences.

Home: Group work.

12/3 Conferences.

Home: Finish final project.

12/8 Presentations.

12/10 Presentations.