



Digital Rhetorics

ENG 351 | Spring 2021
| Online

Illinois State University

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Erika M. Sparby

Email:

Zoom Room:

Zoom Hours:

Required Texts

Sara Wachter-Boettcher. (2017). *Technically Wrong*. ISBN 978-1681688619

- Available on Reggienet as an epub

Other readings as assigned on Reggienet

Course Description and Objectives

This advanced course studies theories of digital rhetorics and asks you to read and think critically about a range of relevant issues, from the practical (information architecture, design, content strategy, usability, and so on) to the ethical (privacy/obscure, online aggression, identity and power, access and accessibility, and so on). You will analyze and compose in a variety of digital genres, including wikis, websites, and social media, and you will also question and enact design justice while considering how these same genres can be used for various forms of advocacy, activism, and other forms of social justice. Class time will be divided between discussion and activities. Students with little experience with particular digital technologies will still have a successful semester as long as they are willing to learn. Google is invaluable, and other resources will be provided.

The objectives for this course are to

- Interrogate relationships between technology, identity, culture, and power and how individuals and communities enact (and are perceived in relation to) digital rhetorical skills and practices
- Develop your understanding of digital rhetorics and corresponding principles, practices, and research, and use this knowledge to produce rhetorically effective texts
- Learn digital production and circulation skills in a range of social media
- Gain familiarity and experience with a range of tools for the production of digital materials



Brief Assignment Descriptions

The assignments in this course are designed to meet the course objectives outlined above. Below are brief descriptions of the assignments; full prompts are available on Reggienet.

Social Media

Four times throughout the semester (roughly every three weeks), you are expected to create a social media artifact, strategize its effective circulation, and then circulate it. Submit a brief memo indicating what you created, where you posted it, how you strategized its uptake, and how people took it up.

Interface Analysis & Redesign

For this project, you will analyze and redesign a digital interface. Consider the identity shortcomings your analysis revealed, as well as the values you think the interface should embody, then produce a redesign that is more inclusive of a variety of identities. The final deliverable for this project will be a portfolio.

Tech Time (Undergraduate Only)

Once during the semester, undergraduate students will film a video presenting a technology that is not in widespread use by others in the class. Explain how the technology works while also applying theories and concepts discussed in the class. Play around with video editing software to meet your goals.

Class Facilitation (Graduate Only)

Once during the semester, graduate students will facilitate a 30-minute discussion. They can take many forms: lecture with discussion, small group work, mini-workshop, etc. Expectations: use a visual aid, synthesize and add to the conversation, and create opportunities for all class members to contribute.

Participation

Arrive to the weekly Zoom sessions on time and prepared. Do the readings, engage in all Zoom and Reggienet discussions and activities.

Draft/Review

Participate meaningfully in the drafting and peer review process with your assigned partner. Provide documents on time.

Grade Distribution Undergraduate

<i>Component</i>	<i>Points</i>
Participation	20
Draft/Review	10
Tech Time	10
Interface Analysis and Redesign	20
Social Media (x4)	40

Grade Distribution Graduate

<i>Component</i>	<i>Points</i>
Participation	20
Draft/Review	10
Class Facilitation	10
Interface Analysis and Redesign	20
Social Media (x4)	40

Grading Note

All assignments and projects must be completed to pass the course.

Grades are earned, not given. I do not respond to requests for higher grades.

Grading Scale

A	100-90
B	89-90
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 or below

Course Policies

The policies in this syllabus are considered contractual at Illinois State University. If you remain in the class after day one, you have agreed to all that is required. I reserve the right to change the day-by-day schedule (with advanced notice), but not the requirements outlined above in the course description and below in the policies.

Zoom Attendance

This class will meet over Zoom once a week. Please arrive on time (it's easy for me to lose track of those who log on late) and consider turning on your video. If you must miss class, let me know ASAP. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade, but I have a lenient approach to missing class – contact me if you are unable to attend and we can work something out.

Homework Submission

All coursework will be submitted on Reggienet on the date and time listed in the prompt. Late work is accepted if you arrange it with me ahead of time. Presentations cannot be rescheduled except in extreme situations. Communication is key – keep in touch with me if something prevents you from completing quality work on time and we can strategize how to get you caught up. Don't disappear.

Professionalism and Content Warnings

During class discussions, peer feedback, and in your writing, you are expected to treat others with respect. This pertains to all class members, the professor, the audiences you write for, and the people you write about. I do not tolerate intolerant discourses. If a student engages in disrespectful or hateful speech, we will discuss conduct; if it happens a second time, the offender will be removed from the course altogether.

You are expected to produce professional, high-quality documents. All ISU students are responsible for upholding the Code of Academic Integrity and the Student Code of Conduct available online. Intentional plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course.

Some of the content and discussions in this course may trigger traumas and strong emotions. I will give content warnings, but be aware of your own capabilities and limitations. If you think a topic may be triggering, please prepare to mute the discussion for a bit if needed. If you decide to miss class, your absence may be excused but you will be responsible for making up any missed work.

Technology

This course's information exchange is entirely digital, so a basic knowledge of some digital technologies is required.

- You are expected to back up all files
- You are expected to have proficiency with your ISU email account, Reggienet, and Zoom.

You are expected to become proficient with unfamiliar computer technologies and apps as needed.

Accessibility

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact SASS (Student Access and Accommodation Services).

Location: 350 Fell Hall

Website: <http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu>

Phone: (309) 438-5853

TTY: (309) 438-8620

Email: ableisu@ilstu.edu