

# Language and Media Discourse

ENG 514

Central Michigan University

Spring 2015

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Office Hours

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Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication.

~ Marshall McLuhan

Upon completion of the course, successful students will demonstrate the abilities to:

1. consider applications of discourse theory to print and non-print media, engaging in inquiry methods of digital and visual rhetoric
2. distinguish and utilize rhetorical elements that appear in print and non-print media to produce print and non-print media appropriate to the discipline of English studies
3. identify, explain, and assess how media constructs social identities, developing arguable theses about the influence of media on language, identity, and culture

Our relationship with media is, well, complicated.

On the one hand, media provides our window to the world. Through mass media outlets and our own social networks, we gain knowledge and insights that help us shape our thinking, plan activities, strengthen relationships, and engage communities.



On the other hand, in this process of shaping, media defines identities, creates narratives, sets agendas, and can inadvertently narrow our perspectives. From the time of the first written language on ancient tablets and scrolls right up until now, people have used the power of language for good and for ill.

In ENG 514, we will explore our relationship with media in order to understand this continuum, as well as to create media of our own.




## Course Texts

Machin and Mayr (2012)  
*How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*; Sage.  
(ISBN: 9780857028921)

Nicholas Carr (2011)  
*The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*; Norton.  
(ISBN: 978-0393339758)

Booth, Colomb, and Williams (2008) *The Craft of Research, Third Edition*; University Of Chicago Press  
(ISBN: 978-0226065663)

Additional readings  
available online



Maybe it is the media that has us divided. ~ Laura Bush

### **Language and Media Discourse Journal**

You will be expected to keep a journal and write entries frequently; many will be assigned in preparation for class sessions, and some will be collected during the semester. Journal entries should be thoughtful and thorough, an informal discussion with yourself over issues, ideas, and experiences occasioned by readings, class sessions, and media confrontations in the course. Ideally, you will publish your journal on a blog.

### **Research Proposal**

This proposal will outline your understanding of your field of study, suggest a tentative research question, point towards relevant texts that you have begun to review, and outline your research timeline. While your proposal is not a hard and fast outline for the rest of the semester, this document should show that you are thinking critically and carefully about how to conduct a research project. It will clearly situate your work in the field and outlines the process that you plan to go through to gather data.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

Your annotated bibliography will include a minimum of 15 sources (print and non-print, including books, journals, magazines, newspapers, news media, blogs, websites, and interviews) that contribute to your understanding of your field and research question. Annotations should include all

appropriate bibliographic information as well as a paragraph that outlines the mode, audience, and purpose of the text, including useful quotations and your critique of the work that clearly situates the texts you have selected in the context of your research.

### **Formal Academic Paper**

A paper about specific issues, examples, or research in the general area of attention. It will be ten to fifteen pages long, typed, double-spaced, with footnotes and bibliography where appropriate. Details about specific assignments will be provided separately, but students are encouraged to find areas of interest relevant to advertising or advocacy and entertainment and propose their own alternative topics to those assigned. Creative or pedagogical alternatives will be admissible with the instructor's approval.

### **Critical Media Literacy Project/Classroom Unit**

This project will be presented in a multimedia format that synthesizes the student's research with at least three forms of media representation such as audio, video, print, and web-based forms. Details about specific assignments will be provided separately, but projects should demonstrate an understanding of the topic being researched as well as the forms of media chosen in order to create an effective presentation for a variety of audiences and purposes.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

CMU provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities or services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the office of Student Disability Services (250 Foust Hall, 774-3018, TDD #2568), and then contact me as soon as possible.

## Academic Integrity

I would expect that because you are planning to be teachers, you already value academic honesty and respect for others in the classroom. Violation of the University policies will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or course and could seriously jeopardize your student teaching plans. **All forms of plagiarism are in violation of these policies and are unacceptable in this class.**

## Writing Center

Because writing is such an important part of a college education, CMU provides free writing center support to all CMU writers, at any stage of the process, from brainstorming to final editing, and for any class. I encourage, but will not require, you to utilize the writing center. You will find their services valuable both as writers and future teachers of writing. For questions about this service, email: [writcent@cmich.edu](mailto:writcent@cmich.edu) or call 989.774.2986.

Images used in this syllabus are from the Microsoft Word Gallery and quotes from Brainy Quote.



## Schedule (Additional readings posted online)

### Week 1 (Jan 14) - Examining Our Relationship with Media

- Examining the production and consumption of media, defining our media identities, creating a media profile

### Week 2 (Jan 21) - Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis

- Machin and Mayer, Intro and Chapters 1-2
- Find two news stories, one video/audio, one blog post for analysis

### Create 10 Discourse Journals Entries between Weeks 3-14

### Week 3 (Jan 28) - Emergence and Distribution of Print Texts

- Machin and Mayer, Chapters 3, 5, 6
- Baron, [From Pencils to Pixels](#)

### Week 4 (Feb 4) - Rise of Mass Media: Newspaper, Radio, Film, Television

- Machin and Mayer, Chapters 4, 7, 8
- PBS, [Milestones in the History of Media and Politics](#)

### Week 5 (Feb 11) - Development of the internet and Web 2.0

- Carr, Prologue - Ch 5
- Booth, Colomb, and Williams, Ch 1-3

Whoever controls the media, the images, controls the culture. ~ Allen Ginsberg

#### Week 6 (Feb 18) - Beyond Web 2.0

- Carr, Ch 6 - Epilogue
- Booth, Colomb, and Williams, Ch 4-6
- Draft/Peer Review of Research Proposal

#### Week 7 (Feb 25) - Convergence Culture

- Jenkins, [Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture](#)
- Booth, Colomb, and Williams, Ch 7-9

#### Week 8 (Mar 4) - Youth and Digital Media

- Selections from boyd, [It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens](#)
- Booth, Colomb, and Williams, Ch 10-11

### Spring Break

#### Week 9 (Mar 18) - Citizen Journalism | Civic Engagement

- Draft/Peer Review of Annotated Bibliography
- Selections from [Civic Life Online](#) Book (MIT)
- Booth, Colomb, and Williams, Ch 12-14

#### Week 10 (Mar 25) - Visual and Digital Rhetorics

- Annotated Bibliography Due
- Selections from [Visual Rhetoric WikiBook](#)
- Booth, Colomb, and Williams, Ch 15

#### Week 11 (Apr 1) - Gaming and Connected Learning

- Selections from Ito et al, [HOMAGO](#) (MIT)

## Contract Grading

While grades are an important part of any college experience, I firmly believe that they should not supersede inquiry, learning, and reflection. Additionally, when you are truly engaged in a writing process - one that respects creativity, flexibility, and persistence - our traditional methods of grading do not always measure these qualities of writers and their process. Grading contracts represent one way to accomplish this goal while deemphasizing, though not completely eliminating grades.

Thus, I want to adopt the following grading contract with each of you: if you complete all class activities, writing assignments, conferences, reflections, portfolio, and the research project, you will earn at least a B in the course. This means that you will:

- Attend class regularly and meet due dates
- Come to class prepared and participate in all activities, especially in peer review and other collaborative tasks
- Complete all writing assignments, including short, in-class activities as well as longer, more sustained projects
- Sustain effort over time, especially in revision, making substantive changes to your writing and not simply surface level editing
- Prepare for our individual writing conferences and follow-up appropriately

In order to earn an A, you will need to create writing that is of exceptional quality. Along with Ms. Dine, I will provide you feedback and guidance so you can create excellent writing. Your final grade is in your control. These criteria are adapted from Jane Danielewicz and Peter Elbow. "[A Unilateral Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching](#)" *College Composition and Communication* 61.2 (2009): 244-268.

We live in a society in which spurious realities are manufactured by the media, by governments, by big corporations, by religious groups, political groups. I ask, in my writing, 'What is real?'

*Philip K. Dick*

#### Week 12 (Apr 8) - Representations of Race, Class, and Gender Across Media

- Selections from [Learning Race and Ethnicity](#) (MIT)

#### Week 13 (Apr 15) - Media Literacy and Production

- Hobbs - [The Seven Great Debates in the Media Literacy Movement](#)
- Review of [Media Education Lab](#) and [Common Sense Media](#) Websites

#### Week 14 (Apr 22) - Reestablishing Our Relationship with the Media

- Booth, Colomb, and Williams, Ch 16-17
- Draft/Peer Review of Paper and Project

#### Week 15 - (Apr 29) - First round presentations

#### Week 16 - (May 6) Exam week, second round