ENG 6801 - Texts and Technology in History

Section: 0M01

College of Arts and Humanities

Dean's Office CAH

Course Information

Term: Spring 2025
Class Meeting Days: W
Class Meeting Time: 06:00PM - 07:50PM
Class Meeting Location: TCH 0351
Modality: M
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Melody Bowdon, PhD
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Office Hours:
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Course Description

ENG 6801 CAH-ENG 3(3,0)Texts and Technology in History: PR: Acceptance into the Texts and Technology program, graduate standing, or C.I. Explores the history of relations between the Texts and Technology. We examine how various technologies have influenced the nature of texts they produce. Spring.

Section-Specific Course Description

This class is a core requirement of UCF's Texts and Technologies PhD program. It explores histories of connections, tensions, and other relationships between and among texts and technology. Readings and assignments will examine how technologies (including digital and mechanical) have influenced the nature of texts they produce and societies in which they circulate. We will explore a wide range of tools and timeframes through a variety of humanities-based methodologies.

Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will:

- Gain an understanding of changes in texts and technologies over time, with attention to orality, literacy, print, and digital media and their impacts on texts and cultures

- Consider challenges of inclusion and omission in archives and textual history

- Recognize and navigate challenges in historical research methods, particularly when working with digital culture and texts

- Explore the history and role of science, technical inventions, changing platforms, and print as they intersect with written forms

- Experiment with digital tools to create a texts and technology timeline

- Expand their academic writing skills through exercises positioning their proposed research trajectory within the history of texts and technology discourse

Course Materials and Resources

Distributed Blackness
ISBN: 9781479829965
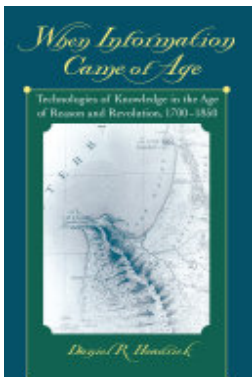**Authors:** André Brock, Jr.
**Publisher:** NYU Press
Publication Date: 2020-02-25

Online Access: https://academic.oup.com/nyu-press-scholarship-online/book/34192

Digital Dead End
ISBN: 9780262518130
Authors: Virginia Eubanks
Publisher: MIT Press
Publication Date: 2012-09-14
Notes: Available online via UCF Libraries

When Information Came of Age
ISBN: 9780199881239
Authors: Daniel R. Headrick
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Publication Date: 2000-12-28
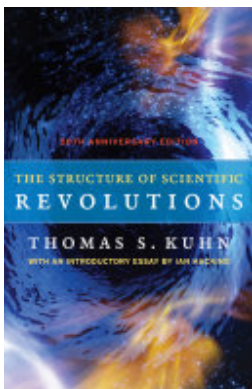
The Structure of Scientific Revolutions
ISBN: 9780226458144
Authors: Thomas S. Kuhn
Publisher: University of Chicago Press
Publication Date: 2012-04-18
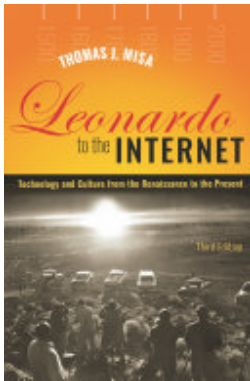
When Old Technologies Were New
ISBN: 9780198021384
Authors: Carolyn Marvin
Publisher: Oxford University Press
Publication Date: 1990-05-24
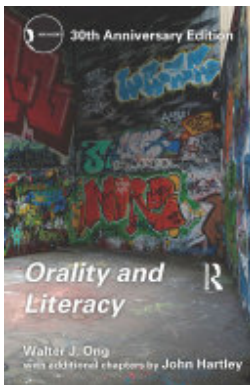**Notes:** Available online via UCF Libraries

Leonardo to the Internet
ISBN: 9781421443119
Authors: Thomas J. Misa
Publisher: JHU Press
Publication Date: 2022-02-22

Orality and Literacy
ISBN: 9781136243721
Authors: Walter J. Ong
Publisher: Routledge
Publication Date: 2013-05-07
Online Access:
https://archive.org/stream/OngWalterOralityAndLiteracy/Ong%20Walter%20%2C%20or ality%20and%20literacy_djvu.txt

Digital Black Feminism
ISBN: 9781479808380
Authors: Catherine Knight Steele
Publisher: NYU Press
Publication Date: 2021-10-26

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Class Assignments

Below are brief overviews of our class assignments. Additional details and expectations will be provided within the assignments section of our WebCourse.

Weekly Reading Responses (20% of course grade)

Most weeks during the semester you will be expected to post a written response to assigned readings in the appropriate discussion area. Posts should typically be 250-300 words long and should include the SRR format—75-100 words of summary/key arguments; 75-100 words in which you respond to the key arguments/explain what you think about the topic; and 75-100 words of reflection, in which you comment on how this reading shapes your thinking about your research focus or even the world more broadly. Occasional longer posts are fine. Please engage with classmates' posts on a regular basis. To encourage organic discussion, you may fold your responses to other students into your own core posts.

Responses should demonstrate deep engagement with specific ideas in the readings, focusing on key passages or elements, relating them to your views or experiences, discussing them through examples, and/or evaluating their arguments. The highest ten post scores will count toward your course grade.

Supplemental Reading Presentation (15% of course grade)

Our time in the course is limited, as is the number of texts we can read and discuss together. To provide each student a chance to engage deeply with at least one other text relevant to their academic interests and to enhance the learning of everyone in the course, at some point in the semester each class member will make a short (10 minute maximum, plus five minutes for questions) presentation about a book of their choice selected from a list provided by the professor. Several specific framing questions for this

project will be posted in the assignment in WebCourses. (Several of the proposed texts are included on the Texts and Technology core comprehensive exam reading list.)

Leading a Class Discussion (10% of course grade)
Each student will take a leadership role in our class discussion of one featured course reading. Responsibilities will include posting 3-5 key thought-provoking questions about the reading for us to think about **the day before class** and generally encouraging engagement in the in-person and online discussions. For some topics, more than one discussion leader may be assigned. The discussion leader is not expected/required to drive the entire conversation around the text, which will go in a variety of directions according to class members' interests, etc., but simply to help us frame our initial engagement with the text.

Post about a Digital Timeline Tool (5% of course grade)
One of our major projects for the course will be a Digital Timeline, which will be accompanied by a short paper explaining the argument behind the artifact. To generate a variety of options for everyone to choose from and encourage early thought about design tools, each student will identify at least one such tool. Tools that are free or inexpensive for UCF students and have a relatively manageable learning curve are generally recommended, though students with more experience and comfort with digital tools may select others. Post your idea as early as you like to receive input from colleagues, but no later than the posted deadline.

Tentative Comprehensive Exam Reading Lists (10% of course grade)
Students will prepare their core exam and one tentative specialized exam list for the Texts and Technology program, using Zotero or another research tool to collect sources. These lists should incorporate readings found through coursework thus far as well as aspirational readings students have identified for the future. Each list will include a 200-250 word contextualizing statement/rationale and clear thematic heading. An appropriate alternative assignment will be available for students not pursuing the Texts and Technology degree.

Digital Timeline Project (25% of course grade)
Using the tool/s of their choice, each student will create a digital timeline that traces relationships between texts and technologies within a timeframe/focus of their choice. This assignment is an opportunity to think creatively about material within and beyond our course and to explore the intriguing power of looking at time as a series of

complicated and synergistic moments. The timeline will be accompanied by a short (8-10 page) paper that will explain the argument/perspective/lens that informs the project.

Final Presentation (5% of course grade)
During the final exam class session, each student will make a short (5-7 minute) presentation sharing their timeline and reflecting upon their learning experiences during the semester.

Practice Core Comprehensive Exam (10% of course grade)
Following a modified version of the exam guidelines for T&T, students will outline and draft a mock Core exam. The exam will consist of one fixed-topic question addressing the relationship of students' work to the field, and a second question engaging the core texts from the course syllabus. An appropriate alternative assignment will be available for students not pursuing the Texts and Technology degree.

Grading Standards for Written Work

This is a graduate-level class with appropriately high standards. No one is perfect, but please carefully proofread every assignment before you submit it. I will grade according to how well your work meets the assignment and course requirements and how well it addresses its rhetorical contexts Specifically, I will frame my responses to and evaluation of your written work in major assignments in terms of the required elements as well as the five canons of classical rhetoric, one of many useful heuristics for thinking about the important elements of communication. See the detailed handout about this heuristic in our WebCourse.

- An A text is exceptional. It presents sophisticated and significant critique and is guided by a meaningful argument. It contains the required elements of the assignment, is written in an engaging style, is arranged in a logical manner, is memorable, and is visually appealing. It is free of mechanical errors.

- A B text is strong. It contains all required elements of the assignment. It is generally above average in terms of the criteria mentioned above but falls short of excellence in one or more category. It is free of mechanical errors.

- A C text is competent. It contains all required elements of the assignment. It is generally average in terms of the major criteria listed above. It has few mechanical errors.

- D work is weak. It does not include the required elements of the assignment and it falls below average in terms of one or more of the major criteria.
- F work fails in terms of one or more of these criteria.

Grade Distribution

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Grade
Weekly Summary, Response, and Reflection Posts	Throughout the semester (10 graded)	20
Supplemental Reading Presentation	Throughout the semester	15
Leading a Class Discussion	Throughout the semester	10
Post about Digital Timeline Tool	March 5	5
Tentative Comprehensive Exam Lists	March 26	10
Digital Timeline Project	April 16	25
Final Presentation	April 23	5
Practice Core Comprehensive Exam	April 28	10

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	64-66%

Letter Grade	Percentage
D-	61-63%
F	0-60%

Policies for Course Grade

We all face challenges that can occasionally make it difficult to accomplish our goals. The policies below describe my general expectations for all students. You are in this class because you are accomplished and capable. Your success in this course matters, but not more than your mental or physical health. If you face one-time or ongoing barriers to success as defined below, reach out to me as early as possible to discuss options for accommodation to minimize impacts on your learning experience and grade. I will address these concerns in an equitable manner in keeping with UCF policy.

 Some of the policies below include a requirement of documentation, but some emergency circumstances may be difficult to document. Please reach out to me if you find yourself in this situation; we can work together to address your concerns.

Makeup Work Policy

This course moves quickly, making it critical that you stay on track throughout the semester. Generally speaking, I do not accept late assignments for credit. Any changes in deadline must be negotiated in advance unless they are due to documented emergencies (medical, in most cases).

Incomplete Grades
A grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be assigned when a student is unable to complete a course due to extenuating circumstances and when all requirements can be completed in a short time following the end of the term. I will assign an incomplete in this class only in exceptional circumstances supported by documentation.

Changes in the Syllabus
This course syllabus and our class calendar are subject to change if unanticipated circumstances arise. If a change is needed, we will negotiate the details together, and if necessary I will post a revised schedule in our WebCourse.

Attendance

Graduate students are expected to attend course every week throughout the semester in order to successfully meet the learning outcomes. If you must miss a course session please let me know as early as possible. More than one absence may impact your course grade.

Online Learning Expectations

This course includes reduced seat time, which means that in addition to participating in our in-person class session each week you will engage actively in online learning, typically in the form of discussion posts and responses.

Classroom Environment

- I expect to have a positive and intellectually engaging class environment where students feel free to express their viewpoints and to have their experiences and perspectives respected and honored. It is my responsibility as a faculty member to ensure that outcome. I pledge to do so to the best of my ability and ask that students assist me with this effort by holding each other and me to high standards and alerting me to any circumstances that require my intervention.

- This course will address a variety of complex issues, including in relation to professional ethics. You are not required to believe or accept any position that we discuss. You are expected, however, to have an open mind and to critically examine and respectfully discuss relevant arguments, ideas, and evidence.

Support When You're Struggling: UCF Cares

Please visit UCFCares.com if you need resources and support, or if you are worried about a friend or classmate. Free services and information are included for a variety of student concerns, including but not limited to alcohol use, bias incidents, mental health concerns, and financial challenges. You can also e-mail ucfcares@ucf.edu with questions or for additional assistance. You can reach a UCF Cares staff member between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. by calling 407-823-5607. If you are in immediate distress or believe someone is in danger, please call Counseling and Psychological Services to speak directly with a counselor 24/7 at 407-823-2811, or call 911.

Note about Artificial Intelligence

This class may provide opportunities for you to make use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in some specific ways. In fact, AI is central to the contemporary academic research landscape, so we will discuss it together, but it will not be an

acceptable research method in our course. You are permitted to use AI only in the manner and means described in the assignments and/or approved by the professor. Any attempt to represent AI output inappropriately as your own work will be treated as plagiarism. Please see this link for information about citing AI generated content in MLA: https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/.

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at [Let's Be Clear](#) and [UCF Cares](#).

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – [Office of Institutional Equity](#) & [askanadvocate@ucf.edu](#)
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – [Student Accessibility Services](#) & [sas@ucf.edu](#)
- [Access and Community Engagement](#) (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – [Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office](#) & [complianceandethics@ucf.edu](#)
- The [Ombuds Office](#) is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity [online](#) or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the [online form](#). UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the [Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage](#).

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.

- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.

- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.

  - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.

  - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.

  - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Week		Topic
1	1/8	Course Introduction
2	1/15	Frameworks for History--Discuss Kuhn
3	1/22	Language and Culture--Discuss Ong
4	1/29	Technology in Context--Discuss Misa
5	2/5	Structures of Thought--Discuss Headrick
6	2/12	Technologies for Communication--Discuss Marvin
7	2/19	Gender, Technologies, and Machines--Supplemental Reading by Oldenziel
8	2/26	New Media--Discuss Wardrup-Fruin and Montfort Part 1
9	3/5	New Media, cont'd--Discuss Wardrup-Fruin and Montfort Part 2
10	3/12	New Media, cont'd--Discuss Wardrup-Fruin and Montfort Part 3
11	3/19	Spring Break
12	3/26	Digital Black Feminism--Discuss Steel
13	4/2	Digital Technologies and Race--Discuss Brock
14	4/9	Digital Technologies and Class--Discuss Eubanks
15	4/16	Making Connections--Course Synthesis
16	4/23	Final Exam