

Writing through Media: Trends

Course: ENG1131

Course Instructor: Aaron Beveridge

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Meeting Times: M/W 9:35am – 10:25am, Th 4:05pm – 7:05pm

Room: M/W Weil 408D, Th Weil 408E

Office: Turlington 4412

Office Hours: Mon 8:30am - 9:30am, Fri 9:35am - 10:25am

Course Description:

Students in **Writing through Media: Trends** will write about and research social media trends. Trends are popular and sometimes viral topics that circulate among social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Vine, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. For this course, students will research one particular trend occurring within Twitter, and will write about and create visualizations of data on this trend as a method of studying contemporary writing within digital networks. Weekly writing assignments will create a collaborative trend archive to consider broader political and ethical issues of social media technologies. The mid-semester essay and infographic project combines traditional research with digital/visual design. For the final project, students will conduct a content analysis of a trend using Twitter data, and produce a slideware presentation that shares the results of their semester-long trend research. Weekly workshops teach students how to collect trend data, how to design visualizations relevant to their projects, and how to share and present this work through writing and public presentations.

Course Rationale:

Writing through Media: Trends is a variation of the Writing through Media series of courses offered by UF's English Department. As the English Department website explains, the goal of ENG 1131 "is to introduce students to the transition underway between literacy and post-literacy (electracy) in contemporary culture." The students in these courses are intended to be "makers (and not just consumers) of new media." **Writing through Media: Trends** stays true to ENG 1131's core concepts. Students will accomplish three primary goals: (1) study contemporary writing as it occurs within social media, (2) work to understand data visualization as a form of digital rhetoric by collecting data and producing visualizations, (3) fulfill the expectations of the University of Florida's *Writing Requirement*. As UF's *Writing Requirement* explains, all the writing assignments for this course will "include such elements as well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis or hypothesis, a persuasive organizational structure (e.g., introduction, body, conclusions), well supported claims, and appropriate and effective stylistic elements." Each of the assignments below adhere to these guidelines in addition to the individual requirements for each assignment.

Required Texts

Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everyone: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*

ISBN: 0143114948

Additional Texts (provided by instructor):

The Purdue OWL Writing Resource as Style Guide

Nathan Yau's "Understanding Data" from *Data Points*

Elizabeth Losh's "Hacking Aristotle: What is Digital Rhetoric?" from *Virtualpolitik*

Eunsong Kim's "The Politics of Trending"

PBS Documentary "Generation Like"

Aral Balkan's "Beyond the Camera Panopticon"
Gar Reynolds' *Presentation Zen*

Required Software/Technology:

Laptop (If you do not own a laptop, I will help you secure one for the semester)
MassMine (provided for free through Research Computing at UF)

Course Assignments:

Attendance: 0 points/-5 points

This class is built around workshop and classroom participation, and therefore attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed to miss 2 of the regular 50 minute classes, and 1 of the 3-hour classes without negatively affecting the final course grade. Upon receiving a 3rd regular absence or a 2nd 3-hour class absence, the overall grade in the course will drop by 5 points, and it will continue to drop by an additional 5 points for each subsequent absence. For example, 5 additional absences beyond the 3 allowed absences (8 in total) will drop a student's total class grade by 25 points.

Workshop—20 points

The workshop grade is based on completion of activities and research during the 3-hour evening workshops. If students are absent for an evening night workshop, then activities must be completed and turned in by the Friday class meeting time in order to receive credit.

Workshop criteria:

- Finish projects, tutorial, or class work within the time provided
- Work consistently
- Prepared for class--having read assignments ahead of time as directed
- Provide peers with thoughtful feedback or assistance depending on assignment

Trend Exigence Essay—20 points

Along with the Infographic project below, the work for the first part of the semester addresses the following question: *What is the exigence of your trend?* This question may be expanded to one or more of the following questions: *Why are people paying attention (or why should they pay attention)? Why does your trend matter (or why should it matter)? What may have caused the trend to gain such a following? Why does it appear to have such momentum?* This essay will produce arguments that answer these or other similar questions by referencing recent news articles and blog posts, by looking at several exemplary tweets and digital artifacts from your chosen trend, and by explaining the your own personal interests in this trend. Finally, successful essay will also consider recent events and broader historical issues that are relevant to the trend as well.

Essay criteria:

- Paper submitted electronically as a DOC, DOCX, or RTF format.
- MLA style. Double spaced.
- 1500 word minimum
- The writing pays attention to basic grammar and style issues: spelling, standard use of punctuation, complete sentences, word choice variety, and sentence structure variety.
- The writing shows organization and cohesion--providing an introduction and conclusion, and using appropriate transitions.
- The writing appears to be revised—paying attention to the "Paramedic Method." <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/635/01/>

Infographic Presentation—10 points

For the infographic presentation students share the infographic they have created that describes their trend with a one-page visual. For the presentation students provide an overview for their research project, explain their design choices for their infographic, and briefly explain the exigence of their trend to their classmates. Using slideware software (Prezi, PowerPoint) students present a 2-4 slides that introduce their research project.

Presentation criteria:

- No less than 5 minutes, no more than 6
- Presentation appears practiced
- Presenter does not read from slides, but has prepared notes to assist with presentation
- A well-developed research idea is presented

Weekly Writing and Responding—20 points

Students will produce 10 online discussion posts of 300 words, and will additionally respond to two of their peer's posts for each weekly assignment. The 300 word initial post counts as 50% of the weekly credit, and substantive responses to your classmates' posts count as 50% of the weekly credit. There is no minimum word count for peer responses, but responses must be substantive. Simple affirmation like "good job" or "nice post" or "interesting" will not count as a response. A substantive response should encourage further conversation, raise a question with the post, try to clarify an idea, or productively add to the topic. The weekly discussion is a core component of this course and will be graded on a weekly basis. The responses and conversations that follow initial posts ought to remain respectful and courteous.

Writing prompts for each week's digital text will be provided by class time each Monday. The weekly writing assignments are *not* "free writing" and are required to show the same organization, style, and polish of scholarly, academic writing. These digital texts are due every week by Sunday at midnight. Students may be asked to revise their digital texts if they do not meet UF's *Writing Requirement* standards. Revisions are due by the following week's digital text deadline.

Weekly post criteria:

- Weekly writing posted by Sunday deadline
- 300 words minimum
- Adequately responds to the weekly writing prompt

Response criteria:

- Substantive
- Timely--responses due prior to following week's writing

**If the weekly writing does not meet the basic criteria, students will receive an email directing them on how to improve their posts and receive help if necessary. If quality does not improve, no credit will be given for subsequent posts until writing improves.*

***Writing tip: Do not draft your blog posts within the browser window. Draft your post within your favorite word processor or text editor and then copy/paste your text into the browser once you are finished writing. Google docs is also acceptable for drafting posts since it saves frequently and will keep you from losing work.*

Final presentation--30 points

The final presentation motivates the work for the entire semester. The tutorials, course readings, workshops, and blog posts are all designed to move students toward the completion of research for the final presentation. The research that students present will investigate a particular trend occurring within Twitter. By collecting a large sample of tweets associated with a trend, students will analyze tweets according to the most frequent words, #hashtags, and @usernames appearing in their dataset. In addition to word frequency, students will look at correlations among key terms in their dataset, and produce data visualizations such as wordclouds, tables, linecharts, and network graphs. Once completed, this content analysis will allow students to compare twitter data to their own arguments about a trend's exigence (urgency, importance, relevance). The trend exigence constructed earlier in the semester provides something to reflect upon, reconsider, "test," or question when analyzing data for the final project.

Final presentation components:

- Project introduction
- Description of trend exigence
- Overview of data analyses
- Reflection

Final presentation criteria:

- No less than 10 minutes, no more than 12
- Presentation appears practiced
- Presenter does not read from slides, but has prepared notes to assist with presentation

Grading, Feedback, and Revision:

For the four primary assignments, students will be provided with an individualized grading rubric for each specific assignment. For weekly writing students will receive a prompt each Monday, along with a rubric for how that assignment will be graded. For all other assignments, prompts and rubrics will be provided when the assignment is introduced and discussed in class during the semester.

Written feedback will be provided for the Trend Exigence Essay, the Infographic Presentation, and for the Final Presentation. Students are allowed to revise ALL assignments prior to the revision deadline listed on the course calendar below.

Revisions are ONLY allowed if students have turned in a complete assignment on its initial due date. However, before a revision may be completed, students are REQUIRED to schedule an individualized conference prior to revising any assignment. Fridays are set aside for student conferences and individualized attention, and twice a semester class is replaced with mandatory student conferences to ensure that students are progressing with their individual research projects.

Total Points for Semester: 100

Final letter grade equivalence based on point total for semester:

A 95 (93-100 points)	A- 92 (90-92 points)	B+ 88 (87-89 points)
B 85 (83-86 points)	B- 82 (80-82 points)	C+ 78 (77-79 points)
C 75 (73-76 points)	C- 72 (70-72 points)	D+ 68 (66-69 points)
D 65 (64-67 points)	D- 62 (61-64 points)	E 0 (0 points)

Email and Note Taking:

Because this course builds cumulatively around individual research projects, due dates and course assignments may change depending on the overall progress of the class. Therefore, it is expected that students take notes every day in class and check their email once per day (Monday – Friday) for updates and changes to assignments.

Deadlines:

Assignment deadlines will be handled automatically with Canvas. Late work will not be accepted. If for some reason you have technical issues with Canvas, then I will accept emailed work with that arrives in my inbox prior to the Canvas deadline.

Course Calendar:

*All Fridays for the semester are set aside for individualized attention and student conferences

**All weekly writings are due on Sundays at 11:59pm

***All Thursday evening seminars will have activities that count toward Workshop points

September

M5: No class

October

Th6: Trend Exigence Essay due at 11:59pm

S9: Infographic due at 11:59pm, Infographic Presentations week of 10th

November

S28: Slides, Notes, and Research Report for Final Presentation due

W23: No class

Th24: No class

December

F9: Revision Deadline

Statement of Writing requirement

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing> (Links to an external site.)

Statement of Student Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> (Links to an external site.)

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment see:

<http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm> (Links to an external site.)

Statement on Academic Honesty

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration see:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> (Links to an external site.)