

ANALYTICAL READING AND WRITING: DEBATES IN DIGITAL CULTURE



English 0802 – Section 4
Monday and Wednesday, 8:00 a.m.-9:40 a.m.
Anderson 945

Instructor: Professor Paul Benzon

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m., Wednesday 2:45-3:45 p.m., and by appointment

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Course Website: <http://TUPortal.temple.edu> click “Blackboard”

Course Blog: <http://ddc04.wordpress.com/>

Course Twitter Hashtag: #ddc04

This course focuses on various elements of contemporary digital culture, from social media websites to search engines and from YouTube to smartphones. We will be thinking and writing critically about how these new technological and social developments shape our minds, our identities, and our relations to one another. What roles do these technologies play in our lives, and what impact do they have? How has digital media transformed the ways in which we think, read, communicate, love, and learn, and what are the bigger consequences of these transformations? What powers do digital technologies give us? What powers do they hold over us? To engage these and other questions effectively, we will be using a series of critical readings about various different media, as well as looking at crucial examples of those media themselves. In your writing for this course, you will have the opportunity to work with texts from class and to follow interests of your own that will help to expand the issues we are considering as a group. Our ultimate goal will be to become stronger critical readers and writers and to become sharper, more engaged participants in the digital culture around us.

English 802 is part of the General Education program at Temple, and fulfills the Analytical Reading and Writing requirement. This is a class concerned with critical reading and writing—we are taking contemporary digital culture as our theme and as our field of research. There are no right or wrong answers or opinions in most cases—positions will be for you to create, argue, and develop in your papers. We will learn how to use researched sources to advance our thinking and our ideas, cite them correctly, and use them in creative written argumentation, evaluation, and explanation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bauerlein, Mark, ed. *The Digital Divide: Arguments for and Against Facebook, Google, Texting, and the Age of Social Networking*. New York: Tarcher, 2011.

Davidson, Cathy N. *Now You See It: How the Brain Science of Attention Will Transform the Way We Live, Work, and Learn*. New York: Viking, 2011.

Hacker, Diana. *The Pocket Style Guide (4th Edition)*. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2003.

Selected articles available on Blackboard, marked on the syllabus with an asterisk (*).

The books listed above are available at the University Bookstore and on reserve at Paley Library as well as through various online retailers. If you order your books online, you are responsible for making sure that they arrive in plenty of time for you to be prepared to discuss them in class—do not wait until the last minute to order them. I recommend using [Amazon Student](#) to get your books quickly and affordably.

COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES

Welcome to our course! The following pages explain the course policies and procedures so that you will be able to do your best work, learn as much as possible, and enjoy yourself in our class. If you have any questions about the course policies (or anything else) at any time, please don't hesitate to ask me in class, via email or Twitter, or during my office hours.

Grading

You must receive a C- or above to pass the course. If your final portfolio is not of passing standard, you will not be eligible to pass the course. There are no extra credit assignments in this course.

Paper Assignments and Final Portfolio	70%
In-Class Participation	15%
Online Work	15%

Paper Assignments and Final Portfolio

You will complete three substantial pieces of writing that involve evaluation, argumentation, synthesis, and development of rhetorical strategies and original ideas. Each of these assignments has three stages: first, you will write a draft of a paper for peer review. Then you will revise your draft based on comments and suggestions from

your peers and turn in a revised draft, which I will comment on. With each revised draft you will hand in a short (around a page) assessment of your own development as a writer. This will help you to articulate and reflect on the critical writing skills you are learning in the course. Finally, you will revise and edit each of your papers again for inclusion in your final portfolio, which is due at the end of the course. You must complete all three paper assignments to pass the class, although simply completing the papers does not guarantee a passing grade. **I will not read or grade the portfolio of any student who has not turned in all typed drafts on schedule consistently throughout the semester.**

I will give in-depth comments on the revised drafts you hand in to me (both in written form and in conferences), but any grade I write on a draft is a **provisional grade**, which means that it is not a final, set grade for that paper. I will not give final letter grades on papers before you hand them in with the final portfolio. The idea behind grading based on this portfolio is that your writing shouldn't be fully evaluated until the end of the semester, after you've been given a full opportunity to learn academic reading and writing as well as possible and to show off your best work. This means that paying close attention to the comments you receive on each revised draft and in individual conferences and spending time and effort working on revision are important to doing well in this course. You may revise your papers as many times as you feel is necessary throughout the semester in order to get them into their best possible versions for the final portfolio, and I encourage you to meet with me early and often to discuss these revisions.

Everything you write will be included in a portfolio to be evaluated holistically at the end of the course.

This portfolio will contain

- **A cover letter or short (1-2 page) reflection essay** that addresses your development over the semester as a thinker, reader, writer, and reviser as shown in your three papers. This serves as an introduction to your portfolio.
- **Final, clean, substantially revised versions of all three papers for the course.** Keep in mind that your final paper is your opportunity to demonstrate your improvement as a writer, so the standard of this paper will be a crucial indicator of your achievement. Paper Four must be of passing quality in order for the entire portfolio to be passing.
- **All previous drafts of each paper** completed in the course—this means it is important to **keep and organize everything** from the semester so that you have the necessary materials at the end.

You must receive a C- or above on the portfolio to pass the course, although a passing portfolio alone does not guarantee you will pass the course. At the end of the semester, a panel of instructors will review your portfolio to assess the grade I have given it. This procedure ensures that all students are evaluated fairly and that standards are kept consistent in the First-Year Writing Program. **A student with any or all of the following will receive an F (fail) for the course:** an incomplete portfolio, a markedly insufficient portfolio, a missing or late portfolio, repeated latenesses in turning in drafts and/or revisions, more than the allowed number of absences, or plagiarism.

This is a challenging course, and we will move from assignment to assignment quickly. In addition, each paper builds upon the skills and approaches of the previous ones, and asks you to address concerns I've raised in my comments in order to improve your writing. For these reasons, it is crucial that you keep up with the pace of paper assignments. **If you have not submitted all assignments in a timely fashion throughout the semester, I will not accept your portfolio and you will not be able to pass the class.** In addition, I reserve the right not to comment on late or incomplete papers. Repeatedly handing in papers late will have a negative effect on your portfolio grade. If you are having difficulty with a paper, please get in touch with me **before it is due** so that I can help you to stay on track and on pace and to do your strongest possible work. Do your best not to let yourself fall an assignment behind—this is a very difficult position to recover from.

In-Class Participation

This is an active, discussion-based course, and classroom discussion and participation will be key to your success and happiness in class over the semester. The bulk of our time will be spent talking and engaging together with the

course material and with each other's ideas. In order to do this, it is essential that you come to class prepared to address the day's material. This means completing all reading before class, bringing the reading to class, and being prepared to discuss the reading thoughtfully. In preparing for class, you should read actively—write down notes and questions about the text in the margins or in your notebook, and look up words and references you aren't familiar with. You should have interpretations, questions, and responses to share with the class, and you should be prepared to offer these and to be called on in our discussion. We will also spend a good deal of class time in writing workshops that will help you to practice the skills and approaches we will be developing as a class. Lack of participation in any workshop will be counted as an absence, so please make sure that you bring any necessary materials with you to class each day.

Discussion and work in class are important parts of this course, so active, thoughtful participation in class will help to raise your course grade, while a lack of participation or engagement will have a negative impact on your grade. Please note that regular attendance is not the same as active participation. Strong class participation includes contributing regularly to class discussion, listening respectfully and attentively to others, responding thoughtfully to their comments, and working diligently during in-class work both on your own and with others. More generally, the more each of you brings your own thinking to the discussion, the more all of us will get out of class—I encourage you to offer perspectives, ideas, examples, oppositions, questions, and other contributions as much as possible. If you are uncomfortable with speaking in class, please let me know or come see me at the beginning of the semester so that we can work together to make things easier for you.

We will spend our class time each day on a variety of different activities, including full-class discussions, small-group discussions, viewings of images and video clips, and in-class writing exercises and workshops. I will lecture very rarely, if ever. However, that does not mean that you should not take notes on what the class has to say about the material we are discussing, just as you would in a lecture course. Active group discussion is the foundation of everything we will do, and it is something you should be consistently engaged in and attentive to. Even when it seems as if we are “just talking” about a reading, a piece of culture, a writing technique, or something else, you should still be actively thinking and writing—do not let the discussion just pass you by without actively engaging it, even if only as a listener and a note-taker at certain moments. Having a record of the class' comments, opinions, debates, etc., will be extremely valuable to you in preparing to develop topics and arguments for papers.

During class discussion, I expect you to be attentive to what your classmates have to say and respectful of their ideas and opinions. Thinking critically and openly about complex issues is a crucial part of college education—we all have a responsibility to create a classroom atmosphere where everyone is free to offer his or her opinion, as long as we all do so respectfully and kindly.

Laptops and tablets may be used in class only for class-related work such as note-taking, class writing or reading, and research. If inappropriate computer or electronic use becomes a problem for some members of the class, I will revoke permission to use them for the class as a whole. If you have questions about whether a certain use of technology is appropriate or not, please don't hesitate to ask me.

Sleeping, texting, listening to music, non-class-related computer use, talking outside of class discussion and other similar behaviors are disrespectful to me and to your classmates and disruptive of our work in class. Students who engage in such behaviors will be asked to leave class and marked absent for the day.

Online Work

Your online work for this course will take two different forms: regular posts to a Twitter feed for our class and weekly posts to a course blog. This work will serve several purposes: firstly (and most immediately), it will give you a chance to think critically about some of the course material before we discuss it in class and to gear our discussion towards issues and questions that are important to you or that you are curious about or confused by. Secondly, it will give us all first-hand experience with several central forms of contemporary digital culture. Third, by giving you the opportunity to bring new material and new areas of concern into our conversation, it will help you to generate

topics, ideas, and arguments for papers. Finally, it will give you concrete practice with the skills of critical writing we will be learning before you apply those skills in papers.

Twitter Posting. You should set up a Twitter account if you do not already have one, and start to follow the hashtag #ddc04, which we will use to mark all of our class-related tweets. As part of your classwork on Twitter, you should post at least four class-related tweets per week using this hashtag (although I encourage you to post more—as many as you find productive or useful—and I imagine that many people will find themselves going over that minimum fairly frequently). For more in-depth information on how to set up and use Twitter for this course and what to post, see the separate handout at the end of the syllabus.

Twitter Grading. Rather than grading every tweet(!) or grading your work on Twitter every week, I will grade it holistically at several points in the semester: in the early weeks, around the middle of the semester, and at the end. This means that I will respond to and assess your work once early in the semester (most likely around the time of our first conference) and once at the end. The use of Twitter in the university classroom is still a relatively new thing, so our work here will be somewhat experimental. The best way to do well on this ongoing assignment is to take it seriously and to post consistently and substantively, using the hashtag as a way to continue our work outside the classroom in a productive way—be sure not to put yourself in the position of posting lots of “catchup” or filler tweets at the last second before grading.

Blog Posting. Note that the blog is located on our course website <http://ddc04.wordpress.com/>, **not on Blackboard** (although we will use Blackboard for email, papers, and other elements of the course). You are not required to register with WordPress in order to post on the blog, but you must subscribe to the blog so that you receive notifications of new material that I post. The most recent main post will appear at the top of the page—click on the comments link for that post to read what others have written and post your response.

Blog Content. Your work on the blog will take different forms at different points in the semester. Sometimes I will post a prompt for you to respond to, while at other times your posts can be more open-ended; sometimes I will ask you to address a particular passage or other element from the reading, while at other times I will ask you to think about a broader cultural issue or phenomenon. The blog is a space for us as a group to be reflective about the material we are discussing, and to begin to air initial responses, interpretations, and reactions before we pursue them more fully in class discussion. In this spirit, your posting to the blog should be thoughtful and analytical—you should offer interpretations and questions rather than summaries or solely personal responses. Because a blog allows discussion to happen over time, you should always read what has already been posted to the blog on a given week before you make your own post, and you should try to address that material in what you say—thoughtful responses that oppose, expand, rethink, complicate, or otherwise complement what others have written are as helpful and meaningful as “standalone” comments (if not more so). I will participate in conversations as they develop as well as posting opening threads.

Each post should be at least 150 words—you might write and edit your post in Microsoft Word or a similar program so that you know the length of your post and so that you have a backup of it on your computer. I will sometimes ask you to include images, links, video clips, and other media elements in your posts—this is fairly easy to do and we will discuss it in class at the beginning of the course.

Blog Scheduling. Unless I specify otherwise, there will be a blog post due before each Monday class (consult the course schedule below for specific details). In order to ensure that everyone has a chance to read comments and absorb the online discussion before we meet on Monday, your posts are due by **midnight on Sunday night**. Because of the time-sensitive nature of the blog, late posts will not receive credit.

Blog Grading. I will grade your blog posts on a scale of 1-4 each week. Criteria for each grade are as follows:

Grade Characteristics

- 1 The post is missing, late, or severely underdeveloped, consisting of only a few sentences.
- 2 The post meets most the technical requirements of the assignment (quotation, use of media, length, etc.), but only engages with the material and the issues it raises in a passing or overly general sense.
- 3 The post uses textual or other material to make analytical claims, and begins to develop them, but those claims or connections are not fully developed or analyzed.
- 4 The post uses textual or other material to make thoughtful, original analytical claims and/or connections and engages and analyzes the issues it raises in independent, in-depth ways.

Attendance and Lateness

You are permitted a total of four absences throughout the semester. These should be used to cover all illnesses, personal emergencies, job obligations, and any and all other contingencies that might keep you from class. **I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.** Obviously it is in your best interest to be at all classes. Arriving more than ten minutes late to class or leaving early will be considered equal to half an absence (however, even if you are more than ten minutes late or if you need to leave early, you should still always come to class). **If you have more than four absences (or an equivalent combination of latenesses, early departures, and absences) you will not pass the course.** If you miss all or part of a class, it is your responsibility to keep up with the work for the course—make sure to follow the syllabus, stay on track with the reading, turn in any written work that was due for the day, and consult a classmate, check the course website on Blackboard, or come see me during my office hours to talk about what you might have missed in class.

Conferences

You will meet with me individually two times this semester. In our meetings we will discuss your papers and you will explain ideas you have and ask questions specific to your work. You must bring a typed paper with you to every conference—either a draft I have returned that you wish to discuss, or a draft that you would like to discuss with me. If you miss your appointment, or if you come to a conference unprepared, I will count it as an absence for the course. I am happy to schedule additional conferences on request—see the section below on office hours for more information.

Technology and Course Work

In addition to being the topic of our course, technology will be a frequent tool in our work together in this course: in addition to posting on Twitter and on the class blog and communicating with me and your classmates via email, you will be handing in papers electronically as well as in hard copy form, and I may ask you to view multimedia material online as part of certain readings and paper assignments. Additionally, some of our readings will be accessible online through Blackboard for you to download and print out to read. As such, you are responsible for making sure that you have the technological tools and access necessary to keep up with the reading and writing for the course. Expect that you will have technological problems at some point in the semester, and plan accordingly—rather than being exceptions or excuses, these moments are part of life in a technological world, and you should be prepared to avoid them and work around them when they do come up. I recommend that you do this in a few ways: print out readings ahead of time, save your papers frequently, back up your work on OWLBox as well as a USB drive, make sure you have access to alternate computers and printers (a friend's or roommate's, a lab in the library or TECH Center, etc.), and leave yourself time to use these backup resources rather than relying on everything working perfectly at the last second. If you have questions about how to use any of these resources (or anything else technology-related), don't hesitate to come ask me.

Office Hours and Additional Help

I want each of you to be successful in this class. Helping each of you develop as readers, writers, and thinkers is important to me, and I want to do what I can to help you achieve those goals and succeed in my class. More importantly, I have a lot of interest in the material we will be working on this semester, and I would love for you to

get the same enjoyment and excitement from it that I do. If you have any questions, problems, or things you want to discuss—about the course, the readings, writing assignments or paper ideas, life at Temple, future academic or career plans, or anything else at all—or if you simply want to talk more about what we’re doing in class, please come see me. My office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:45 a.m.-12:45p.m. and Wednesdays from 2:45-3:45 p.m. in Anderson Hall 1127—this time is set aside for us to talk and for me to help you and work with you. If you aren’t free during that time, get in touch with me before or after class or by email and we can set up a time that is more convenient—I’m also happy to talk via Google Chat, Skype, or other means. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you are having trouble or feel you need help, or for any other reason at all.

Using the Writing Center

The Temple Writing Center (Tuttleman Learning Center 201) is an excellent (and free!) resource for getting additional help and feedback on your writing, and I recommend that everyone in class take advantage of their services. They offer drop-in meetings, longer advance appointments (call 215-204-0700), and feedback over email (see www.temple.edu/writingctr for more information). While they will not “fix,” proofread, or write your paper for you, they can provide very useful advice and direction at any point in the writing process.

Disability Statement

This course is open to all students who met the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Statement on Academic Freedom

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02 .

Academic Dishonesty

All work that you submit for this course must be your own. Pay attention to the ways in which you use our course readings and make sure you attribute all information, data, words or ideas to the proper source or person. Also, if you get significant help in writing your drafts from a friend, parent, or class mate, or if you submit a paper that you wrote for another class for one of our assignments, you have violated the rules of academic integrity, so please be careful that every paper you write for this class is generated specifically for this class and is completed properly. Your work must be your own in all ways (ideas, writing, organization, use of quotes and source material). If I discover that you have plagiarized or were academically dishonest in any of your work for this course, you will automatically receive an F as your final grade. If the plagiarism or dishonesty is significant, I will also report it to Temple University’s Disciplinary Board for further action. Temple University takes academic dishonesty very seriously. Please familiarize yourself with the university’s policy on academic dishonesty, which may be found in the Temple University Statement on Academic Honesty for Students in Undergraduate Courses.

See Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Guide*, pages 107–119, for tips on avoiding plagiarism and how to use other material in your own papers correctly.

Portfolio Goals for English 0802:

Goal 1 – Critical Reading/Critical Writing Connections

Portfolios will

- Develop research based on the analysis and interpretation of both source texts and one's own ideas and experiences. Demonstrating an understanding of the validity of outside texts (especially Internet-based materials) is crucial to this project;
- Demonstrate the ability to use the ideas of others as a critical lens through which to reflect on one's own ideas and experiences;
- Accurately represent and acknowledge differing points of view or interpretations, connections and distinctions between source materials, and between one's own ideas and those presented in sources;
- Represent sources correctly and with respect for the original text and context;
- Make integral use of sources to develop the subject of the course beyond the mundane and into the realm of originality.

Goal 2 – Shaping Meaning and Communication

Portfolios will

- Provide adequate context for readers, including brief summaries and definitions of key terms;
- Articulate a clear purpose in all papers;
- Make rhetorical choices consistent with that purpose;
- Show an awareness of audience, respecting the need for coherence, context and clarity.

Goal 3 – Academic Writing Practices

Portfolios will

- Demonstrate the ability to choose outside sources wisely based on their relevance and value in support of one's own position and purpose;
- Show a knowledge of the conventions of academic argument, including the importance of acknowledging opposing and multiple positions;
- Incorporate the ideas of others accurately and fairly with the correct use of summary, paraphrase, and quotation where relevant;
- Document all summaries, paraphrases and direct quotations and provide a works cited page according to MLA guidelines;
- Demonstrate an ability to meet academic expectations for grammatical and mechanical correctness.

Goal 4 – Self-Reflection

The self-reflection included in the portfolio will

- Demonstrate an awareness of how writing affected thinking and beliefs about various subjects throughout the semester;
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate what the writer learned about reading, evaluation and interpretation, and how this knowledge has affected critical reading and writing practices;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of context in the reading and interpretation of a text, and how context will influence the writing process;
- Demonstrate an understanding of substantive revision and the crucial role it plays in improving the quality of a written text.

Course Schedule

The schedule below may change over the course of the semester. I will announce any changes in class and/or via email. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of these changes by attending class, checking your email and the class blog regularly, and contacting me or coming to my office if you have any questions.

Week One

Wednesday, Jan. 22 Course Introduction: What Is Digital Culture?
Introductory Tweet and Blog Post Due by Midnight, Friday, Jan. 24

Section One: Digital Brains

Week Two

Monday, Jan. 27 **Reading due:** Nathan Jurgenson, “The IRL Fetish”*
Writing Workshop: Active Reading
Blog Post on Jurgenson Due Midnight Sunday

Wednesday, Jan. 29 Mark Bauerlein, “Introduction”
Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”
Writing Workshop: Active Reading

Week Three

Monday, Feb. 3 Gary Small and Gigi Vorgan, “Your Brain Is Evolving Right Now”
Introduction to Paper 1
Writing Workshop: Thesis Statements and Arguments, MLA citation
Blog Post on Small and Vorgan Due Midnight Sunday

Wednesday, Feb. 5 Marc Prensky, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants”
Blog Post on Prensky Due Midnight TUESDAY

Week Four

Monday, Feb. 10 **Library Visit – Meet in Paley Library 130 at Class Time**
Writing Workshop: Introduction to Online Scholarly Research

Wednesday, Feb. 12 **Writing due: Paper 1 First Draft**
Writing Workshop: Peer Review

Section Two: Digital Society, Digital Identity

Week Five

Monday, Feb. 17 **Writing due: Paper 1 Revised Draft with Reflection**
Introduction to Section 2
Introduction to Paper 2

Wednesday, Feb. 19 Lee Knutilla, “User Unknown: 4chan, Anonymity, and Contingency”*
Introduction to Zotero

Week Six

Monday, Feb. 24 Andrew Keen, “Web 2.0”
Writing Workshop: Working with Quotations
Blog Post on Keen Due Midnight Sunday

Wednesday, Feb. 26 **No Class: Individual Conferences**

Week Seven

Monday, Mar. 3 **No Class: Spring Break**

Wednesday, Mar. 5 **No Class: Spring Break**

Week Eight

Monday, Mar. 10 **Library Visit – Meet in Paley Library 130 at Class Time
Individual Conferences in Second Half of Class**

Wednesday, Mar. 12 Clay Shirky, “Means”
Writing Due: Annotated Bibliography
Writing Workshop: Research Materials Review

Week Nine

Monday, Mar. 17 Reading Due TBA
Writing Workshop: Research Materials Review
Blog Post on TBA Reading Due Midnight Sunday

Wednesday, Mar. 19 **Writing Workshop:** Arguments and Conclusions, Synthesizing Material

Week Ten

Monday, Mar. 24 **Writing due: Paper 2 First Draft**
Writing Workshop: Peer review

Wednesday, Mar. 26 **Writing Workshop:** Strategies for Revising Paper 2

Section Three: Digital Learning, Digital Life

Week Eleven

Monday, Mar. 31 **Writing due: Paper 2 Revised Draft with Reflection**
Introduction to Section 3

Wednesday, Apr. 2 Cathy N. Davidson, *Now You See It*, Introduction and Chapter One (1-43)
Introduction to Paper 3

Week Twelve

Monday, Apr. 7 Cathy N. Davidson, *Now You See It*, Chapters Three and Five (61-104 and 132-161)
Blog on Davidson Due Midnight Sunday

Wednesday, Apr. 9 Cathy N. Davidson, *Now You See It*, Chapter 6 (165-207)

Week Thirteen

Monday, Apr. 14 Cathy N. Davidson, *Now You See It*, Chapter 8 and Conclusion (247-292)
Writing due: Topic Proposal and Working Bibliography
Writing Workshop: Review of Paper 3 Proposals and Bibliographies

Wednesday, Apr. 16 **Writing Workshop:** Topic TBD

Week Fourteen

Monday, Apr. 21 **Writing due: Paper 3 First Draft with Reflection**

Wednesday, Apr. 23 **No Class: Individual Conferences**

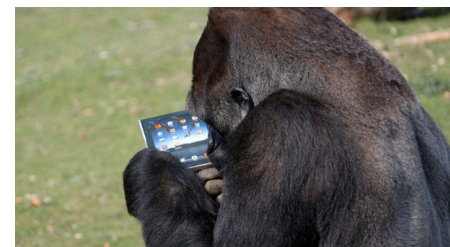
Week Fifteen

Monday, Apr. 28 **Writing Workshop:** Paper 3 Revisions

Wednesday, Apr. 30 **Writing due: Paper 3 Revised Draft**
Writing Workshop: Peer Review

Week Sixteen

Monday, May 5 **Final Class: Portfolios Due In Class**



How to Use Twitter in English 802

Twitter is a social media/microblogging platform organized around posts of 140 characters or less. It is an increasingly large part of digital culture, and is used by journalists, activists, authors, scholars, and celebrities, in addition to everyday people around the world. In this class, we will use Twitter as a way of recording our thoughts about the texts we read and the issues they raise, and of sharing that thinking with one another outside of the classroom.

Getting Started

- *Register.* If you don't already have a Twitter account, go to twitter.com and register for one. If you already have an account, you may want to start a separate one just for this class—that decision is up to you.
- *Download.* There are a wide range of ways to access Twitter: you can use the main webpage or a variety of (mostly free) clients and applications available for smartphones and computers. Using one of these will help you to keep track of our class conversations in an organized way—I recommend [TweetDeck](#), which is available through any web browser as well as a plugin to Google Chrome.
- *Follow.* In addition to allowing you to stay connected with peers and friends, Twitter is also a powerful news-gathering and reading tool for the larger world. Start following people and organizations that interest you, both in relation to your personal interests and in terms of the issues of our course—see what major technology publications like [Wired](#) and [TechCrunch](#) are talking about, and what some of the authors we'll be reading are tweeting. If nothing else, you should start following our class hashtag, #ddc04, which will show you all the posts by members of our class. You can set up an ongoing search for this on the Twitter webpage or a separate column for it in many Twitter clients, and you can also find it on the side of the [course blog](#). Make a point of checking this hashtag regularly—that way you'll be sure to see any notes or announcements I send out, and you'll also be up on what people are discussing before you post.

Tweeting for Class

The number one rule to being a productive, successful tweeter for this course is to **be substantive**: it's fine to tweet me with basic questions about class business or to have some social chat with classmates, but make sure that the majority of your tweets for class engage the course material, your classmates, and me in a way that advances and/or adds to our ongoing class conversation. *Relatedly, everything you say on Twitter for this class should be civil and respectful—this is a public forum, and you should not use it in ways that are antagonistic, offensive, or otherwise inappropriate.*

Ways to Tweet for Class:

- **Livetweet your reading.** One of the most important skills to develop in this course is active reading—as you read, you should write down as many notes, questions, ideas, important passages, and responses to the authors as possible. Twitter is a great way to do this publically and collaboratively—using it as a way of taking notes online in conversation with classmates will deepen and extend how you understand the material.
- **Respond to classmates.** Relatedly, having multiple people tweeting about the same readings and issues provides a great opportunity for dialogue and debate—you can use Twitter to ask and answer questions about the readings, add to what others are already saying, disagree or start a debate, etc.
- **Post relevant links.** If you see a story in tech-related news (or any other material online) that raises issues from our course, post a link to it and tell us what you think of it!
- **@ the authors.** Since our course is all about digital culture, it shouldn't be a surprise that many of the authors we'll read are active on Twitter. Follow them and mention them in your tweets—you might well get a response!

These possibilities for posting are only some initial suggestions about how to use this platform for our class—the overarching guideline is to be thoughtful, critical, and engaged. If you've got questions about how to use Twitter for our class (technical, content-related, or something else), email me at pbenzon@temple.edu, or write me at [@pbenzon](https://twitter.com/pbenzon).