English 3180: Language && Digi.Tech.

UNC Charlotte
Fall 2016
001: W/F, 2:00-3:15
116 Burson

Matthew Osborn, Ph.D.
Fretwell 265G
Office Hours: W, 10-11; 4-5
mjosbor1@uncc.edu

This course will investigate the exchange of primarily written and graphic information in digital contexts from the past, our contemporary moment, and speculative futurisms. We will consider our ever evolving relationships with information—both humanistic and posthuman, both enabling and disabling—as made possible by technological apparatus. Students will learn how information communication technologies (ICTs) might reasonably be construed as rhetorical "grammars" for both alphabetic and non-alphabetic "languages" through which information is variously inscribed, manipulated, accessed, recorded, or obfuscated by means of electronic tools and their forerunners. As a secondary or parallel agenda, the course investigates a series of possible "relationships with information" and signifying practices perceptible in digital- cultural productions. These relationships include epistemic, existential, aesthetic (visual and otherwise), material, embodied, interfacial, raced, gendered, classed, and post-human ways of conceiving language and digital technologies.
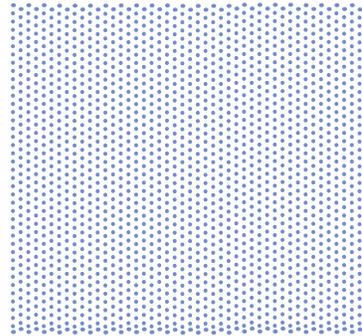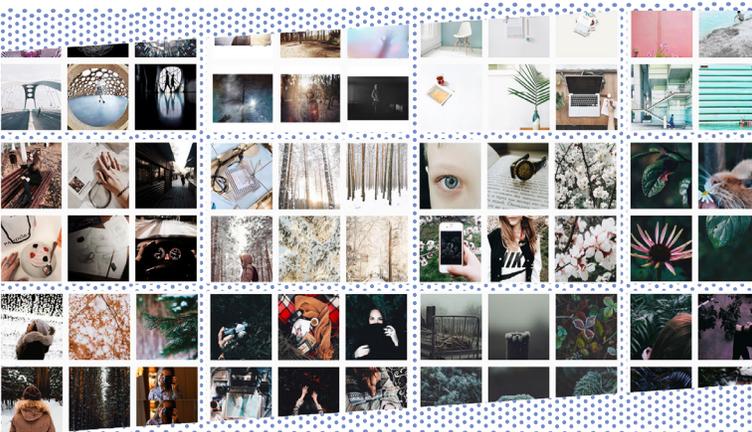

Google Data Center at Douglas County, GA

Holly Herndon, "Call" series (unk.)

Still from *City Rising* (2015)


Lev Manovich, "Instagramism" Dataset

Deliverables

Midterm Exam 25%	Multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.
Argument 35%	6-7 pages; 1" margins; MLA or Chicago Style. Integration of four scholarly sources (from class or elsewhere); three popular sources. Structure and analysis of sources to be reviewed in class.
Final Exam 30%	Multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Cumulative.
Participation 10%	Quantitative impression of contribution to class dialog. Participation is thus partly preparation. See "Participation," below. Students may be asked to comment on their own participation at the term's end.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Recognize historical relationships with information and language that persist in today's digital technologies;

- Cultivate literacies for alternative, nonalphabetic communications and languages seen in digitality;

- Understand information itself as variously meaningful, powerful, or dangerous— sometimes irrespective of its content.

- Exercise a critical relationship with enabling and/or disabling technologies;

- Engage the speculative proposition that there is no necessary determination about technology's role or nature in communication.
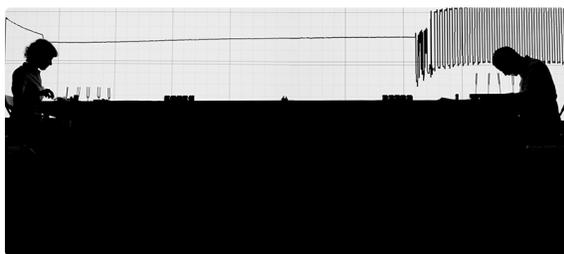
Still from Ryoji Ikeda's performace / installation
Superposition (2012-2014)

Texts, Expenses

_001. Ali Fard and Taraneg Meshkani, eds., *New Geographies of Information* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Graduate School of Design via Harvard University Press, 2015). ISBN-13: 978-1934510384.

_002. Additional readings are provided via Canvas. We need to refer to the assigned texts every day. Hence these readings may involve a printing expense. A computer or tablet are also good options; phones are not acceptable. *Persons arriving without texts will be counted absent.*

_003. Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Rental streaming via Amazon or iTunes is $4-6 (click "view in iTunes" for rental price).

Policies

This syllabus contains the policies and expectations I have established for English 2116 and English 3180. Please read the entire syllabus carefully before continuing in this course. These policies and expectations are intended to create a productive learning atmosphere for all students. Unless you are prepared to abide by these policies and expectations, you risk losing the opportunity to participate further in the course.

Attendance

This is a process and practice courses, and the specific kind of learning we're after will not occur if you don't attend. See the "Participation" sections (i.e., two [2]; both) above and below. Students in two-day/week sections missing three or more sessions will incur a 1% reduction in the final grade for the course per absence beginning with the third; students in one-day/week night classes missing two or more sessions will incur a 2% reduction in the final grade for the course beginning with the second. Students leaving before class concludes will be marked absent. Come in and stay awhile.

Note: Generally, there is no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused." Emergencies, however, will be reviewed by the instructor on a case by case basis.

Note: Quizzes must be taken on site. Anyone not physically present who takes an online quiz will have their score changed to zero. Makeups, however, are possible. Speak with me.

Title IX

UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that many UNC Charlotte employees, including all faculty members, are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact any of the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident: (1) University Counseling Center (counselingcenter.uncc.edu, 7-0311); (2) Student Health Center (studenthealth. uncc.edu, 7-7400); or (3) Center for Wellness Promotion (wellness.uncc.edu, 7-7407). Additional information about your options is also available at titleix.uncc.edu under the "Students" tab.

All students are required to abide by the UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy and the policy on Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Communication Resources. Sexual harassment, as defined in the UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy, is prohibited, even when carried out through computers or other electronic communications systems, including course-based chat rooms or message boards.

All gender expressions and gender identities are welcome. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, just let me know. Feel free to share your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me.

Disabilities

Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

Tardy Instructor

In the event the instructor does not arrive and no advanced notification of such absence has been given via email, students must wait ten minutes before dismissing themselves.

Office Hours

Office hours belong to you just as much as class time does. Don't hesitate, just attend. Students who visit always leave better prepared to undertake assignments. See my regular office hours above. You also can arrange to see me at alternative times that are mutually convenient. The way to do this is to email me a list of possible times from which to choose. Let's talk—especially if you're having trouble in the course. We will work on a solution.

Deadlines

All assignments are due on the "due date." Late work without a valid excuse will negatively affect your grade. Only the instructor determines the validity of excuses for late work. The penalty is a 5% reduction of the assignment's earned grade per calendar day the work is late. Work not submitted one week after the due date will be considered "missed" and will receive a grade of zero (0%). *Please*

understand that the "Available Until" dates in Canvas extend one week beyond actual deadline for the sole purpose of accepting penalized late work. Actual deadlines are specified in bold red font on the Home schedule. Do not confuse these two dates. The instructor is not responsible for ensuring student work has been submitted; the student is responsible for ensuring their work has been successfully submitted. Problems and errors within Canvas or Moodle should be communicated to the instructor ASAP. If a due date is relevant, you must email the assignment for timestamp purposes: mjosbor1@uncc.edu.

All work may be submitted early for evaluation, draft feedback, and/or planned absences. The schedule will almost certainly be revised to better suit the needs of the students.

Modifications and Changes

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Such changes will be announced in class and/or email, as well as on Canvas. Always rely on Canvas for the current schedule. Do not print the schedule and expect it to remain accurate.

Academic Dishonesty

Work submitted with *any* amount of plagiarized content may receive a score of zero (0%). Cheating on quizzes or exams will earn the same result (0%). Persons in accidental or fuzzy situations may be given the chance to revise and resubmit for a reduced grade. All students have the right to appeal such penalties via "Settlement" and/or "Hearing" procedures described at the link in the next paragraph.

All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in

disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online.

Faculty may ask students to produce identification at examinations and may require students to demonstrate that graded assignments completed outside of class are their own work.

Withdrawals

Students are expected to complete all courses for which they are registered at the close of the add/drop period. If you are concerned about your ability to succeed in this course, it is important to make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible. The University policy on withdrawal allows students only a limited number of opportunities available to withdraw from courses. It is important for you to understand the financial and academic consequences that may result from course withdrawal.

Participation (Affects Grade)

This course is *not* designed to merely familiarize students with a body of information to be called upon, repeated, or applied at a later time. Although we will do all the above, we won't stop there. Because we cannot go further if we rely on lecture, almost every meeting will involve a group "conversation" about the reading for that day. Prepare for these conversations by bringing in one or two citations from the readings every day plus a short (i.e., 1-2 sentence) response/comment/question about the citation.

You might find a sentence or idea interesting, puzzling, enraging, life-enhancing, depressing, annoying—and so on. A sentence could make you need to ask a question (please do). You might find an idea in the reading to be profoundly true or deeply erroneous. Be prepared each day *not only* to point to

the sentence and to summarize it, but also to *analyze* or respond to it. A good way to accomplish this second part is to simply answer the question of *why* the sentence makes you feel/see/think/act the way it does? Participation is thus partially preparation. Participation is thus measurable by means of the frequency with which you contribute to discussions.

I will conduct this class in an atmosphere of mutual respect. I encourage your active participation in class discussions. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The conflict of ideas is encouraged and welcome. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, you will not be permitted to participate further.

Content Note

Our course deals with (digital) culture. Culture can be offensive and traumatic. Readings in this course may engage sensitive and potentially offensive topics when relevant to the goals of the course. The instructor recognizes students may have legitimate and deeply personal reasons that make engaging such issues problematic. The schedule includes some warnings for such content. However, it does *not* purport to denote all possibly offensive content for all possible audiences. Please review the assigned readings before coming to class and communicate with the instructor if discussion if engaging particular content becomes problematic.

Again, Regarding the Schedule

See the course Canvas or Moodle in advance of each class for links and PDFs.

Itinerary

	Prepare for Class	During Class
W 8/24		Introductions; Informations; Language; Protocol
F 8/26	1. Plato, from *Phaedrus*, 268a-279c	Rhetoric, Writing, Righting *Epistemic, Historical*
W 8/31	1. Plato, from *Symposium*, 199e-212c	Acquisitions *Epistemic, Existential*
F 9/2	1. *NGoI*, Fard and Meshkani, "Geographies of Information," 5-11. 2. *NGoI*, McCullough, "Remoteness?," 13-19. 3. *NGoI*, Hallak, "Invisible Networks," 37-43. . . . all in *New Geographies of Information (NGoI)*	New Relationships with Information *Material, Existential*
W 9/7	1. Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 3-19.	Enframing; Morse Code *Epistemic, Existential*
F 9/9	1. Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 20-35 (file linked above, 9/7).	Challenging-Forth *Epistemic, Existential*
W 9/14	1. *NGoI*, Papanikolaou, "Choreographies of Information," 45-55. 2. *NGoI*, "Preliminary Findings toward an Architectural History of the Network," 57-65.	Histories *Material, Epistemic, Existential*
F 9/16	1. *NGoI*, White, "Farm/Cloud" 67-75. 2. *NGoI*, Bratton, "Governing Planetary Skin," 167-173.	Accountings *Historical, Material*
W 9/21	1. *NGoI*, Blanchette, "From Digital Exceptionalism to Computational Scarcity," 21-27. 2. *NGoI*, Shepard, "Predictive Geographies," 133-137. 3. *NGoI*, Steenson, "Architecture Machines and the Internet of Things," 101-106.	Abilities *Historical, Classed, Existential*

F 9/23	1. Ulmer, on Electracy 2. Ulmer, Apparatus Table 3. Barthes, on "Studium and Punctum," from *Camera Lucida*.	Electracy; Images *Historical, Aesthetic and/or Epistemic, Embodied*
W 9/28	1. Manovic, "Subjects and Styles in Instagram Photography"	Instagrammars *Historical, Aesthetic and/or Epistemic*
F 9/30	Selections from the MIT/Whitechapel *Information* planned for publication early September, 2016. Forthcoming.	Information Aesthetics *Aesthetic, Historical*
W 10/5	**Midterm**	**Midterm**
F 10/7	1. Reynolds, "Maximal Nation." 2. Garvey, "PC Music, Hipster Runoff, and the Year of the Internet Hangover."	Digital Sonics *Aesthetic; Epistemic; Existential; Embodied*
W 10/12	1. Chun, "Daemonic Interfaces, Empowering Obfuscations."	Power, Control, Program *Interfacial, Epistemic*
F 10/14	1. Bratton, "Platform and Stack, Model and Machine."	Platform, Platformed *Interfacial, Epistemic*
W 10/19	1. Hendrix, "At War with Waze." 2. Hardy, "Using Algorithms to Determine Character." 3. View: Bratton, "We Need to Talk"	Accidents *Interfacial, Existential, Classed*
F 10/21	*No Class*	*No Class*
W 10/26	1. Tanz, "The Curse of Cow Clicker: How a Cheeky Satire Became a Video Game Hit." 2. Bogost's reflection, "Cow Clicker: The Making of an Obsession."	High Scores *Platformed, Interfacial, Existential, Classed*

F 10/28	1. Bindi, "Women Didn't Recently Start Coding" 2. Video: ABC News, "What it Feels like to Be a GamerGate Target" *Warning:* The ABC News video discusses sexual violence against women. Graphic depiction of violence against women in popular video games appears for the sake of critique.	Gendered Computing *Gendered, Classed*
W 11/2	1. from Nakamura and Chow-White's *Race after the Internet* 2. Stephen, "How Black Lives Matter Uses Social Media" *Warning:* These readings discuss racism and racially motivated violence.	"Post-Racial" *Raced, Classed*
F 11/4	1. Metahaven, "Captives of the Cloud: Part I."	Clouds *Existential, Material*
W 11/9	**Draft Paper for Peer Review; Bring hardcopy to Class**	**Peer Review**
F 11/11	1. Wood, "Is it Love?"	Surprises *Existential, Material, Classed*
W 11/16	1. Video: Bratton, "Algorithmic Perception: On AI an Cities"	Copernican Traumas *Post-Human, Existential*
F 11/18	**Papers Due: Upload by 11:59 PM**	Debrief; Sharing; Individual Consultation
W 11/23	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving
F 11/25	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving
W 11/30	1. Film: Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (stream via Amazon or iTunes, ~$4).	Automation; Delegation *Post-Human, Epistemic, Existential*
F 12/2	Review Day	Review
F 12/16	**Final Exam Period: 2:00-4:30**	Assessments