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ENGL 151-02, Critical Thinking and Writing: cyberculture interfaces, Fall 2002

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RITICAL THINKING AND WRITING CYBERCULTURE INTERFACES

Instructor: Stephanie Tripp
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Objectives

An interface communicates between two or more distinctive systems or organisms. Just as a computer's operating system serves as an interface between machine language and human users, college writing provides the interface between individual students and the larger academic community. "Critical Thinking and Writing" teaches students how to use this interface effectively. The goal of this course is not to instruct and evaluate students on "good" writing in general but to help them recognize and produce good *academic writing*.

This section of ENGL 151 will focus on how to read, analyze, research, organize, and write scholarly essays. It also aims to sharpen skills in critical thinking, formal argument, persuasive rhetoric, and problem-solving. In tandem with these objectives, students will explore the myriad interfaces between humans, animals, and machines that make up what is popularly known as "cyberculture."

Required Texts

The Cybercultures Reader,
ed. David Bell and Barbara Kennedy
A Writer's Reference, 4th ed.,
by Diana Hacker
Assorted handouts and reserve materials

Course Requirements

Expository Essay (4-6 pages): 15%
Visual Culture Analysis 1(2-3 pages): 8%
Visual Culture Analysis 2 (3-5 pages):
12%
Argumentative Essay (4-6 pages):15%
Bibliography (at least 10 sources): 2%
Annotated Bibliography (at least 4
sources): 8%
Research Paper (6-8 pages): 25%
Daily Assignments: 5%
Class Participation: 10%

Grading

All requirements will be graded on an "A" to "F" scale and weighted as outlined above.

Policies

■ You are allowed three unexcused absences during the semester. For each absence after that, your final grade will be reduced one increment (from an "A" to a "B+" for example). A few absences due to illness or a family crisis will be excused if documented to my satisfaction. Students participating at school-sponsored events will be excused with proper documentation. Prolonged absences—even if documented—will not be excused, however. Students who are absent from a class always will be held responsible for any reading or writing assignments (either in-class or out-of-class) for that day. It is your responsibility to keep up with your work, either by contacting classmates or by referring to your syllabus. Any out-of-class assignments will be considered late if they are turned in after the due date,

even if you have an excused absence. If you know you are going to be absent, arrange for a friend or classmate to turn in your assignment *on the due date*, or else talk to me about turning in your paper *before the due date*.

■ I consider habitual lateness to class to be extremely inconsiderate and will lower your class-participation grade if you straggle in more than three times during the semester.

■ The Rhodes English Department requires you to complete all assigned work to receive credit for a course. If you do not turn in an assignment, you risk failing the course.

■ Unless I specifically designate an assignment as a group project, all work must be individual. Plagiarism, collusion, and multiple submissions are not acceptable. If I find out you are turning in someone else's work, relying on someone else's help, or receiving credit in other courses for projects I assign, you risk failing the course. You are responsible for knowing and following the Rhodes Honor Code.

■ You are expected to show respect for diverse opinions during class discussion and in papers. You also are expected to participate in class discussion, e-mail and other interactions with others in a responsible manner. You should grant others the same courtesy when they express their opinions that you would expect from them when you express your own.

■ You must make a copy of each assignment you turn in and retain that copy until the end of the semester.

■ I plan to review your projects thoroughly for errors in spelling, grammar, and style. I consider spelling errors in assignments you work on at home to be a sign of inexcusable laziness and will penalize you heavily for misspelled words. I also will penalize you harshly if you repeat grammatical errors that I already have called to your attention. If you are having trouble understanding your errors, please talk to me and we will develop a strategy for improvement. Refer to *A Writer's Reference* for guidance on matters of style, grammar, and punctuation. For additional help and feedback, visit the Rhodes Writing Center at 315 Palmer Hall.

Schedule

CR = *The Cybercultures Reader*
WR = *A Writer's Reference*

Week 1

Aug. 28: Introduction
Aug. 30: "What Is Cyberspace?" handout

Week 2

Sept. 2: Labor Day holiday
Sept. 4: Wilbur, "An Archaeology of Cyberspaces," *CR* 45-55
Sept. 6: Leary, "The Cyberpunk," *CR* 529-39

Week 3

Sept. 9: Thieme, "Stalking the UFO Meme," *CR* 230-36
Sept. 11: Handout on memes and urban legends on the Internet; "Evaluating Sources," *WR* 68-72
Sept. 13: Handout on intellectual property issues; "Citing Sources, Avoiding Plagiarism," *WR* 82-85

Week 4

Sept. 16: Ross, "Hacking Away at the Counter-Culture," *CR* 254-67
Sept. 18: Draft of Expository Essay due; peer review workshop; bring *WR*
Sept. 20: Robins, "Cyberspace and the World We Live In," *CR* 77-95

Week 5

Sept. 23: Expository essay due; Introduction to Visual Culture
Sept. 25: In lieu of class, attend screening of *Blade Runner*, 7:30 p.m., Frazier Jelke A
Sept. 27: Branwyn, "Compu-Sex," *CR* 396-402

Week 6

Sept. 30: Discuss lurking, flaming, netiquette, and other cybercultural social practices; *WR* 316-19
Oct. 2: Springer, "Digital Rage," *CR* 337-47
Oct. 4: Visual Culture Analysis 1 due; view "Kill Switch"

Week 7

Oct. 7: Discuss "Kill Switch"
Oct. 9: "Anatomy of a Cyborg" handout
Oct. 11: Dery, "Ritual Mechanics," *CR* 577-87; selected excerpts from Stelarc, *CR* 560-76

Week 8

Oct. 14: Oehlert, "From Captain America to Wolverine," *CR* 112-23
Oct. 16: Visual Culture Analysis 2 due; Introduction to Argument
Oct. 18: Logical fallacies; *WR* 37-46

Week 9

Oct. 21: Fall Break
Oct. 23: Exercises on argument and logical fallacies
Oct. 25: Sobchack, "New Age Mutant Ninja Hackers," *CR* 138-48

Week 10

Oct. 28: Draft of Argumentative Essay due; peer review workshop

Oct. 30: Digital film maker Jon Jost at Rhodes; attend presentation in lieu of class (7:30 p.m., location TBA)
Nov. 1: Introduction to scholarly research; "Managing Information," *WR* 72-78

Week 11

Nov. 4: Argumentative Essay due; library day
Nov. 6: Willson, "Community in the Abstract" (abridged), *CR* 643-51, 655-57
Nov. 8: Workshop on preparing a list of works cited; *WR* 341-47

Week 12

Nov. 11: Bibliography due; Introduction to WWW rhetoric
Nov. 13: Bring in copies of Web pages, URLs; "Creating Effective Web Sites," *WR* 319-21
Nov. 15: Nakamura, "Race In/For Cyberspace," *CR* 712-20

Week 13

Nov. 18: Stratton, "Cyberspace and the Globalization of Culture," *CR* 721-31
Nov. 20: Discussion on globalization; bring in media examples
Nov. 22: Sardar, "alt.civilizations.faq," *CR* 732-52

Week 14

Nov. 25: Annotated bibliography due; "Integrating Sources," *WR* 86-91
Nov. 27 and 29: Thanksgiving break

Week 15

Dec. 2: Barwell and Bowles, "Border Crossings," 702-11
Dec. 4: Research Paper draft due; Peer review workshop
Dec. 6: Peer review workshop continued

Week 16

Dec. 9: Mitra, "Virtual Commonality: Looking for India on the Internet," *CR* 676-94
Dec. 11: Research paper due