



Course Description

“This course will explore the theory and practice of digital writing technologies. Topics covered include the production, management, and reception of digital texts; web writing style; hypertext and linking; authorship; copyright. Students will evaluate the design and content of web texts and create their own web sites.” The focus in this course will be to have you engage in both the production of written texts for the internet and also develop a critical eye for examining the written texts present on the Web, including an understanding of how the relationship between reader and writer is affected by the evolution of technologies.”

Course Requirements

Assignment	Percentage of Final Mark	Due Date
Discussion Forums x 8; Wikis x 2.	10%	Ongoing
Wikipedia Edits, Evaluate a Wikipedia Article, and Final Article Contribution	Edits = 5%; Evaluate a Wikipedia Article = 5%, Final Article =15% total (see details later in course outline/ syllabus)	Edits (Jan 28), Evaluate an Article (Mar 3), Draft article (Mar 10), Final article (March 24 to April 8)
Essay with hyperlinks or online article (1000 words or so)	30%	February 11
Personal Website	35%	April 8

Discussion Board Posts and Wiki entries (10%)

This is where we have regular weekly conversations in the course for 10 weeks. Details on posting requirements are given on the next pages.

Two of these will be a collaborative wiki activity in the OWL Wiki space (not to be confused with Wikipedia). Instructions will be provided.

Wikipedia Edits (5%), Evaluation of an Article (5%), and Article Creation (15%) (due dates above). Final version due March 24 (flexible to the last day of the term, though this date should be a target for you to space out the workload)

For several weeks during the term you will be editing and contributing to Wikipedia. Yes, really. This will involve making 1) small edits to existing articles (5%), evaluating an existing Wikipedia article (5%), drafting an article or substantial contribution in your Sandbox (ungraded), peer reviewing a classmate’s entry (part of your discussion board participation) and completing your final article (15%). Ultimately, you will be either creating a new article or making substantial contributions to an existing entry in Wikipedia. Details will be provided.

Hypertext essay (30%) Due February 11

Write an essay (with intro, thesis, body, conclusion) on any topic **with a clear connection to the readings and content of the course** and smoothly incorporate hyperlinks to appropriate online content (examples, visuals, articles, etc.). The subject must be in some way related to writing and/or reading (communication) on the Web. Research your subject, provide new insights, explanations, or examples of the issue. The style can be standard academic or more of a “magazine” or blog style. Length will be approximately 4 double-spaced pages (1000 words), though this is a rough guideline. See **Assignments** for detailed instructions.

Website Development (35%) Due April 8

Select a topic of interest to develop a website using software such as Dreamweaver or by using a premade template from a site like Wordpress, Webnode, Wix or Weebly, Squarespace, etc. If you use a pre-made template, you must sufficiently customize it to make it yours.

Add content to that site—you must have at least 5 pages/subpages (see **Assignments** for details). If not using a template site, you can use the free space allocated to you at Western to post your site (see instructions in **Course Information**), host it elsewhere. Very few if any students have taken this route in the past few years; most people use a template site already online. If you are using a Wordpress, Webnode or Wix site, hosting is provided already. You just make it live on the web.

Assignment Format

Your essay is to be typed and double-spaced and submitted as .doc, .docx, or .rtf format. If you submit a .pdf file to retain formatting, also submit a second version in a format that I can edit with comments. Do not use a cover page, as these are particularly unnecessary for online submissions. When using sources in a paper, you will be expected to follow MLA, APA, or Chicago-style citations.



Submitting Assignments



Assignments are due on the dates specified on the schedule. Late essays will be penalized by **3% per day** unless I have permitted an extension on the due date. You must speak to me ahead of time for an extension and provide a suitable reason. Weekly class sessions will run from Monday to Sunday, so writing assignments for a particular week are due by Sunday night at 11:59PM, Eastern Time. If they're submitted a little past midnight, say before I wake up the next morning, there won't be any penalty. All this is designed to help last-minute, weekend editors.

You must also submit your final draft of the hyperlink essay/online article to [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) for plagiarism checking. This happens automatically when you submit it to the **Assignments** area. Turnitin will generate a report for you, detailing the percentage of your paper that has been taken from sources, which I will also look at. I will not grade any essay until I see the report on Turnitin.com.

You are responsible for keeping copies of all assignments submitted in case we need to discuss your writing and if you want to submit it for the annual Marie Smibert Writing Program Student Achievement Prizes in April.

Attendance/Discussion Board/Wiki Participation



Obviously, we do not meet formally in a Distance Studies course. Therefore, attendance and participation on the Discussion Board (and in our case, Wiki) are intertwined. While online classes are generally asynchronous, they are not correspondence or self-paced. You must attend class (defined as logging into our OWL section and interacting, posting questions and thoughts) **at least once by Thursday** for a total of **two** (or more) separate posts per week (a week is defined as running from Monday to Sunday). **At least one post must be a reply/response to another student and at least one must respond to the main discussion question.** I will assign a weekly number grade from 0-10 based on whether you have fulfilled the posting requirements described in further detail below—1) **quality of posting**, 2) **engagement** (frequency and number of posts made).

1) *Quality of Posting*

All posts on the Discussion Board must

- ✓ Contribute something meaningful to the board.
- ✓ Support your opinion with sufficient reasons or evidence.
- ✓ Display clarity of writing, organization and grammatical usage appropriate to the audience and situation.

Postings should not

- ⊗ Contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language.
- ⊗ Be excessively long (more than one screen length) or excessively short.
- ⊗ Be unrelated to the forum topic.
- ⊗ Only say things like “I agree with you” or “Nice comment!” that do not contribute any substance.

The use of racist or any language that works against the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion will not be tolerated.

2) *Engagement*

Two posts are required. Feel free to post more.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of ‘make-up class’ in another course **will** count as non-attendance, and **will** attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario **shall not require** a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student’s other scheduled class times. If you are asked or ‘required’ to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean’s office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is **your** choice; your absence will not be excused.

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, which can be found here:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently Western and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.”

In this course, students are permitted to use AI tools for information gathering and preliminary research purposes only (unless otherwise indicated in the assignment instructions). These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. It is essential, however, that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize, develop, and articulate their own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploration, but students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources and avoiding plagiarism in any form.

Note that for all assignments completed outside of class, the instructor can require you to attend an in-person interview to discuss your work before a mark is finalized. Assignments should always reflect students’ own thoughts and constitute independent written work. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and ethical learning environment that promotes critical thinking, supports independent inquiry, and encourages original written contributions.

Prerequisites

Ensuring you have the correct prerequisite(s) is your responsibility. “Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

The prerequisite for registration in this course is:

At least 65% in one of Writing 2101F/G, Writing 2125F/G (or the former Writing 2121F/G), Writing 2111F/G, Writing 2130F/G or Writing 2131F/G; or at least 65% in one of Writing 1000F/G, Writing 1030F/G, or Writing 1031F/G; or at least 65% in each of MIT 1020E (or both of MIT 1021F/G and MIT 1022F/G) and MIT 1025F/G; or permission of the Department (consult the Undergraduate Program Director, Writing).

Academic Accommodation

Accommodation by Instructor for work worth less than 10% of the overall grade in a course:

Instructors are encouraged, in the first instance, to arrange participation requirements and multiple small assignments in such a way as to allow students some flexibility. A student seeking academic accommodation for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor or follow the appropriate Department or course specific instructions provided on the course outline.

In arranging accommodation, instructors will use good judgement and ensure fair treatment for all students. Instructors must indicate on the course outline how they will be dealing with work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. In particular, instructors must indicate whether medical documentation will be required for absences, late assignments or essays, missed tests, laboratory experiments or tutorials, etc.

Where medical documentation is required, such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Academic Counselling/Dean's office, who will make the determination whether accommodation is warranted. Given the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy (https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf), instructors may not collect medical documentation.

Medical Accommodation Policy

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Dean's office (the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration/home Faculty) together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. These documents will be retained in the student's file and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s).

Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic accommodation shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”)

Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner.

Documentation from Family Physicians/Nurse Practitioners and Walk-In Clinics

A Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is required where a student is seeking academic accommodation. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. An SMC can be downloaded at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Documentation from Student Health Services

At the time of illness, students should make an appointment with a physician/nurse practitioner at Student Health Services. During this appointment, request a Student Medical Certificate from the Physician/Nurse Practitioner.

Documentation from Hospital Urgent Care Centres or Emergency Departments

Students should request that an SMC be filled out. Students may bring this form with them, or request alternative Emergency Department documentation. Documentation should be secured at the time of the initial visit to the Emergency Department. Where it is not possible for a student to have an SMC completed by the attending physician, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that their ability to meet their academic responsibilities was seriously affected.

Please note that individual instructors will not under any circumstances accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). All medical documentation must be submitted to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of a student's home Faculty.

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

(<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519-661-3030 (during class hours) or 519-433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays and should give reasonable notice in writing (email), prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Statement on Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have

experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Other Student Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support and Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Intellectual Property and Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Term Schedule

Date	Topic + To Do	Readings
Week 1 (Jan 8-14)	<u>What's Different with Web Writing?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro self and what characterizes Web writing in your opinion. This is participation item 1 of 10. Get your personal web space at UWO if using (see https://wts.uwo.ca/hdi/web.html); otherwise, look at free website template options like Wix and Wordpress. Create account on Wikipedia (instructions provided). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jay David Bolter Chapter 1 "Introduction" from <i>Writing Space</i> provided in the Weekly Content + additional lecture material. How is AI Changing How We Write and Create?
Week 2 (Jan 15-21)	<u>Multimedia Writing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wiki collaborative writing activity—The differences of writing for the Web (instructions given at start of week) This is participation item 2 of 10 Think about a potential subject/ article you might edit in Wikipedia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neil Postman "Peekaboo World" + lecture material.
Week 3 (Jan 22-28)	<u>eBooks, The Future of Print, New Literatures</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion (Participation item 3 of 10) on website plans. Complete Wikipedia training + Copyedit Wikipedia (5%) by Jan 28 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicholas Carr (from <i>The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains</i>): Excerpt "The Deepening Page" (in the Weekly Content)
Week 4 (Jan 29-Feb 4)	<u>Hyperlinking, Hypertext</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wiki collaborative writing activity (How to Hyperlink). This is participation item 4 of 10. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bolter (from <i>Writing Space</i>): "Hypertext and the Remediation of Print" and "Refashioned Dialogues"
Week 5 (Feb 5-11)	<u>How Reading on the Web Affects Your Brain</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion – "Six degrees of Wikipedia" This is participation item 5 of 10. Hypertext Essay (30%) due: Feb 11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicholas Carr: "A digression on the writing of this book" in the Weekly Content David Levy (from <i>Scrolling Forward</i>): "Reading and Attention" in the Weekly Content.

<p>Week 6 (Feb 12-16, short week)</p>	<p><u>Online identity and blogging</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post - website outline. This is participation item 6 of 10. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naomi Baron “Having Your Say” from <i>Always On</i> in the Weekly Content
<p>Week 7 (Feb 26-Mar 3) After Reading Week</p>	<p><u>Plagiarism, originality, and the Web</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post – remixed item. This is participation item 7 of 10. • Evaluate a Wikipedia article (5%) by Mar 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View “Everything is a Remix” (look at the Original Series and other videos) • Read “The Ecstasy of Influence, A Plagiarism.” Jonathan Lethem
<p>Week 8 (Mar 4-10)</p>	<p><u>Web 2.0 and user participation: eJournalism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post – social media post. This is participation item 8 of 10. • Continue developing pages for website. Recommended: Post main site page for yourself. • Rough draft of Wikipedia article due Mar 10 for peer review in Week 9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Clay Shirky (from <i>Here Comes Everybody</i>): “Everybody is a Media Outlet” in the Weekly Content.
<p>Week 9 (Mar 11-17)</p>	<p><u>Web 2.0: Democratization, Anonymity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion forums– peer review of classmates’ Wikipedia draft article. This is participation item 9 of 10 • Recommended: Post 2nd page of website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read or view Andrew Keen’s interview on “The Cult of the Amateur.” • Read Jaron Lanier’s “Beware the Online Collective”
<p>Week 10 (Mar 18-24)</p>	<p><u>Web design: crash course</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at past student websites. No discussion posting needed this week. • Final Wikipedia Article (15%) due Mar 24 (flexible to the end of the term, but aim for the end of Week 10) • Recommended: Post 3rd page of website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD (will be provided)

<p>Week 11-12 (Mar 25-Apr 8)</p>	<p><u>Wrap up</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion posts (submit website rough draft for peer and professor advice). This is participation item 10 of 10.• Recommended: Post 4th page• Final Version of Personal Website completed by Apr 8 (35%).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TBD (will be provided)
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