HU 5115:
Literacy, Society, Technology, and Education:
Agency and Activism while Teaching with Technology

Tues. 11-1:30
Dickie Selfe rselfe@mtu.edu
138 Walker
906.487.3225
906.482.5663 (hm)
http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~rselfe/5ll5
Office hours by arrangement

Rationale:
Our definitions of literacy and who is a literate citizen are changing, and technologies are involved in complicated ways in those changes. Graduate students and faculty in English studies programs face difficult theoretical and practical choices as they try to imagine appropriate ways to attend to these changing literacies. Can we keep up with world filled with ever changing sets of technologies? Can we understand the implications for each on definitions of literacy? No. So how then can English studies professionals remain active agents of change in an overdetermined technological world? In order to be agents of change or technological activists (not simply technological advocates), we need time not only to learn new technologies and apply them to our classes and scholarship, but time to think about and learn to live well (if possible) with those technologies.

Any “answers” or speculations we come to will be of value to the English studies disciplines as a whole, and I have every intention of pushing us toward a publication or demonstrative “event” of some sort. I fully expect participants in this class to help imagine what that event/publication might look like.

Recognizing that people come to classes like this with rich and varied theoretical, technological and pedagogical backgrounds and beliefs, I hope to take advantage of that diversity. Novices and experts are welcome. Skeptics and enthusiasts are as well. I’ll try to design a course that will accommodate those hungry for the theoretical and the practical. I’m sure we will learn a great deal about and with each other.

Components of Class:
Reading Groups?
Technology “how-to” sessions?
Readings & Discussions w/ In-class Activities

Book Reviews
Techno-pedagogical Explorations
Compositions/Assignments:
  Technology and Teaching Autobiography (TATA)
  Synthesis Report
  Practitioner Interviews & Reports
  Media representations of Teaching and Technology
Final Projects
Online Learning Record (for formative assessment)

Primary Readings:


Kitalong, Karla, Selfe, Dickie, Moore, Michael. “Technology Autobiographies and the Co-construction of English studies Literacy Classes.” In Jeff Gaylin (Ed.) Teaching/Writing in the Late Age of Print, forthcoming.


Others selected from Dickie’s library or via personal recommendation in class (Please bring a copy of pieces you’d like to read to class and we can talk about how to fit them into our schedule).

Course Library:
YOU DON’T HAVE TO BUY THESE BOOKS! (unless you want to ;-)
To be determined by suggestion and in class.

Electronic Media for Techno-Pedagogical Exploration
Part of our obligation this term is to explore technological systems that are being used in English studies courses (first-year courses, technical & professional communication, ESL, literature, language arts and English Ed. courses). And of course our explorations can’t just be of the technology itself. They should be focussed pedagogically: what can teachers and students DO with these systems that they can’t do without them or how can they improve everyone’s learning experiences?
There's another reason to explore in this way. As we explore, our learning curve for the system changes and our discursive experience, for better or worse, changes as well. In other words, in order to critically evaluate these often complex pedagogical systems well and accurately, we have to get beyond the "beginner" introductions that are common in many technology workshops.

One final reason for these explorations has to do with agency & activism. The technologies listed below are accessible: we either have direct access to the folks who maintain them (and can therefore ask for reasonable modifications) or they are "open source" applications (more on open source, later). What others should we explore?

WWW Threaded Discussion, WebBoard:
http://skipper.hu.mtu.edu/~rselfe (look for the LTSE conferences)

Email List:
ltse-1@mtu.edu

Synchronous Environment, NorthWoodsMOO:
http://maryann.hu.mtu.edu:8000

Online Course Management Tools, WebCT:
http://

Class web site:
http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~rselfe/5115

Teaching With Technology site:
http://public.cle.clemson.edu/TTECH-100-001-0000/

Assessment Site, Online Learning Record:
http://lro.cwrl.utexas.edu/index.php?fuseaction=login

Weekly Schedule
(Which weeks can we conduct our class session online?)
Week One (Aug. 27)
* Introductions
* Class Introduction: The Technology of the Seminar
* Discuss C. Selfe's, "Technology and Literacy" and Kitalong, Selfe, Moore's "Technology Autobiographies ..."
* In class, begin TATA assignment
* Assign chapter review sessions for Giddens.

* ASSIGNMENT: Read Giddens, Intro. & Chapter 1 of The Constitution of Society.
  Begin collecting media representations of technology and teaching.
Week Two (Sept. 4) (Sept. 3, Labor Day)
* TATAs due by class time
* Giddens, discussion of structuration: Dickie
* Project brainstorming session (online in the CCLI) with invited guests
* Techno-pedagogical exploration: Online Learning Record
* By Friday, Dickie distributes .pdf version of TATAs (MTU) and TADAs (UCF).
* ASSIGNMENT: Read Giddens, Chapters 1 & 2
  Read TATA's (MTU) & TADAs (CFU)

Week Three (Sept. 11)
* Discuss content & rhetorical "moves" of Giddens, Chapters 1 & 2, _________ & _________ discussion leaders
* Book review choices
* Interviewing Practitioners: choosing and contacting interviewees
* Techno-pedagogical exploration: email/email lists
* ASSIGNMENT: Read Giddens, Chapters 3 & 4
  Write Synthesis report

Week Four (Sept. 18)
* Discuss content & rhetorical "moves" of Giddens, Chapters 3 & 4, _________ & _________ discussion leaders
* Discuss and hand in Synthesis Reports
* Show and Tell: media representations of technology and teaching
* Techno-pedagogical exploration: NWMOO #1
* ASSIGNMENT: Read Giddens, Chapters 5 & 6

Week Five (Sept. 25)
* Discuss content & rhetorical "moves" of Giddens, Chapters 5 & 6, _________ & _________ discussion leaders
* Techno-pedagogical exploration: NWMOO #2
* Final Project proposal—one page—due today.
* ASSIGNMENT: Read Bolter/Grusin (B/G), Intro. - Chapter 3.

Week Six (Oct. 2)
* Discuss Bolter/Grusin, Intro. - Chapter 3; Dickie discussion leader
* Assign discussion leaders for B/G Chapters 4-14
* Informal presentations on Practitioner Interviews.
* Techno-pedagogical exploration: WebBoard

* ASSIGNMENT: Read Bolter/Grusin, Chapters 4-14.

Week Seven (Oct. 9) (Oct. 12, Homegoing break)
* Discuss B/G, Chapters 4-14
* Informal presentations on Practitioner Interviews.
* Midterm Assessment using OLR due this week before Fri.

* ASSIGNMENT: Read B/G. Chapters 15-18.

Week Eight (Oct. 16)
* Discuss B/G, Chapters 15 & 18: __________, __________, __________ discussion leaders
* Formulate central questions for online discussion of Remediation.
* Show and Tell: media representations of technology and teaching
* Begin book review presentations

* ASSIGNMENT: Dickie will send out an invitation to C&W community
  Read Intro. and Chapters 1 & 4

Week Nine (Oct. 23)
* Hold online discussion of Remediation on NWMOO
* Book review presentations
* Techno-pedagogical exploration: class web pages

* ASSIGNMENT: Read Passions, Intro. & Chapters 1, 4, & 6.

Week Ten (Oct. 30)
* Discuss of Passions: Dickie, __________, __________
  & __________ discussion leaders
* Book review presentations
* Draft of Final Project due today

* ASSIGNMENT: Read Passions, Chapters 7, 8, & 10 (and one of your choice).

Week Eleven (Nov. 6)
* Discuss Passions: __________, __________ &
  __________ discussion leaders
* Book review presentations
* Techno-pedagogical exploration: OLR, revisited

* ASSIGNMENT: Read Passions, Chapters 11, 17, & 19 (and one of your choice).
Week Twelve (Nov. 13) (Nov. 16, 10 PM, T-giving) (Nov. 22, T-giving)
* Discuss Passions: __________, __________ & __________ discussion leaders
* Show and Tell: media representations of technology and teaching
* Hand in final interview reports.

* ASSIGNMENT: Read Sustainable Practices, Chapters 1 & 5.

Week Thirteen (Nov. 27)
* Hand in book reviews or review artifacts.
* Hold CCLI Strategic Planning Session #1 and interview one other stakeholder outside of class for next week.
* Dickie will invite stakeholder representatives to next class to discuss the most important initiatives identified above.
* Hold CCLI Strategic Planning Session #2.
* Dickie will construct CCLI goals and action items based on Session #2 discussions.

Week Fourteen (Dec. 4)
* Final Project Presentations

Week Fifteen (Dec. 11)
* Dickie’s Tenure & Promotion talk (online discussion with participants?)
* Final Project Presentations
* Online Learning Record final assessment

Finals Week (Dec. 18)
* Hand in Final Projects or hold "events" by this date.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1a) Reading groups?
This is an optional assignment, but I would like to encourage people to form reading groups and spend time refining their understanding of the class readings outside of class time. To that end, I am willing assign some portion of your grade to this activity.
Ph.D. students--prepare for and attend reading group meetings, and record/report on discussions (electronically or in class prior to discussions)
MA students--prepare for, attend, and contribute to group discussions

If you want credit, the group should prepare a short report at the end of the term and detail the successes and any difficulties you faced. How would you do it differently next time? What roles were the most helpful and productive in the group? Why?

1b) Technology "how-to" sessions?
This class offers us an opportunity to learn "how to" skills but doesn't really offer us much of a chance to trade these in class. So we could set up an out-of-class time to meet and work on mutually interesting technologies. We could also build TWIT into this process. A message concerning the sessions that Anne and I are thinking about will appear soon on your local email list. TWIT is, after all, a model of ongoing professional development that you might want to start at other institutions when you graduate. These sessions are also optional.

2) Chapter Discussion Leaders
Depending on how many people take the class, you'll probably get to lead the discussion on one chapter per assigned book
= 3 chapters.

Everyone will read the chapters but the discussion leaders should prepare extensive annotations on your selected chapters, including comments, questions, connections you made with the content and summaries of the rhetorical moves made by the author. (Overall, what was their purpose and what disciplinary or conceptual gaps were they filling? Where were they most successful? Which parts of the chapter should we pay most careful attention to?)

Before Monday of the week your chapter is due, send out (to lste-l@mtu.edu) a set of questions answered in the chapter that get at the most useful, important sections. The rest of the class will spend some time early in the discussion talking about where they would go to answer your questions. Be prepared to lead a discussion in class, elicit comments from other participants. IMPORTANT: Generate a short "active learning experience" for those attending. (That is, have the rest of us "do" something with the material--write, generate examples, relate it to other readings or experiences, ... ) Be pedagogically creative. If you would like to meet in
the CCLI for online activities, please meet with me to plan the activity.

With your permission, I'd like to publish the materials you create and any resulting artifacts from the activities you develop on the web on a Teaching With Technology (TWT) web site that I started creating at Clemson University last year. Currently that site is at this cumbersome address:

http://public.cle.clemson.edu/TTECH-100-001-0000/

3) **Book Reviews (of books, sites, or readings not already required)**

Choose one book (or set of readings or book-length web site) that has some bearing on your own interests and the class readings or projects. I'll bring in a class library from which you can choose. Prepare a substantial review of that piece (This could be an online or print document or an interactive “event.”); some web sites might also be appropriate for review. Be sure to include the strengths and weaknesses you noticed, and suggest how you might use, in your own work, the theory, observations, evidence, or practices developed in the reading. Let us know who might benefit from reading the piece. Prepare materials for a short presentation.

I'd also like to publish these materials on the Teaching With Technology (TWT) site at Clemson University:

http://public.cle.clemson.edu/TTECH-100-001-0000/

4) **Literacy Experiences and Practices**

This is really a set of assignments:

1. the initial autobiographies (TATA),
2. a "synthesis" report that takes into consideration your classmates' TATA experiences and a set of technology/design autobiographies from the University of Central Florida, and
3. interviews with two scholar/educators who have volunteered to be interviewed about "new" literacy practices and teaching with technology.

Why start the class with these assignments? I'd suggest that there is a considerable "gap" in the process of planning most technology-rich classes: the teacher of this type of class often knows very little about students' past experiences, attitudes, and abilities concerning technology and the topic of the class. Students know very little about each other, as well. This first set of assignments is meant to help "bring to discursive consciousness" (c.f., Giddens) your own technology and teaching histories/(her)stories, and then to stretch your understanding of technology-mediated literacy practices found in this class and in an upper-level undergraduate class on visual design at the University of
Central Florida. Finally, together we'll get a sampling of what other teacher/scholars think about the literacy practices of students and how that influences the way they teach with technology. Quite a few people from around the country have volunteered to be interviewed.

With your permissions, we might want to publish some version of all three assignments on the TWT web site.

**Technology Autobiographies and Teaching Autobiographies (TATA)**

These two pieces of writing are meant to be a fun and interesting to you and to your classmates, myself, and a class of upper-level professional communication students down in Orlando, Florida. I can hear you all saying, “What? What’s this about Florida communication students?” It’s a long story involving a good friend and RTC graduate, Dr. Karla Kitalong now teaching at the University of Central Florida. I’ll explain in class.

At any rate, the bottom line is that we (class members) need to know a bit about you for reasons that will become apparent. I hope, after my first talk, after reading “Technology Autobiographies and the Co-construction of English studies Literacy Classes” and after reading some of the early chapters from Anthony Giddens’ book.

**What to do:**

Please write a technological autobiography and a teaching autobiography (TATA). We’ll start these in class on Tuesday and then distribute them electronically (in .pdf format) by Friday of the second week. Everyone in the class will then have the weekend to read the HU5115 autobiographies and those from Karla’s class. It’s a lot of reading but by the third class, we all should know something about each other and our collective technology and teaching experiences/ambitions. These TATAs will NOT be graded other than to note that you handed them in. But you have to hand them in by class time Tues. Sept. 4. I’ll create (with your help if anyone wants to learn how to use PageMaker and then create .pdf files) a single booklet that can be distributed electronically. For your TATA files (in MS Word or WP .rtf format) use this naming convention: <lastname, first initial, TATA.rtf>. Mine would be <selfedTATA.rtf>. Put them in the Groups drive folder called TATA by Tues. Sept. 4. To complete the assignment, respond to a selection of the following prompts. You don’t have to answer them all:

**Technology Autobiography:**

Write an autobiography in which you recall your earliest experiences with technological devices or artifacts. (feel
free to compose a visual representation too/instead!) What were those early devices?
- What do you remember about using them?
- What were the popular gadgets in your house while growing up?
- Who do you identify as being a technologically "literate" person in your current or past life?
- Were there other people who influenced your attitudes toward technology (positively, negatively)?
- What's on your technological "wish list"?
- How do you expect to learn and keep up with new technologies in the future?
- Everyone can teach a technology lesson to someone. What can you teach? Who would be the ideal learner for this lesson?
- What technologies do you need to learn in the near future?

(Artistic representations of your relationship to technology are very welcome and usually very interesting. I would appreciate a short written statement explaining the work.)

Teaching Autobiography:
- What experiences in your past have gotten you excited about teaching?
- What informal or formal (work-related) teaching experiences have you had (educational, corporate, one-on-one)?
- What specific teaching expertise do you bring into this class: administrative, curriculum design, an understanding of student learning, technology and teaching . . . .)?
- What sort of classes or teaching experiences do you hope to have in the future? In other words, imagine yourself working for a K-12 or college-level institution or an organization that requires systematic instruction of some sort. (Are there any that don’t?) Describe the ideal kind of educational system in which you’d like to be involved or the kind of system you’d like to set up.

Write the TATA with your classmates’ interests in mind. What kind of examples would be most interesting to these folks? How much time do they have to read? What do they need to know about me and my abilities? In the next assignment, read your classmates’ TATAs for insight into their interests, attitudes, and abilities.

Synthesis Report
After reading the two sets of technology autobiographies, report on the types of technology-related literacy abilities, attitudes, and skills that you see across the two classes. What strikes you about these autobiographies? What can we learn as teachers from these documents? What patterns do you see across classes, across institutions?
Using our class’ TATAs (considering both teaching and technology), what would you like to learn? What would you be willing to teach? We’ll try to set up in-class and out-of-class workshop sessions where we teach and learn from each other.

**Practitioner Interview**

You will need to conduct interviews with two of the many practitioners from the Computers and Writing community who volunteered to be interviewed about the general topics of "teaching with technology" or the "technical literacy practices of 21st century students." The sets of autobiographies that we read and the synthesis reports that you write should help us formulate a common set of interview questions. But you will have plenty of leeway to ask whatever questions you like. To give you some context, here is the note I sent out to recruit these volunteers. ~50 people responded to this email request within one day. Obviously there are many folks interested in talking about these topics.

**RECRUITING MESSAGE**

Last spring I had my first-year composition students at Clemson interview off campus experts. We posted their interview reports on a web site with the following awkward URL:

http://public.cle.clemson.edu/TTECH-100-001-0000/

This term I'm teaching a graduate class called Literacy, Society, Technology, and Education. I'd like to continue collecting interview reports concerning the general topics of "teaching with technology" and the "technical literacy practices of 21st century students." If you are up for an online interview (or phone interview) please drop me some private mail and we'll contact you with more details early in the fall term.

In order to minimize your commitment, the interaction would be limited to the following:

1. We provide you with a list of questions ahead of time, so you can anticipate issues that might come up during the interview.

2. You meet online or by phone for an interview at a time convenient to you.

3. You reply briefly to some follow-up questions (if any) that students have after the interview.
4. At the end of the term, we provide you with a pre-published report in one of the following formats: html, pdf, or MS Word. Any comments or corrections will be made before posting the report to the site above.

I know the coming term will be quite busy for all of you, so I greatly appreciate any help.
Media Representations of Teaching and Technology

Periodically throughout the quarter we will have a show-and-tell of web sites, images, text/writings (including poetry), films, video clips, audio that say something about your relationship to teaching and/or technology. So begin looking around, and start collecting media representations that you can bring in. We’ll share these representations in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth weeks. In the last weeks, you’ll construct a media representation (face-to-face, in print, or online) that can go along with your TATA assignment. Don’t forget to collect all the works cited information as you collect. I can be talked out of it but I’ll assume unless you show me something different, that we’ll be using Ruszkiewicz and Walker’s COS adaptation of the MLA style guide for online citations. (c.f., Ruszkiewicz, John and Walker, Janice R., Bookmarks: A guide to research and writing. NY: Longman, 2000.

I’ll be glad to host a video night so we can share any films. I’m assuming that these media bits might be useful in your final projects or in future web pages that you develop, including your own personal, professional, or teaching pages. If we have a group of interested souls who would like to refine and “publish” these media reps. or the TATAs, I’m sure we can find venues for professional publishing or self-publishing individual or collections of these compositions.

Final Projects

Final projects have at least two functions in graduate classes. They give us a chance to synthesize the really amazing range of ideas, concepts, skills and attitudes we’ve come across during the term in a physical and conceptual format that is useful to you. Take this as an opportunity to play with themes, pedagogical approaches, technologies in an area of importance to you. Apply what you’ve gleaned from the course to an area of study that you find fascinating. The form of this project is open. It can be anything from a standard paper (no more than 12 pages double spaced, not including works cited), to a draft of a presentation for a conference, to a web site, to a live “event.” We’ll negotiate the form and substance of these projects by midterm and then renegotiate by week 12.
Grading

How can one grade when they are looking at such divergent final projects? We will be taking course I’ll call Peg Syverson 101 on assessment in order to come to some answer to that question. At the assessment link listed above, what she calls the Online Learning Record site, Dr. Syverson has compiled a very nice collection of materials that not only justifies why we might use such a system to evaluate all courses that involve writing or composing, but also materials that tell us how to go about it from any browser. You’ll be using this online system to track your own learning and improvements and at the same time exploring the value of this process for future classes. Dr. Syverson outlined her method below of introducing this atypical assessment system to students and teachers, and I’ll use the same process. She said,

EVERYONE is always a bit nervous using the LR [Learning Record system] for the first time . . . . One of the things I’ve done successfully in the past is to ask people to work in small groups or pairs to review the LRO main information site (http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson/olr) and exemplars. Each group is responsible for learning about one part of the LR (Part A, Observations, etc.) and then explaining that part to the rest of the class. I give them about 10-15 minutes to review what is at the site about that part and then about 5 minutes to present on it. That seems to get them engaged right away and asking the right kinds of questions. You can say frankly that you are trying this model out and would love to have their feedback on it. [Consider it said :)]

Of course we are intensely interested in how to make the LR better serve students and teachers, so any feedback you can provide will be most appreciated.

So please, in a notebook or somewhere else, keep notes on what you find productive and frustrating about the ORL system (short notes after each session). I’ll compile a report or set of recommendations to send to the UT folks at the end of the class.