UN1015: Composition
R27: Fisher 131, T/R 3:37-4:47pm
Michigan Technological University

Instructor Dan W. Lawrence
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Office: Walker 142
Office Hours: By appointment (don’t be shy)

Course Description: UN1015: Composition is a general education, university-wide class designed to inform students about effective communication practices in a world where interaction is increasingly multimodal.

Overview: The theme of this class is “Visions for a Human Future Amid Apocalypse.” Global catastrophe is on the public mind: in our art, science, media and consciousness. We are concerned about economic, environmental, agricultural, and political collapse. What is the role of writing, language, science, and technology at a time philosopher Slavoj Žižek calls the “zero-point”? We will use this theme to help direct our discussions and writing.

Goals: The goal of this class is to take a rhetorical approach to composing in the digital age. Students will learn how rhetoric can inform meaningful communication across the disciplines and to conduct ethical research. Students will reflect on profound personal, social, and global issues while we investigate the intersection of science and the humanities. This course is designed to help students meet the University Student Learning Goals of “Communication” and “Information Literacy”.

Required Materials: You will need to bring a dedicated notebook to class for writing prompts. We will be reading Carl Sagan’s Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space. This text will be used as a jumping-off point for discussion, research, and writing. Buy it from the bookstore, but I’ll have a backup PDF in case we need it.

Grading: These are the important due dates for the course that you will want to note. Due dates might change to reflect the actual versus expected pacing of the course. Just remember: I will not accept late work.

Attendance/Notebook Upkeep 20% Daily
Canvas Weekly Reflection 10% Weekly: Sundays by 10pm
Project One 20% Canvas: Th, Sep 26th, 10pm
Project Two 20% In-class: T/Th, Oct 29th/31st
Project Three 20% Canvas: Th, Nov 21st, 10pm
Portfolio w/Reflection Essay 10% Canvas: T, Dec 10th, 10pm

Attendance: Missing class will harm your grade. This is because there will be a substantial amount of in-class interaction, material, prompts and discussions. I strive to make every class meaningful and worthwhile. Notify me ahead of time if you cannot make it to class. I allow two of these excused absences in the course, because I understand that unexpected life issues happen. Unexcused absences, or absences beyond those two excused will result in ½ of a letter deduction in your final class grade, and subsequent absences will compile further deductions.

Devices: Keep laptops away during class. Phones and other noise-makers should be silenced or on a vibrate mode. Some tasteful ringtones may be excused, especially works by Iron Butterfly, Stravinsky, or Woody Guthrie. Please leave the room if you need to use a communication device. I advocate for the productive use of technology, so if we ever need figures, facts, or info from the Internet, I may understand the use of mobile devices in class. Why keep ourselves in the dark, right? Also, please use mobile devices to correct an apparent error, pull up a quote, or supplement the class conversation in any way.

Plagiarism: I consider plagiarism a serious ethical offense. I will not accept work that is not your own, or work that is improperly or insufficiently cited. It is a waste of my time and a waste of your mind. Do your own work.

University Policies: Familiarize yourself with these policies.
Academic Integrity: http://www.mtu.edu/dean/conduct/policy/academic-integrity/
Disability Information: http://www.mtu.edu/dean/disability/policies/
Undergraduate Policies: http://www.admin.mtu.edu/catalog/university/academic/#policies

This syllabus may be altered by the instructor at any time if warranted.