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. This is an online version of this course.

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: Students will complete three major assignments to practice research and writing as well as video production, while interacting with each other through meaningful online Canvas-based discussions. 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: 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. Available on Canvas as a PDF.

Grading: There are 100 possible points in this course. Three major projects are assigned, each worth 10 points. A weekly reading response discussion post, and a weekly peer response post are each worth 5 points, for a total of 60 points. A post introducing yourself is worth 5 points, and a post summarizing the research article you’ve selected for Project One is worth 5 points. See the class schedule for assignment descriptions, due dates, and more information.

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. Please note that I will be using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software. Plagiarized work will earn you zero points.

Note on Late Work: I do not accept late work. Please pay close attention to the assignment due dates for both the major assignments and the Canvas discussion posts. Points will not be awarded for late posts. Be mindful that Canvas posts are time-stamped, and are thus easily monitored for their submission date.

Note on Contacting Me: Please get in touch with any concerns or questions. I attempt to answer all e-mails within two business days. My e-mail is dwlawren@mtu.edu. However, please make sure to read the syllabus and schedule carefully before submitting a question to me. It’s quite possible the answer to your question is already here. Similarly, feel free to use the “Comments and Questions” thread in the Canvas discussion board to seek assistance from your peers.

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.