Composition: Crafting the Future
Michigan Tech • Summer 2014 (Online)

Overview
In this course we will read and write about how some writers have responded to the present as a way of imagining—and warning about—possible worlds to come. Guided by our reading and discussion, we will scrutinize our own present and construct our own visions of the future through close readings of the texts as well as of some aspects of contemporary culture—urban and environmental crises, economic imperialism, sexual and reproductive politics, the ethics of biotechnologies, issues of race and gender, the romance of technology, robotics and cyborg cultures, media saturation, language and representation—and the persistent questions they pose about what it means to be human at this start of a new millennium.

Goals

• Read, interpret, and develop the ability to critique complex arguments through online interactions
• Analyze, proofread, and revise written and visual elements of research drafts
• Learn strategies for analyzing audiences, conducting research and using critical reasoning in order to craft effective arguments
• Learn research skills including the ability to organize materials, use library resources, evaluate the validity of sources, and use logical reasoning to present research following standard MLA or APA format
• Understand expectations of academic integrity

Required Materials

• A computer for taking notes, downloading PDFs, writing papers, etc.
• A working MTU email account that you check regularly
• Access to Canvas for announcements, readings, assignments, discussions, quizzes, grades (You will be logging on to Canvas often)

Canvas Discussion Board (Posted Monday and responses due Sunday of each week by 11:59PM)

Every week, detailed instructions will be posted to the Announcements tab. Please download and read all of the assigned readings and supplemental audio/visual materials noted in the instructions. You will need these in order to participate in daily discussion board questions and complete weekly synthesis assignments.

DISCUSSION BOARD THREADS (Monday-Wed.): Every Monday, I will post
three discussion questions on Canvas so that students can address significant ideas from the assigned readings and videos. They are labeled for each day of the week (M-W), but you can complete them at any time throughout the week. I recommend completing the readings in order, however. These are informal interactions that will allow students to process and apply relevant terms and concepts with the purpose of building toward your “synthesis” discussion board assignments. These informal exercises will require you to interact regularly with your instructor and peers. You are expected to post at least twice on each discussion for a total for 6 pts./week. You will need to check the discussion board regularly to answer new questions and present new ideas. All weekly discussions will close at midnight on Sundays.

➢ PURPOSE:
   • To engage in academic discourse with peers
   • To answer/raise questions of significance
   • Demonstrate your understanding of course material
   • To challenge one another and engage in “spirited” debates.
   • To provide peer feedback

➢ Weekly Synthesis Assignment (6 total)

WEEKLY SYNTHESIS ASSIGNMENTS (Posted Monday and due Sunday by 11:59 p.m.):

Directions for the weekly synthesis assignments will be accessible via Canvas with directions for completing each exercise. These assignments are expected to be posted by the designated deadlines. These are special responses that will integrate material covered throughout the week on the discussion boards.

➢ PURPOSE:
   • To synthesize the reading assignments and audiovisual materials
   • To demonstrate the ability to think critically and apply relevant terms and concepts
   • Learn how to from logical arguments using supportive evidence
   • Convey ideas in using various formal, short essay formats (e.g. comparison/contrast, Toulmin’s Approach, pro/con, topical sequence, etc.)

➢ Research Project

A completed research project should demonstrate a student’s ability to analyze a target audience, effectively implement library resources, organize ideas, and support a well-reasoned argument by incorporating the rhetorical strategies covered throughout the semester. This project must be documented using MLA or APA format and includes a 1-2 page proposal (25 pts.), an annotated bibliography with scholarly sources (50 pts.), a 3-4 page full-sentence outline with proper citations (75 pts.), an 8-10 page documented paper (150 pts.), and a final multimodal project (100 pts.). All components of
the research project total 400 points. If you fail the research project, it is unlikely that you will pass the course.

➢ Quizzes

Periodic quizzes will be put up on Canvas that will go over the course material for the week. Quizzes most often cover readings and audio/visual materials that have been made available on Canvas (ex: PowerPoint/Prezi presentations; short videos).

Assignment Policies

• Late assignments are unacceptable!!! All major assignments must be submitted to Canvas by the designated deadlines.
• All work associated with your research project must be turned in on time! This includes a Works Cited/References page and the appropriate MLA or APA parenthetical citations. Failure to properly document research is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade.
• You are responsible for completing ALL of the readings BEFORE you participate in the discussions.

And finally....