

Spring 2021, University of South Carolina



→ *This course is fully online, hybrid:* This means that there is:

- a) weekly asynchronous work on Blackboard (approximately equivalent to 75 mins on average to complete) due Tuesday nights
- b) synchronous video class on Thursdays (75 mins) via Zoom, 1140am—1255pm
- c) routine outside class work/homework including readings, papers, projects

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm & by appointment (including before or after Thursday sessions)

** See the "Video Office Hours" tab on our Blackboard site for the zoom room link **

Office Location: Due to damage from a big leak over the summer, my Humanities Office Building office remains closed for spring semester, so we will arrange to meet on video (or safely in-person somewhere on campus)

General Course Description (from the Undergraduate Bulletin):

Emphasis on writing in digital environments, exploring critically and creatively what it means to compose in emerging genres and media. Students will create multimedia texts that may include digital video, audio podcasts, social networks, and/or blogs and wikis, among other digital modes of expression.

Course Description (Dr. Rule's Spring 2021 Section)

Digital Writing: Rhetoric and Digital Engagement — How do I engage audiences online? How do I create a compelling persona in the digital texts I make for social media, blogs, and other genres? What are the varied rules or conventions of writing in online spaces? How has the internet and digital communication changed writing, changed classical conceptions of the rhetorical situation, changed relationships between rhetors and audiences? This course will engage these questions, and more, as students develop a dynamic rhetorical framework through which to explore, analyze, and create ranging and changing digital genres (including analysis and composition in video, audio, image and social networking, as well as alphabetic language). Students will develop skills, knowledge, and creative rhetorical strategies for composing savvy and effective digital content and for critically encountering it, exploring how writers ethically earn attention and engagement in digital spaces.

Course Goals and Outcomes:

By the end of ENGL 468, students will be able to:

1. Engage skillfully in ranging research methods (primary, secondary, genre, ethnographic) and develop an inquiry stance toward conceptualizing 21st century digital composing, information, and communication
2. Identify and discuss how the Web, digital texts, and technologies continue to change and influence how we communicate
3. Perceive, critique, and enact rhetorical dimensions—including genres, audiences, exigence, purposes, constraints, and conventions—of digital communication
4. Design effective digital texts that make use of multiple communicative modes (including language, audio, images, video, etc.)

Course Structure

Due to the ongoing global pandemic, this course is an *online hybrid*: this means that half of our instructional time will be *asynchronous work* you complete on your own time and pace in Blackboard. This work is arranged in weekly Modules in Blackboard; modules will open Thursdays at 5pm and you'll have until the following Tuesdays 1159pm to finish). You should expect these module activities (not including readings or other "homework" time, see below) to take around 75 minutes *on average*. The other half of our instructional/classroom time will be *synchronous video meetings*, every Thursday at our assigned class time, 1140am—1255pm. *Attendance is required*. In addition, as with all your courses and just like in face-to-face learning, you should expect also "outside of class" work including writing tasks, papers, and larger projects.

- **Methods for Synchronous Video Sessions:** During our video class sessions, students can largely expect whole group discussion, small group activities, informal writing tasks, and short lectures with interactive elements.
- **Maybe Some In-Person Interaction:** *You can complete this course entirely remotely.* However, as possible, I would value meeting you in person, safely and socially distanced! That the Humanities Office Building is again closed this semester may make this more difficult but stay tuned for options to meet with me in person.

Required Texts

✓ *There are no required books to buy for this course*

- Our materials are available online, scanned selections of books, or Open Educational Resources—vetted, public domain, open license, and freely accessible texts written by professionals for educational use. I use OERs because I am concerned about costs of higher ed in general, because this course is about digital texts and OERs are made possible by the internet, and because I want you to continue to use, and find new, digital writing resources after you leave my class. Digital writing is changing all the time!

COURSE POLICIES

Classroom Expectations

Professionalism is expected at all times. Because the university classroom, video ones included, is meant to foster the free exchange of ideas, we must show respect for one another in all circumstances. We will show respect for one another by exhibiting patience, courtesy, kindness, curiosity, and intellectual engagement with one another. For online video class meetings and interaction in digital spaces:

- Be an active participant—your writing, thinking, speaking, analytical activity, creativity, and curiosity is at the core of this course.
- Avoid distracting yourselves and others. While we're all working from home and other spaces, please remember that your video participation is basically public. Come to online sessions just as you would to live sessions (do not multitask; do not zone out; if you have to step away, do so briefly and make sure that your audio/video is muted; do not eat a big meal; do not broadcast to us from under the covers, do not attempt to attend the session while at your job, etc. Use your common sense!).
- **In general, mute your mic when you are not speaking;** this will help everyone hear.

- I **encourage** you to have your video on at all times, for most every session, most of the time. You can, if you need to, leave video off for part or a whole session. I may ask you to turn on your vid at certain times; I will always include activities to measure your participation/attendance in the video sessions (that is, if needed, you CAN do a whole session with no video).
- Please be on time as habitual tardiness is disruptive, especially in this online format (repeated tardies can be as absences if you might miss an active participation activity).
 - See Attendance section below for more details on how your participation in these sessions will be measured.
- Understand that this all remains still a learning curve. We're in unprecedented times. We'll work together to make this a rich and rewarding learning experience. I'm here to help and teach you; we're here to learn together and from one another.

Technical Support

If you have problems with your computer, technology, IT-related questions, support, including Blackboard, contact the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) Service Desk at (803) 777-1800 or submit an online request through the Self-Service Portal (<https://scprod.service-now.com/sp>) or visit the Carolina Tech Zone (https://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/university_technology_services/support/ctz.php). The Service Desk is open Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM (Eastern Daylight Time).

If you are located in the Columbia, SC area, the Thomas Cooper Library at UofSC has laptop computers for you to check out (for 7 days at a time) in case you encounter computer issues/problems. If you are not located in the Columbia, SC area, most regional campuses and public libraries have computers for public use (availability may be limited during Spring 2021).

Attendance

Attendance in this course is important and mandatory and it's part of your grade. Attendance will be earned in every Thursday video session (attendance is *not* taken for asynchronous work). **Active participation** is what counts for attendance (in other words, you cannot just *join* the session, you have to participate). Here are the details:

- **Active participation will be based on at least one activity we'll do each session;** completing it (or them) will count for your attendance. Some examples of attendance activities might include writing a comment in Chat, submitting writing to a Padlet, writing a Breakout group recap email to Dr. Rule, an exit slip etc. There may be more than one of these activities in any session (e.g. Write a comment for "silent disco discussion" *and* answer a question for an exit slip at the end of session) and they will happen at different times during sessions (middle, end-only, etc.).
- Based on USC's "10 Percent Rule," **you can accrue 1.5 allotted absences or "free" absences with no penalty, which I'm rounding up to 2.** So, for up to two misses, you get "free" points. After two misses, you will earn a zero for each miss (see below).
- *Illnesses, travel, work, conflicting appointments or classes do not constitute "excused" absences—those types of misses count toward your allotted two.* There are some exceptions to this general rule . . .
 - In the case of a university-approved "excused absence" including observation of a religious holiday, university-approved sporting or other event: you *can* make up any missed sessions and attendance activities and thereby avoid a recorded absence *if* you present proper and prior notification and/or documentation

- In the case of significant illness or other issues that may keep you from attending class virtually (or meeting deadlines) for a longer period of time: contact me immediately to make arrangements.
 - DON'T DELAY in contacting me if you become significantly ill or are facing other challenges affecting your performance in the course.
- In general, the university has moved away from an attendance policy that relies on deductions. Too, since this is a discussion-based course, participation is central. So "Active Participation Activities" is a component of your final grade, 50 points total.
- It is not necessary, but it's nice, to notify me when you are going to miss a video session. It is required to contact me in advance if you are going to have an excused absence. If you miss, you can email me to hear about the session and possibly get a recording. I also *may* share some of the Powerpoint slides on Blackboard.

Late Work Policies

Keeping up with the work in this course is imperative. My advice is to meet all deadlines and attend our video sessions regularly. But in the case that you cannot or did not meet a deadline, here is what to do:

- **If you need more time for a larger assignment** (e.g., an SW; SM Ethnography, etc.): Write me *in advance* to request an extension (generally, I'll be good with 24 or 48 hours more, but I'll be open to whatever you might need).
- **If you miss a due date for a larger assignment but never contacted me:** I will consider accepting the work late with a late penalty. Up to 48 hours late will earn a 25% penalty; 72 hours, 50%; 96 hours, 75% penalty.
 - In general, if work is missing for more than 5 days after its due date (with no arrangements), it's a zero and there are no make-ups. More than one missed deadline like this, and I may request that you drop the course
- **I won't accept late Weekly Module Activities (including Reading Quizzes)** – please prioritize those Tuesday night deadlines. You can't earn credit if you're late. I'll consider extensions or make-ups *only in significantly challenging circumstances or with university-approved absences* (if those present, write me!)

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

In accordance with USC's Honor Code, it is your responsibility to avoid dishonesty and deceit in your work in this course (and all your courses). As (digital) writing is our focus, it is especially your responsibility to avoid plagiarism. Violations of the University's Honor Code include, but are not limited to, presenting another's ideas as your own, improperly citing sources, using another's work as your own, allowing someone to write an assignment or part of an assignment for you, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. Any instances of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment, as well as additional disciplinary measures including referring you to the Office of Academic Integrity. For more information, please see the Honor Code from the Office of Academic Integrity: <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf>

Accessibility

The University of South Carolina provides services to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should: 1) Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center in Close-Hipp 102 (803-777-6142). Those students with arrangements should

feel free to approach me with how I can best assist them. All students, regardless of institutional status, are invited to let me know how I can better facilitate your academic and physical access to our course.

University Library Resources

University Libraries Resources (sc.edu/libraries)

- University Libraries has access to books, articles, subject specific resources, citation help, and more. If you are not sure where to start, please Ask a Librarian! Assistance is available at sc.edu/libraries/ask.
- Remember that if you use anything that is not your own writing or media (quotes from books, articles, interviews, websites, movies – everything) you should cite the source (in MLA format, or another style you know).

Counseling Services

The University offers counseling and crisis services as well as outreach services, self-help, and frequently asked questions: https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_health_services/medical-services/counseling-and-psychiatry/index.php

Writing Center (<http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/write/university-writing-center>)

This course has many kinds of writing assignments. The University Writing Center (Byrnes 703) is an important resource you should use! It's open to help any UofSC student needing assistance with a writing project at any stage of development.

Conferences

You *may* have one required conference near the end of the term. I encourage you also to visit my office hours at any time in the semester to discuss your progress. Depending on the circumstances, we can meet online or face-to-face (safely and socially distanced on campus). In addition to in-person meetings, I am always willing to answer questions/respond to concerns via email—I generally answer emails 10am to 7pm M-F and in the mornings on weekends.

Course Revisions/Changes

I've planned out our term but may need to adjust dates for daily work in the course, including changes to readings, homework, etc. to better suit our needs. Major assignments and percentages are not generally subject to change; due dates may change but I'll try to make sure you will only ever get more time. **Please always be sure you are referencing the most recent version of the course schedule.**

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

○ Active Participation – <i>activities in weekly video sessions</i>	10%	50 pts.
○ Reading Quizzes	10%	50 pts.
○ Weekly Module Activities	25%	125 pts.
○ Short Writings (5)— <i>varied genres</i> includes 3 blog posts + Digital Genre Research Report + peer blog analysis	10%	50 pts.
○ Blog Project – <i>Design Development Rationale</i> (due in 2 parts)	15%	75 pts.
○ Social Media “Ethnography”	10%	50 pts.
○ FINAL PORTFOLIO – <i>contract-graded</i>	20%	100 pts.
TOTAL:	100%	500 pts.

*** Full assignment descriptions/instructions are available on Blackboard, under the "Assignment Details" tab. I'll also place each in the appropriate Modules when it's time to tackle them.

FINAL COURSE GRADES

Points/assignments are not weighted. I'll calculate your final grade simply by adding your total earned points and dividing by the total possible (500) to determine your final course percentage.

A=90-100 B+=85-89.99 B=80-84.99 C+=75-79.99 C=70-74.99 D+=65-69.99 D=60-64.99 F=59.9 and below

If you have questions about your grades, please feel free to discuss with me at any point during the term. I'll record most of your grades in My Grades in Blackboard, so you can monitor your progress.

Details about the Course Schedule

*The Course Schedule is a separate document – these are details about how the schedule works in general
SEE THE COURSE SCHEDULE FOR MORE!*

- The Course Schedule lists Weekly Module activities *in general*, titles of readings, as well as Assignment due dates. Use it to help and guide your planning.
 - Each **Module** folder in Blackboard is where you'll find all the details you need to complete Weekly Activities, stacked in order that you should do them.
- All asynchronous **Weekly Module Activities, including Reading Quizzes** are organized in separate Module folders in Bb (in the tab "Weekly Modules") and should be completed **every Tuesday evening by 1159pm**
- **Assignments** -- like SWs, blog stage 1, etc.-- are generally due on **Thursdays, by our synchronous video class time (1140am), often with the option instead to submit by 1159pm that day**