

UN1001: Perspectives on Inquiry

What is Identity?: Exploring Techno-logic selves

FALL 2008

MWF, 12:05-12:55

Bldg.20 (R. L. Smith Mechanical Engineering) Rm.303

Course website: <http://un1001.wordpress.com/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Wendy K. Z. Anderson

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Phone: 487.3240

Email: wkzander@mtu.edu (*this is the best way to reach me*)

Office Hours: MWF 10-11am or by appt.

I am open to discussing matters pertaining to the course, readings, and your writing; please feel free to contact me via email or phone as well as in person. I hope you will also take advantage of my office hours and email.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Texts and Materials:

1. 1 gig Flashdrive.
2. Course Readings and Syllabus on Blackboard and Course Blog.
3. Slack, Jennifer Daryl & Wise, J. Macgregor. Culture + technology: A primer. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.
4. Stephenson, Neal. The diamond age or, a young lady's illustrated primer. New York: Bantam Spectra, 1995.

Course Calendar: Calendar is tentative and subject to change. Please check online calendar for latest changes. Any hard copy may be obsolete, so be sure to bring it with you to each class to record all changes. Assignments are listed on Blackboard's calendar with hard submission times enforced by Blackboard.

Description: We will examine how the self is constructed using technological prostheses, such as cell phones and computers, and within technologically mediated environments, such as online Web 2.0 networked spaces like facebook, flickr, blogs, and online and offline gaming environments. We will address the following questions: First, how does technology shape identity? What is the relationship of prosthetic technology to identity? How does a technology's history and cultural context influence its future uses and developments? Second, how do identity politics shape emerging technologies? What is our responsibility for our use and development of new media technologies?

Goals:

- to critically consider the mediated environments we participate in.
- to creatively develop effective oral, written and visual communication.
- to use reasoning and evidence to support arguments.
- to develop thoughtful consideration of others' ideas and positions.
- to develop effective learning strategies and time management.
- to further MTU's mission to promote diversity, creativity, leadership, and teamwork.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING

Attendance: Attendance is welcomed, expected, and mandatory. To best utilize our time, come to class on time. You are considered absent if 1) you are more than 15 minutes late and/or 2) you are unprepared for class. Similar to a job, I expect that if you cannot make class that you will contact me ahead of time and connect with a peer to get up to speed on what was covered in class.

There will be regular in-class work to record your attendance and preparation for class. You may miss three sessions without penalty. For every class after the first three, I will lower your final grade by fifty points. Seven absences constitute automatic failure of the course.

Class participation: In order to accomplish the course goals, you must come to each class prepared. Participation is one of the most important components to the success of the course. You are expected to come to class on time, reading carefully and critically, bringing printed out readings to class, posting on the blog before class, and being prepared to engage with the ideas and your class. Class investigations are participatory assignments that include critical and active discussions as well as in-class collaborative work.

In order to preserve an open environment, our classroom is one of mutual respect between everyone in the room. Any behavior that creates a hostile classroom environment will not be tolerated and the party(ies) involved will be asked to leave the class. Since each classroom is made up of individuals, each student's questions or concerns will be responded to in an individual manner rather than with a blanket response.

Assignment Expectations: All readings, blog comments, and papers are to be completed prior to class and solely by the student (unless other instructed as collaborative work). You are expected to submit assignments on Blackboard and/or the course blog by the deadlines listed. All typed work is due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. In order to be considered for a grade, all assignments are to be complete and must conform to MLA, APA, or Chicago style documentation and format (word-processed, Times New Roman, 12 point legible font, double-spacing, with one inch margins). Late assignments will only be accepted with the specific, prior agreement of the instructor. No exceptions.

In terms of minor assignment, you are expected to comment twice a week on blog posts over the semester in response to the readings and class discussion. In terms of major assignments, you will be required to complete an Identity paper (100 points), a Favorite Technology paper (100 points), an Avatar Portfolio Presentation and Paper (100 points), and a Game Play with Mediated Identity paper (100 points) with peer critiques for each assignment. Please keep a flashdrive with all your work for the course for your Portfolio. You will submit this at the end of the semester with all major work (revisions) and a reflection paper. Be sure you keep your copies of all work with my original comments on them.

I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes or assignment at anytime to test the preparedness of the class as a whole. These minor exercises will make up the remaining 50 points of the class total.

Assignment	Number	Point Allocation	Total points per category
Blog Posts	2-3 per week		100
Identity	1	100	100
Favorite Technology	1	100	100
Avatar Portfolio	1	100	100
Game Play	1	100	100
Reflection paper	1	100	100
Peer Critique	4	25	100
Revised Portfolio: 3 papers	1	100	200
Library Visit	1	50	50
Miscellaneous Points			50
Course Total:			1000 points

Grade Scale: Your points will be translated into percentages; your final grade will be calculated according to the following percentage scale:

1000-900	A
899-800	B
799-700	C
699-600	D
599-below	F

Note about Incompletes: The mark of 'I' is inappropriate if, in the instructor's judgment, it will be necessary for the student regularly to attend subsequent sessions of the class. I will give an Incomplete only in cases of extreme emergency.

After reviewing the grade breakdown above, students should choose an overall grade goal that illustrates the effort he or she plans to put into all his or her assignments. I am an instructor with high expectations. If you intend to earn an "A" in this class, expect to work hard. I encourage you to ask questions about each assignment and bring in drafts of papers to ensure you meet expectations.

If you wish to discuss a grade on any assignment or presentation, you must wait 24 hours after I return the critique AND come to my office to discuss your concern. This time will allow us to process any relevant information and prepare for our discussion. If you approach me in class with a concern I will refer you to my office hour and appointment times. Also, according to the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) any student's grade will not be discussed with anyone other than the individual student (including family members).

UNIVERSITY POLICY

Discrimination: Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or the Affirmative Action Office, at 487-3310

Respect: Insults, slurs, or attacks of any kind will not be allowed in my class. Any student who engages in this type of behavior in the classroom will be permanently removed from the class. In other words, forced to drop the course, in addition to other possible punishment given by Michigan Technological University (See the Michigan Technological University Community Code of Conduct (Available at <http://www.sa.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/code/conduct9.html>). In order to have an effective teaching and learning environment we must practice both respect and tolerance, without question.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating: All written work submitted for a grade in this course must be the product of your own composition. Ideas generated due to reading and group discussion may provide the inspiration for your work, but should not be the sole ideas represented. With collaborative projects, of course, ideas should be representative of the group's work.

Plagiarism: The act of presenting as your own work another individual's ideas, words, data, or research material is plagiarism. The concept applies equally to written, spoken, or electronic texts, published or unpublished. All ideas and quotations that you borrow from any source must be acknowledged: at a minimum, you should give the name of your author, the title of the text cited, and the page number(s) of the citation. The only exceptions to this requirement would involve what is familiar and commonly held (e.g. the fact that the earth is round). You should know that penalties for plagiarism are severe and can entail suspension from the University. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the University policy on Cheating and Plagiarism set forth in Michigan Technological University at http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html.

RESOURCES

The Writing Center: The MTU Writing Center (Walker Arts & Humanities Room 107) is a superb resource. The staff is willing to help no matter what stage you're at in your paper, from brainstorming to putting on the final touches. Since writing a good paper entails having other people looking at it and giving you feedback, visits to the Writing Center are highly recommended. See <http://www.hu.mtu.edu/wc/> for more information.

Library Website: <http://www.lib.mtu.edu/>

Online Documentation Websites: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>