Gender, Sexuality, and New Media

Class Blog for WRTG 3020-093, 096, 588 – Spring 2014

SYLLABUS

The Syllabus applies to all three sections of WRTG 3020 taught by Amy Goodloe for Spring 2014.

**HYBRID SECTIONS:** These sections meet once per week on campus and complete all other work online. Both classes meet on Tuesdays in HUMN 1B70. Section 093 meets from 5:00-6:15 and section 096 meets from 6:30-7:45.

**CONTINUING ED SECTION:** The online section has one “virtual class” meeting each week and completes all other work online. The “virtual class” activities take place from Wednesday to Friday.

The menu below shows each section of the Syllabus in alphabetical order. Follow the links to read each section, and return to them several times throughout the semester, when some items will become more immediately relevant to you.

Pay close attention to the Minimum Requirements for Passing the Class, which you’ll find on the Class Policies page.

SYLLABUS MENU:

- Course Structure
- Description
- Learning Goals
- Learning Portfolios
- Policies
- Writing Spaces & Tools
Gender, Sexuality, and New Media

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DESCRIPTION

Every upper-division writing and rhetoric class (WRTG 3020) focuses on a topic of particular interest to the instructor of that class, and the topic provides the basis for all reading, critical thinking, and writing activities.

The topic for your section of the class is: the Rhetoric of Gender, Sexuality, and New Media in American Culture. I designed this topic about eight years ago, as a way to combine my two favorite fields: gender & sexuality studies and new media storytelling.

SHORT VERSION

In this class, you'll learn to communicate persuasive messages about gender and sexuality through a variety of new media genres, ranging from those based in alphabetic text to those delivered in video format.

FULL DESCRIPTION

I'll help you explore our topic in depth through weekly activities, lecture notes, and videos, but you'll get a taste by reading the following definitions of the key phrases in our course title.

GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Here are a few of the questions we'll consider as we explore the rhetoric of gender and sexuality:

- what do we believe to be true about gender and sexual orientation?
- where did we get those ideas?
- what other ideas are out there (theories, articles, other stories)?
- how do we evaluate which ideas seem valid?
- how might we persuade others to reconsider their ideas about GS?

By "gender and sexuality" I’m referring to the subset of Women & Gender Studies that looks specifically at the relationship between gender norms and sexual orientation.

For example, we might explore why it is that men with feminine characteristics are often assumed to be gay, because that's a clear case of a connection between gender and sexual orientation. But we will not explore issues that have more to do with gender than with sexual orientation, or vice versa. Those are excellent issues to explore, and I recommend that you take a WGST or LGBT class to explore them further.

NEW MEDIA

Here are a few of the questions we'll consider as we experiment with writing through new media:

- how has the nature of writing changed in your lifetime, and how might it change in your future?
- which skills from "writing for the page" apply to "writing for the screen" — and which don't?
what new forms of communication are possible through the combination of words, images, sounds, and video?
how do we decide which new media messages are trustworthy?

By "new media" I'm referring to those forms of multimedia communication that are now available to anyone with a computer and internet access.

Not that long ago, the only way to produce and distribute multimedia messages on a broad scale was to go through the news or entertainment industries, which are now thought of as "old media." But we no longer rely on those "gate keepers," now that anyone can remix video, create a podcast, start an internet meme, or create a blog, and potentially reach hundreds if not thousands of viewers just by spreading the word on social media.

RHETORIC

This section explains what I mean by "rhetoric" in our course title.

Language and Persuasion
If rhetoric is the study of language and persuasion, then the "rhetoric of gender and sexuality" is the study of how language persuades us to think and feel about issues like gender identity and sexual orientation. "Language" comes in many forms: print texts, web texts, speech, music, images, video, and even body language. Every day we encounter messages about gender and sexuality conveyed through these different forms of language, and we also use these languages to compose our own messages, including our own gender and sexual identities.

As students of the rhetoric of gender and sexuality, we will start to pay closer attention to how these languages work, including what kind of impact they have on us as well as how we can use them most effectively to convey our own messages. We'll also explore what kinds of knowledge these languages produce as well as what kinds of knowledge they deny.

Constructing Realities
For example, consider the "knowledge" produced by the fact that English has only two pronouns to refer to a person in the singular: he or she. Whose realities and experiences are made visible by that particular use of language? Whose realities and experiences are rendered invisible, even "unknowable"?

Then consider how that very problem is reproduced in a variety of "languages," ranging from bathroom signs to sections in the clothing store to the images available to us in popular media. Even the forms we have to fill out on a regular basis give us only two options for identifying our gender: man or woman.

Rhetorical Framing
That way of framing reality is rhetorical, meaning that it puts forward a claim that's meant to persuade audiences, even if that's not the conscious intent of the author. It persuades us to see gender as a binary system comprised of only two polar opposites, as though this is the "natural" and "normal" way to see gender, as though no other options are even possible.

In other words, these uses of language produce a certain kind of knowledge. But it's only one kind of knowledge, and our job as critical thinkers and as students of rhetoric to explore and compose other kinds of knowledge.

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PART 1

- **Span:** First half of semester
- **Grade weight:** 40%

### PART 1: RHETORIC OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading &amp; Writing Topics</th>
<th>Learning Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal experience with gender norms</td>
<td>Private journal entries from each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender studies terminology and theories</td>
<td>Blog posts from each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical analysis of claims about gender and sexuality</td>
<td>Comments on blog and Google+ posts from each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genres of writing about gender: explanation, viewpoint, narrative</td>
<td>Learning reflections and rhetorical analyses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordances and constraints of digital writing spaces</td>
<td>Short Projects: Experiments in genre</td>
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### CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT #</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>Exploring the Rhetoric of G&amp;S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Learning Gender Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Comparing Genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Genres and Gender Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Crushes and Categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>Analyzing Hetero-Norms</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PART 2

- **Span:** Second half of semester
- **Grade weight:** 60%

### PART 2: WRITING IN NEW MEDIA GENRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading &amp; Writing Topics</th>
<th>Learning Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Pattern of Weekly Assignments

Each week, you'll do one main reading and journaling assignment, one blog post, and one discussion or commenting activity, following the pattern shown below. You'll also engage in class activities one per week, either in the classroom on campus or in a virtual classroom.

#### Weekly Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Meetings</th>
<th>Hybrid Sections</th>
<th>CONTED Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HUMN 1B70</td>
<td>Virtual Classroom (Google Group)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuesdays from 5:00-8:15 or 8:30-7:45</td>
<td>From noon on Wednesdays to midnight on Sundays</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CALENDAR</th>
<th>UNIT #</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 3/10 - Sunday 3/16</td>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>Rhetorical Situations &amp; New Media Genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 3/17 - Sunday 3/31</td>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>New Media Genres: Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4/1 - Sunday 4/6</td>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Draft Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4/7 - Sunday 4/13</td>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>Draft Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4/14 - Sunday 4/20</td>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td>Draft Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4/21 - Sunday 4/27</td>
<td>Unit 11</td>
<td>Revision Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 4/28 - Sunday 5/4</td>
<td>Unit 12</td>
<td>Final Projects Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Syllabus Menu:

- Course Structure
- Description
Writing Spaces & Tools

Gender, Sexuality, and New Media

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WRITING SPACES & TOOLS

DIGITAL WRITING SPACES

As part of our exploration of new media genres for writing and discussion, we’ll use several types of digital writing spaces. You’ll post different parts of your weekly assignments in each of these spaces, depending on which type of space best suits the purpose of the assignment.

The private journal is visible only to you. All other spaces are shared by students across all sections.

PRIVATE JOURNAL: A private space to record your responses to readings and brainstorming activities and to develop ideas for writing projects. (See below for tips on choosing a journal.)

CLASS BLOG: Blog space to publish semi-formal writing for discussion and as well as final versions of each project.

GOOGLE+ COMMUNITY: Social network space to share and discuss links to web pages and digital media as well as relevant observations from everyday life.

GOOGLE DRIVE: File sharing space to upload drafts in any format (document, PDF, image, audio, video) and provide peer review comments.

GOOGLE GROUP: Forum space to contribute to discussions in the weekly “Virtual Class” activity for Continuing Ed students.

DIGITAL WRITING TOOLS

Software

You’ll need access to software that allows you to edit audio, images, and video. You may find adequate audio and image editing apps for mobile devices, but you’ll need access to a computer for video editing, given the amount of processor power that requires.

At a minimum, you should have access to the free video editing software that comes on all Macs and PCs or the ability to use a web-based video editor. You can use the labs on campus if you don’t have a suitable computer of your own.

Hardware

Ideally you should have access to a device that lets you easily capture words (typing) as well as audio, images, and video. A smartphone would be perfect, but an iPad or laptop would also do, provided its camera and internal mic work.

I also strongly recommend that you invest in a portable hard drive. At a minimum, you should back up any work that exists only on your main computer, but you’ll also find a portable drive handy if you decide to use the lab computers on campus for video editing.

Video cameras, tripods, and external mics are very handy to have, but not required. You may be able to check these out from ATLAS.

CHOOING A PRIVATE JOURNAL

Your primary learning tool for this course will be a private journal you use for the weekly reading and journal writing assignment as well as a variety of other purposes, including brainstorming ideas for projects.
By "private" I mean that the journal is something you keep to yourself and do not share with your classmates. But you'll need to complete each week's reading and journaling assignment before you can do any "public" work in the class (like blog posts or discussion activities).

You'll also need to show me your private journal entries, but only when we meet to review all your learning components. I won't need access to your journal beyond our meeting.

Journal Format

Your journal may take any format you choose, but your best bet will probably be a combination of a physical and digital journal.

**Physical journals** (like notebooks) are nice for those who like to write and sketch by hand, as well as for those who don't tend to carry smartphones or laptops. I recommend a fairly small notebook personal notebook, rather than a spiral class notebook, so that you can more easily carry it with you wherever you go.

**Digital journals** lack the convenience of writing and drawing by hand, but they make it much easier to save URLs and to experiment with new media. If you use a smartphone, you'll also always have access to the journal and can easily record words as well as images and video.

Options for web-based journals include a private folder on Google Drive, a private Tumblr or Blogger, or my favorite tool of all time: Evernote (available on web, Mac, PC, iOS, and Android).

**Evernote bonus:** If you have an iPad, you can use the Penultimate app for handwriting and drawing and your notes will sync with your regular Evernote notebooks.

Options for mobile device journals include any web-based journal as well as a wide variety of note taking apps for iOS and Android.

Journal Considerations

As you consider how to manage your journal, keep these considerations in mind. Your journal must provide you with:

- an easy way to record your thoughts and observations wherever you are (through words at a minimum, but possibly also through audio, photos, or video)
- an easy way to collect and organize all of your journal activities so that you can show them to me in our portfolio meeting (we'll go over them together but I won't take them home with me)

If you're prone to losing things or to technology meltdowns, then you'll also want to find an easy way to back up the journal so that your brilliant insights aren't lost forever!

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LEARNING PORTFOLIOS

We’ll meet in person twice during the semester to go over a “portfolio” of your learning components up to that point, which will help me evaluate what you’ve learned. The portfolio will include:

- your private journal entries
- your blog posts
- your comments and discussions on the blog and our G+ community
- your self-assessment for the unit
- final versions of writing projects for the unit

When we meet, you’ll show me your private journal entries so that I can mark them off on a checklist. We’ll also go over your informal and formal writing assignments and discuss your overall engagement in the learning process.

By meeting in person, I’ll be able to develop a fuller picture of your progress towards meeting the course learning goals, which will help both of us recognize what to focus on in the next unit.

NOT A NUMBERS GAME

I don’t use a point system to calculate grades for a variety of reasons, but the most relevant is it turns the process of doing assignments into a “numbers game,” where racking up points becomes more important than genuine learning. In other words, point systems tend to emphasize only the more tangible aspects of assignments (such as whether they were posted on time), and not the less tangible aspects (such as whether or not they show that the student learned anything).

That’s not to say you don’t need to worry about posting your work on time in my class. You do, but only because each weekly assignment feeds into the next one, so you need to finish them in a certain order, as shown on the Weekly Schedule chart. But it would be better for you to be a bit late on an assignment that shows substantial learning than for you to post a skimpy assignment on time.

MEETING MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS

The minimum expectation for any assignment is that you’ll complete it on time and in full. Assignments that specify a quantity (such as the number of posts to comment on) will indicate the quantity that counts as the minimum. Anything you contribute above that number counts as a “grade booster.”

As you can see from the chart below, meeting the minimum expectations is one path towards earning a B. But it’s also possible to earn a higher grade even if you didn’t always meet the minimum expectations, just as it’s also possible to earn a lower grade even if you did. It depends on other factors relevant to your overall learning process as well as on how much additional work you do that counts as a “grade booster.”

GRADE CHART FOR LEARNING COMPONENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE RANGE: B+, A-, or A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surpasses the minimum expectations in one or more ways:</td>
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</table>
- Private journal activities show STRONG engagement in the process of learning through private writing
- Class blog posts and comments demonstrate ABOVE-AVERAGE engagement in the process of learning through dialogue with others
- Journal and blog contributions FREQUENTLY exceed the minimum amount or meet other criteria to count as “grade boosters”
- Journal and blog contributions were posted on time and in full.

GRADE RANGE: B
Meets the minimum expectations, defined as:
- Private journal activities show GOOD engagement in the process of learning through private writing
- Class blog posts and comments demonstrate AVERAGE engagement in the process of learning through dialogue with others
- Journal and blog contributions may OCCASIONALLY exceed the minimum amount or meet other criteria to count as “grade boosters”
- Most journal and blog contributions were posted on time and in full.

GRADE RANGE: B- or lower
Falls below the minimum expectations in one or more ways.
LEARNING GOALS

Here’s the short version of our learning goals:

- to deepen your understanding of your own gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation
- to fine tune your “credibility meter”
- to gain experience writing/composing messages in new media genres
- to persuade specific audiences to rethink their own ideas about gender and sexuality, using new media formats

For the longer version, follow the links to Rhetorical Awareness, Composing Processes, and Digital Literacies on the Learning Goals page of my DigitalWriting101.net help site.

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POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: All of the Recommended Syllabus Statements for CU faculty apply to our class, as do those items on the CU Policies page that apply to students.

Below you’ll find details on the policies that apply to all of my Spring 2014 classes.

Read the policies carefully and let me know if you have any questions. All students are expected to abide by the class policies in a syllabus, regardless of whether to not the student actually read the policy.

Pay special attention to the last section on this page: MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO PASS

ON TIME & IN FULL

Your weekly assignments are due in the order shown on the Weekly Schedule near the bottom of the Course Structure page.

These assignments count as “on time” as long as they meet these criteria:

- Private Journal Entries: the time and date label shows that they were finished before you published a blog post for that week
- Blog Posts: the post was published before your class meeting for that week
- Comments and Discussions: they were posted by midnight on Sunday of that week

These assignments will count as “in full” if they follow the instructions and reflect an average or greater level of engagement.

EXTENSIONS

The most important deadline each week is the blog post, given that you have to do the main assignment first, before you can write your blog post, and the rest of the week’s activities will relate back to that. All blog posts are required, but if a minor emergency situation comes up that prevents you from publishing your blog post on time, please email me to request an extension.

If you occasionally need a little extra time to finish the Comments and Discussions by the end of the week, that’s fine. You don’t need to request an extension in those cases.

ATTENDANCE

Hybrid Sections

The Hybrid sections will participate in a classroom-based activity only 14 times throughout the semester, so it’s important that you attend (which is defined as arriving on time and staying until the class is dismissed).

However, I know that sometimes things come up that are outside your control, so if you end up needing to miss one or two classes, that should
be fine. But if you miss three or more classes, you risk not meeting the minimum criteria for passing the class, as described below.

If you do miss a class, you may let me know as a courtesy, but that does not mean the absence will be "excused." Also note that you’re still responsible for what you missed in class, including content I went over and any activities we engaged in. Contact me for details on how to make up what you missed.

Conted Section

The online section will participate in a "virtual class" activity only 12 times throughout the semester, so it's important to complete these when they become available. These activities serve as a kind of "attendance," and you’ll meet the criteria for "attending" that week if you complete the activity by midnight on Sundays.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASS BEHAVIOR**

**Digital Learning Spaces**

- Post activities well before the final deadline so that you can return and participate frequently
- Show respect for your audience’s beliefs and engage in civil conversation, not heated disagreements
- Show respect for your audience’s time by writing clearly and concisely, without straying too far off topic
- Demonstrate through your comments that you’ve paid careful and thoughtful attention to what others have to say

**Physical Classroom**

**Minimize Distractions**

- If you must arrive late, be as quiet as possible
- If you must leave early, sit near the door so you can slip out quietly. Also let me know at the start of class. So that other students know you’re not just skipping out on the class, I’ll typically acknowledge you when you leave
- Take care of getting drinks, going to the bathroom, making phone calls, checking email, and so on BEFORE class starts, to avoid disrupting our activities
- Turn off your cell phone ringer (expecting urgent call, let me know and step outside to answer)

**Stay Focused**

- **Keep laptops and other digital devices CLOSED** unless we need to use them
- Resist the temptation to check your new messages in class (email, text, voice mail, FB, etc.)
- Only open applications and web sites relevant to our current class activities
- Listen actively and thoughtfully when others are speaking

**Be Prepared**

- Do all reading and writing activities by the deadline
- Prepare presentations, group discussion guides, and drafts for class workshops before class begins
- I may call on you at any time to share your work or ideas in progress, so be ready!

**MAKING UP MISSED WORK**

If you must miss class, make up the work you missed within 48 hours. For details, contact a classmate, check the Class Notes section of the class web site, or contact me.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty is a broad area that covers research integrity, plagiarism, intellectual property rights, and copyright law. All college students are expected to demonstrate academic honesty throughout the period of their enrollment, which includes obeying the CU honor pledge and abiding by **CU’s Standards of Academic Integrity**.

Academic honesty is a complex topic, but you can use a fairly simple question as a test: would this action cause anyone in a position of authority over you and/or whose opinion you value to lose trust in you? In other words, if the action might damage your credibility as an honorable person, don’t do it!
Here are some guidelines for how to demonstrate academic honesty in our class, most of which we’ll cover in more detail when applicable:

- Produce original work in response to each assignment
- Don’t re-purpose assignments from other classes
- Request feedback on content and delivery only from me, your classmates, or the Writing Center
- Provide full bibliographic citations for any words or ideas you borrow from others
- Limit your use of digital media to those items available under Fair Use guidelines
- Provide complete source information for any images, sounds, video, or other digital media you use

If you fail to meet a guideline by accident, we’ll discuss the situation without taking it to the Honor Council. But if I discover willful intent on your part, I’m obligated to report that to the Honor Council, which has the authority to enforce non-academic corrective action. I retain the authority to enforce academic sanctions, which will range from an F on the project to an F in the course, depending on the severity of the breach of trust.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO PASS

You must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible to pass the class, regardless of any grades you’ve already received:

- Complete all required private journal activities before publishing each week's blog post (or up to 48 hours after)
- Publish each week's blog post when due (or up to 48 hours after)
- Contribute the minimum number of comments and discussions due at the end of each week (or up to 48 hours after)
- Attend and/or participate in at least 75% of your weekly class “meetings”
- Attend a Learning Component Review meeting with me at least once before you start working on your final projects
- Submit final projects in full (based on the assignment), on time (or up to 48 hours after), and in an accessible format (meaning that nothing interferes with my ability to read, listen to, or watch your project)
- Submit all learning reflections when due (or up to 48 hours after)

As you become involved in the class, you’ll see why these are the minimum requirements for any successful workshop-based course. Over 14+ years and 2000+ students, I’ve only had about six or seven students who did not meet the minimum requirements for reasons other than documented major medical or family emergencies.

MAJOR EMERGENCY OPTIONS

If a major emergency situation prevents you from meeting the minimum requirements indicated above, here are your options:

Withdraw

Check with your advisor to see if you’re still eligible to withdraw at the time.

Retake the Course

This option leaves you with an F on your transcript, but if you do well the next time around, the situation is fairly easy to explain to anyone who asks.

Request an Incomplete

The university puts strict guidelines about which students are eligible for this option. Instructors are advised to agree to an Incomplete request only if (a) the situation is due to a documented family or medical emergency; and (b) the student has already met more than 75% of the course’s minimum requirements with a passing grade.

If you meet those conditions, you must request an incomplete from me near the end of the semester and meet with me to fill out the paperwork, which you’ll then take over to the Dean’s Office. The Dean’s Office has the final say over whether your request for an incomplete will be granted.