digital rhetoric in health & medicine

>> winter 2022, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ <<

>> classroom: ▮▮▮▮▮ <<

>> zoom room info on canvas + google cal <<

>> amcult 658 / digital 658 / english 658 / ftvm 658 <<

>> m. remi yergeau, associate professor of digital studies & english <<

>> myergeau@umich.edu, office hours by appointment

>> Course description

In this (hybrid) class, we will examine classical rhetorical concepts (such as phronesis/practical wisdom, aretê/virtue, and eunoia/goodwill) against broader formations and understandings of digital rhetoric — and with it, rhetorics of health, disability, and medicine — as a field. Our conversations will work to unpack and dismantle rhetorical studies's historical and contemporary representations of suasive discourse, technologization, and embodiment. In particular, our discussions will explore technical entanglements with pathologization, as well as the ways in which crip, trans, and decolonial theories of the body work in service of subverting stock notions of the digital rhetorical.

In addition to its theoretical/critical focus, this class will also involve low-threshold digital production and play, with specific attention paid to accessibility. No experience with production is required to take this course!

>> Participation

Participation is a loaded word. We all have different needs, experiences, and challenges when it comes to discussing and engaging with class material. This is especially thrown into relief given our present circumstances, and it is a challenge we will collectively embark upon this semester. In our class, we will collaborate to create spaces (both virtual and physical) that enable everyone to contribute meaningfully through the modality and platforms that work best for us.

This class is listed as a hybrid class, but there is no requirement to meet in person in order to complete this class. This being said, I want to recognize the profound challenges that remote learning and our current moment bring, which includes (but is not limited to) social isolation,

lack of technology access, childcare challenges, concerns with visa requirements, inaccessible or unsafe learning environments, and more. At the moment, I imagine that our course will have some fully online meetings, depending on our needs or the week's topic, and that other sessions will meet in-person with a dedicated Zoom livestream available for those who need to participate remotely. Our class will have a CART provider who will be joining us via Zoom throughout the semester to provide real-time closed captions for our class.

>> Collective access

For each assignment, you will be asked to provide textual descriptions of all visuals you submit, as well as captions for all video and audio content you create. Additionally, I hope that, in the course of our time together, we might invent or consider alternative ways of making our projects and in-class activities more accessible, or more collectively designed.

Accessibility and participatory design are not simply topics of discussion or abstract concepts from our daily reading. They are as much lived actions as they are conceptual. As a result, with each project, I expect you to consider critically who your audience is and the ways in which your assignments make a statement, however implicitly, about how you enact accessibility and design in your everyday work.

Accessibility & accommodations

Services for Students with Disabilities, located in G-664 Haven Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. With or without documentation, it is my intent to make our learning experience as accessible as possible. Regardless of whether or not you are registered with SSD, please let me know what we can do to maximize your learning, participation, and general access in this course. You can contact SSD at (734) 763-3000 or http://ssd.umich.edu/.

>> Assignments

> blog reading responses & exercises <

Throughout the semester, you will be contributing reading responses to our class blog. Over the course of the semester, you will compose six responses — that is, **roughly one response every other week**. Our course calendar suggests dates that you might aspire to submit these posts,

and these dates are rather purposefully framed as aspirations rather than deadlines: i.e., we are likely aspiring to goals we will not meet, and that's OK. If you need to take more time with composing a response (or even digesting a reading/s), please take that time. I will check in with you throughout the semester to see how things are going and whether there's anything we can do that would better facilitate an engagement with our readings + digital play.

Your blog responses can serve as reflections on one or multiple readings, and they can also be retrospective (i.e. you write a post in February that reflects on something we read in January). In addition to using Wordpress as our primary virtual discussion hub, we will also be using Wordpress for digital play, reflection, and in-class exercises. To that end, I am asking that half of your blog posts (three) take up one or more of the following challenges:

1. **Sharing/offering:** Draw our attention to an outside text, object, event, or media artifact -- something we're not engaging in class that you think is relevant to us. It need not be academic in scope, though it can be!

2. **Respond in a different mode** (e.g., memes, text, video, audio, ASCII art, GIFs, etc.)

3. **Fail at something:** Or, compose something (whether in a different medium or on a topic) that you've had little opportunity to practice.

4. **Draw from (digital) community wisdom:** You might interpret this one as you delving more deeply into something you're passionate about, or something you've learned that you wish to impart to others, that aligns with one or more of our readings. What you impart need not be academic!

<div align="right">

> data/self-tracking visualization <

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Drawing from Giorgia Lupi and Stefanie Posavec's *Dear Data*, as well as Sorapure and Fauni's "Teaching *Dear Data*," this mini-project asks you to spend one week collecting data and creating a postcard (physical or virtual) visualization of it. In class, we'll collectively determine the kinds of data we're interested in collecting and displaying, drawing upon our readings in self-tracking, biocapital, and health quantification as we create data and ultimately trouble our data creations. Data sets we might create include, but are not limited to, the number of squirrels we see in a week, how many times we put on shoes in a week, the number of masks we go through in a week, or the number of times Comcast fails us in a week, and so on. In other words: our projects

might be light-hearted in focus, even as we engage in the vexing process of collecting, arranging, and disseminating it. We will discuss our ideas in class on February 7, with the goal of submitting visualizations on February 14.

<p align="right">`> final project <`</p>

This final project is a rather flexible one. You may compose your project in any form, medium, or genre, and you can decide whether this project should be addressed to those in your field(s) or beyond. I am purposefully not delineating a target length or medium for this project because form will radically differ from person to person. Your project might take form in/as poetry, social media compositions, technical or field reports, seminar papers, multimodal narratives (video, audio, artwork), syllabi or lesson plans, and so on. This project will provide you with an opportunity to engage more deeply with the conversations, methods, and concepts that we've been developing in digital rhetoric, science and technology studies, and discourses of disability, health, and medicine throughout the semester.

As well, with your project I will ask you to also include a short statement (roughly 1-2 pages) that positions your work within the context of our class. This statement should be both explanatory and reflective: It should provide detail that guides our reading/viewing, but it should also reflect on the process of creation and its connections back to our course theme.

Midway through the semester, I will ask you to submit an informal proposal that describes your intent for the project, in terms of form, scope, topic, and audience. We will discuss your proposals during one-on-one conferences (via Zoom or Google Meet) during the weeks of March 7 and March 14. As well, I have reserved our last two class sessions for workshopping of your projects. During this time, you will share your work with the class, as well as offer feedback for your peers.

Goal timeline
- **February 21:** Final project proposal

- **Weeks of March 7 & 14:** Midterm conferences (Google Meet or Zoom)

- **April 11 & April 18:** Workshopping & work-sharing (bring project draft to class)

- **Friday, April 22:** Submit final project via email (myergeau@umich.edu)

658: Course calendar

January 10: Method

//AGENDA
- Introductions
- (Digital) rhetoric and/as method
- Technology setup

//GLANCE (in class)
- [White Coat Waste Project](#)
- [#BeagleGate](#)

January 24: Ethos & digital (mental) health production

//READ
- Eyman, Ch. 1, [Defining and Locating Digital Rhetoric](#) (from *Digital Rhetoric*)
- Bruce, Ch. 1, "Mad Is a Place" (from *How to Go Mad Without Losing Your Mind*) **[Canvas]**
- Keränen, "Biopolitics, Contagion, and Digital Health Production: Pathways for the Rhetoric of Health and Medicine" **[Canvas]**
- Molloy, "Vulnerable Rhetors and Stigma in Health and Medicine" (from *Rhetorical Ethos in Health and Medicine*) **[Canvas]**
- Wang, [Yale Will Not Save You](#)

//GLANCE
- NAMI: [About Mental Illness subpages](#)
- Mind Freedom International: [What Is Mental Illness?](#)

//SUBMIT
- ███████████████. Please introduce yourself (and/or your pets!) and share your reflections on one or more of the day's readings. What questions do you have? Where do you feel hesitant, intrigued, confused, or impassioned?
- **Submit ideas or comments** you might have for our ███████████████ **[we'll discuss this more in class on 1/24!]**

January 31: Digital phenotyping & self-tracking

//READ
- Banner, Ch. 3, Capacity and the Productive Subject of Digital Health
- Tekin, "Is Big Data the New Stethoscope?" **[Canvas]**
- Berkhout & Zaheer, Digital Self-Monitoring, Bodied Realities
- Weinberg, Mental Health and the Self-Tracking Student

//GLANCE
- Quantified Self
- RealLife Exp [app] + LifeData [website]

February 7: Visualization, micro-blogging, & health activism

//READ
- Sorapure & Fauni, Teaching Dear Data
- Thulin, Diabetes, Art, and Data Resonance
- Cavar & Baril, Blogging to Counter Epistemic Injustice: Trans Disabled Digital Micro-Resistance

//GLANCE
- Lupi & Posavec, *Dear Data*: The Project + *Dear Data* By Week

//COME READY TO DISCUSS
- Data/Self-tracking project ideas

February 14: Manufacturing (digital) uncertainty

//READ
- Ceccarelli, "Manufactured Scientific Controversy" **[Canvas]**
- Condit, "The Supra-Cyborg" **[Canvas]**
- Baniya & Potts, "Valuing Expertise During the Pandemic" **[Canvas]**
- Teston, Ch. 1, "Evidential Matters" **[Canvas]**

//SUBMIT
- Data/Self-tracking project ███████]

//READ

- Allard-Huvez & Gilewicz, "Digital Parrhesia 2.0" **[Canvas]**
- Frey, "How Dare You": Greta Thunberg, Parrhesia, and Rhetorical Citizenship
- Piepzna-Samarasinha, As an Autistic Femme, I Love Greta Thunberg's "Resting Autism Face
- Rauchberg, TikTok's Digital Eugenics
- Eyman, Ch. 2, Theory (from *Digital Rhetoric*)

//SUBMIT

- Final project proposal [Canvas]

March 7: Biopiracy & biocolonialism

//MIDTERM CHECK-INS

- Zoom one-on-one during weeks of 3/7 & 3/14

//READ

- TallBear, Intro, "An Indigenous, Feminist Approach to DNA Politics" (from *Native American DNA*) **[Canvas]**
- CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance **[Canvas]**
- Ceccarelli, "Biocolonialism and Human Genomics Research" (from *On the Frontier of Science*) **[Canvas]**
- Benjamin, Designer and Discarded Genomes

//GLANCE

- Simons Genome Diversity Project
- Human Genome Diversity Project

March 14: Telehealth & eugenic rhetorics

//MIDTERM CHECK-INS, continued

- Zoom one-on-one during weeks of 3/7 & 3/14

//READ

- Teston, Ch. 5, "Computing Evidence" **[Canvas]**
- Benjamin, Interrogating Equity: A Disability Justice Approach to Genetic Engineering **[Canvas]**

- TallBear, Ch. 2, "The DNA Dot-Com" (from *Native American DNA*) **[Canvas]**
- Selections from Zeavin, *The Distance Cure* **[Canvas]**

//GLANCE
- MSSNG
- ████████

March 21: Digital epideictic

//READ
- Segal, selections from "The Epideictic Rhetoric of Pathography" (from *Health and the Rhetoric of Medicine*) **[Canvas]**
- Clark, Against Access
- Cram, Field Notes from COVID Time
- Morrison & Britton, How Can You Spell Care with Only 1s and 0s?

//GLANCE
- TBD!

March 28: Rhetorics of biocapital

//READ
- Crider & Anderson, Disney Death Tour
- Banner, Intro, "Theorizing Communicative Biocapitalism"
- Banner, Ch. 2, The Voice of the Patient in Communicative Biocapitalism

//GLANCE
- Patients Like Me

April 4: Mediated arête (virtues & values)
- Sterne, *Diminished Faculties* **[Canvas]**
    - Ch. 1, "Degrees of Muteness"
    - Ch. 2, "Meet the Dork-o-Phone
- Malatino, Trans Care Within and Against the Medical-Industrial Complex (from *Trans Care*)
- Virdi, "Black Bars, White Text" **[Canvas]**

//GLANCE

- TBD!

April 11: Workshop

//SUBMIT

- Drafts-in-progress (Google Drive)

April 18: Workshop

//SUBMIT

- Drafts-in-progress (Google Drive)

** Final projects are due on Friday, April 22 via email (myergeau@umich.edu)