

Department of English

Summer 2020

Updated May 8, 2020
Information subject to change

SUMMER 1 (May 18 – June 25; Exams June 6)

~~76-101~~ ~~Interpretation & Argument~~ **CANCELLED**

Section: S
Instructor: Rebecca Wigginton
Meetings: MTWRF 10:30-11:50 a.m.
Units: 9.0
Prerequisite: none
Open to: First-year students

What is the relationship between technology and (or in) the human body, and what could it be? At Code Conference 2016, Elon Musk suggested that “we are already cyborgs,” and as far back as the 1960s, Marshal McLuhan’s groundbreaking work in media studies argued that we’ve always used technology as extensions of ourselves. This course invites you to consider the possible and acceptable forms that human-integrated technology may take in the future and what forms they have already taken in the present. Given that this shift is already happening, and that many experts are confident the shift points to the next big turn in our technological and human evolution, we will not limit our course discussions to whether or not it “will” or “should” occur, but we will instead focus on consideration of what forms human-implanted technology is already taking and seems likely to take next. Within this frame, we will discuss the implications these forms have for ethics, medicine, religion, “big data,” and the law. Readings include both popular and academic articles, along with one novel that imagines what human-integrated technology might look like in the near future—M.T. Anderson’s *Feed* (2002).

As we enter into an ongoing conversation taking place in a variety of fields, you will develop skills in the fundamental practices of critical reading and academic writing and apply them to complete assignments in which you analyze arguments, synthesize perspectives on central problems, write an academic research proposal based upon those syntheses, and finally contribute your own argument to the conversation on human-integrated technology.

76-234 ***Media: Past, Present, and Future***

Section: S
Instructor: Kathy Newman
Meetings: MW 6:30-9:50 p.m.
Units: 9.0
Prerequisite: 76-101, 76-102, (76-106 & 76-107), (76-106 & 76-108), or (76-107 & 76-108)
Open to: Undergraduates

In the late 1700s moral crusaders were worried about the latest media scandal: the surge in women reading novels. As one observer complained, “Women, of every age, of every condition...retain a taste for novels. I find [novels]...in the work-bag of the seamstress, in the hands of the lady who lounges on the sofa, the mistresses of nobles, the mistresses of snuff-shops, the belles who read them in town, and the chits who spell them in the country.” While today we might be genuinely concerned about texting while driving, or the depression associated with high levels of Facebook use, in this class we won’t judge so much as we will analyze. We will look at what historical media trends have in common with, and how they are different from, the media trends of today. We will read about the print revolution, the electronic media revolution, the current digital revolution, and we will also try to peer into the future. Importantly, we will take a literary and cultural studies approach to this material. We will ask, specifically, what can the humanities teach us about media revolutions over time? How is narrative, or storytelling, central to each media revolution?

76-270 ***Writing for the Professions***

Sections: S; T

Instructor: Andrew Gordon (section S); CP Moreau (section T)

Meetings: MTWRF 12:00—1:20 p.m. (both sections)

Units: 9.0

Prerequisite: 76-101, 76-102, (76-106 & 76-107), (76-106 & 76-108), or (76-107 & 76-108)

Open to: Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

Professional and technical documents are integrated into the activities that they support. People use professional and technical documents for many different activities, such as choosing health plans, refinishing furniture, creating websites, operating nuclear reactors, and learning chemistry. People also use these documents in diverse settings, such as on the phone, in a cab, in business class, and in the desert. People use these documents in leisurely comfort and under severe time constraints. A professional and technical writer’s main goal—and challenge—is to create a document that the target audience can read and use easily. In this course, you will gain experience in developing the writing and other communication skills you will be expected to have as you transition from student to professional. You will learn to analyze the audience, purpose, context, and genre of specific communication problems, to transform that analysis into a plan for creating a usable document that communicates your message effectively, and to develop a rhetorical approach to writing professional and technical documents.

SUMMER 2 (June 29 – August 6; Exams August 7)

76-101 ***Interpretation & Argument***

Section: U (CMU students); E (Pre-College)

Instructor: Craig Stamm

Meetings: MWF 12:00-2:20 p.m.

Units: 9.0

Prerequisite: none

This course focuses on arguments related to the social impact of video games in contemporary culture. Video games have been an influential force of entertainment for decades, but in the past decade have reached a new peak of mainstream appeal. Emphasizing issues around identity politics, the course discusses issues of representation and identification in video games from the past and present, while also looking at how video

games have evolved and developed their own unique and complex culture. Students are asked to write papers analyzing an argument about video games, writing a proposal describing a potential topic for a final paper and a plan of research, and then finally contributing their own argument to a discussion about video games and their social impact.

76-264 *Special Topics in Writing & Communication: Sequenced: The Art of Time in Nonfiction*

Section: U (CMU students); E (Pre-College)

Instructor: Kevin Haworth

Meetings: MTWRF 9:00—10:20 a.m.

Units: 9.0

Prerequisite: none

Open to: Section U: CMU Undergraduates; Section E: Pre-College Program

Without the passage of time, there is no story. But there are many ways to organize, steer, and structure time in all our written communication, from creative writing to personal statements, research statements, and job applications. How do you write an essay that covers one hour? One day? Twenty years? How do you handle flashbacks, or multiple timelines? During this course, you will learn many of the ways that a writer can conceptualize the time frame of a story, manage time, or even slow or speed up time to suit the story you want to tell. Writing prompts, readings, and discussion will help you become more skilled in using time and structure.