

EDPX 2200: Cultures of Emergent Digital Practices

Spring 2015 | <http://mysite.du.edu/~treddell/courses-2200.htm>

Tues & Thur, 2:00-3:50pm | Sturm Hall 434

Professor: Trace Reddell, Emergent Digital Practices

Office Hours: Tues/Thur 12:15-1:45pm and by appt. | Office: Sturm 216B

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Catalog Description: This course explores the many ways technology has shaped and been shaped by our various cultures, from the local to the global. The course offers in equal parts a history of emergent practices; a theory of how and why new technologies and practices continue to emerge; and an extrapolation of possible futures and trends for the continued imagining and unfolding of technologies and practices to come. This course provides an historical and theoretical foundation for critical thinking and creative ideas in the EDP major. Reading, writing, critical analysis, and synthesis of new ideas will be key components. No prerequisites. (4.000 Credit hours)

The class fulfills an EDP Foundations requirement for the Major and Minor.

This class introduces digital media as emerging cultural artifacts through a variety of disciplinary lenses and conceptual practices. The class emphasizes critical work being done in media theory & cultural studies, art and art criticism, pop culture, media anthropology, sound studies, and science fiction studies.

Required Texts

(available in the DU Bookstore)

1) Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* (NYU 2008)

2) Hiroshi Yamamoto, *The Stories of Ibis* (Haikasoru 2010)

* Links to additional required readings and other media will be posted on the class website on an on-going basis throughout the quarter.

Course Structure and Goals

This course explores two tracks of critical participation in emerging digital cultures.

One is scholarly and provides you a track in which to conduct research, formulate and support critical theory, write about your own research and theory, and present your work to your peers. Activities along this track will include reading and other content integration; journaling; group discussion and small-group activities; blogging; writing, editing and revising; and a mini-conference presentation.

Tuesday class sessions will run in this academic mode. We will hold a critical think-tank with class time devoted to small group projects; solo work; tracking personal goals and progress; and discussion.

The other is creatively pop cultural and provides you a track in which to join in the history of critical participatory culture. Activities along this track will explore speculative writing and FanFiction; memes; mash-ups; remix; appropriative media; glitch; audiovisual performance; and curation.

Thursday sessions will emphasize the creative mode. Our participatory laboratory will combine some solo exercises; small group collaborations and interactions; mini-critique sessions; tracking personal goals and progress; and discussion.

By the end of the quarter, students will be responsible for working together to produce two distinct outcomes:

- 1) A mini-conference developed around the theme of your collective choosing.
- 2) A creative anthology of critical media artifacts for the Web.

Course Objectives

Through a combination of reading, research, writing, creative work, and dialogue, this class will foster your ability to:

- 1) Discuss specific cultural artifacts in order to describe a contemporary development in the use, application, and/or creative practice of emerging digital media and technologies. (Relevance)
- 2) Accurately describe relevant technical details and apply these details to meaningful critical and cultural discussions. (Attention to detail)

- 3) To situate cultural artifacts within larger critical and theoretical contexts, including the social, political, psychological, philosophical, spiritual, and speculative. (Depth and breadth of understanding)
- 4) To integrate different approaches to writing and media production in ways that will demonstrate your understanding of the nature and obligations of the critical voice. (Sophistication of synthesis)

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment details will be posted on an on-going basis.

Course Assignments (60%)

- Weekly prompts (50 points)
- Resource Review 1 (10 points)
- Resource Review 2 (10 points)
- Synthesis Piece (10 points)
- Creative Cut-up / Remix / Mashup (10 points)
- Webspinna': Live Web Audiovisual Mix (10 points)

Finals (30%)

- Final Panel (15%)
- Final Artifact (15%)

Course Participation (10%)

Participation

Your participation in this course is essential to its success. Being prepared for and present during class sessions, ready to interact in a focused and engaged way with the material and each other, is your main responsibility.

Groups are an important part of this class, and you will be responsible for working with your group both during class sessions and outside of class. The majority of this outside collaborative work will take place online.

- **Phase 1: 5 groups of 3**
The first half of class will have you in very small teams for collaborative exercises, research, critique, and discussion.
- **Phase 2: 3 groups of 5**
The second half of class will switch to fewer big groups. Each of these three groups will be responsible for organizing a final panel presentation and discussion.

Student Responsibilities

You need to read, watch, or listen to the required material before the class on which it is assigned. And for every thing we read, watch, or listen to, you need to be prepared with some things you'd like to talk about. These may take the shape of questions you want to pose, interpretations or applications of key ideas, sections of assigned material that you might want us to consider more closely. For each text, I will provide you with prompts and exercises.

Beyond the specific pages assigned for class readings, you are also expected to carry on your own research plan that will involve your finding, reading, evaluating, and applying scholarly and other work to your own projects. Again, I will give prompts and guidelines, but your doing independent scholarly work is expected and should be factored into the hours you commit to the class outside of our meeting times (depending on your reading/absorption rate, plan on committing 6-8 hours a week outside of class on assignments). This scholarly work will inform your final panel presentation for the class's mini-conference, and it will showcase your independent interests and thoughts in a way that doing only assigned material cannot.

You will be expected to write quite a bit for this class, which builds toward a final short paper and panel presentation. But you will also be asked to write regularly as part of your process of absorbing and working with new source materials. You will be asked to keep an ongoing journal in which you will track your interactions with the class content, as well as set and track goals for your work. I will interact with you through this journal.

You are also expected to produce several critical pop media artifacts. You will have prompts, but the choice of media production platform is mostly up to you. You can work with your own software or use the EDP studio labs.

Students need to have an active Google Docs account. It is your responsibility to maintain folders for the projects and course work. You will have individual work and collaborative work on Google. For a naming convention, please always include your last name at the start of any folder or document. For example, my files would have titles like "Reddell_EDPx2200-syllabus.doc," "Reddell_chappie-meme.gif," and "Reddell_chillwave_remix.mp3," all included in a folder, "Reddell_EDPx2200".

You will also be invited to our course blog for public documentation of our course of critical inquiry into, and playful engagement with, emergent digital culture.

Communication with the professor, including tracking of attendance and grades, will be administered through the Canvas site accessible through DU's PioneerWeb.

Class Schedule

For details & links, please see the class website: <http://mysite.du.edu/~treddell/courses-2200.htm>

Week one

- 1) course introduction
- 2) think-tank: technocultural anthropology / lab: Remixed cartoons (caption game)

Week two

- 1) think-tank: Convergence culture and Remediation
- 2) lab: Surrealist games / collage novels / found novel (generative remediation)

Week three

- 1) think-tank: Resource Review 1
- 2) lab: Situationist Détournement

Week four

- 1) think-tank: Free Culture
- 2) lab: Appropriation / Mashup / Remix

Week five

- 1) think-tank: Resource Review 2 / Speculation
- 2) lab: Speculative Synthesis / FanFiction

Week six

- 1) think-tank: Performance in Participatory Culture
- 2) lab: Webspinna

Week seven

- 1) think-tank: Posthumanism
- 2) lab: Glitch

Week eight

- 1) think-tank: defining the themes for panels
- 2) lab: defining the themes for the anthology

Week nine

- 1) think-tank: refining the themes
- 2) lab: refining the themes

Week ten

- 1) academic mini-conferences 1-2
- 2) academic mini-conference 3

Final: presentation and launch of creative anthology

General Policies

Technology

While you are not required to purchase the software that you may use for this class, not having the software is no excuse for failing to complete your projects. It is your responsibility to work out times when you can use the EDP labs or to make other arrangements for doing your work. It is your responsibility to adhere to all rules regarding the use of the EDP labs and equipment.

Laptops and Peripheral Devices

Laptops are permitted as long as you are staying on task. Please do not use your cell phones or instant messaging device or service in the class. Recording class sessions is not permitted unless you are told otherwise on a case-by-case basis.

Disabilities / Medical Accommodation

If you qualify for academic accommodations because of a disability or medical issue please submit a Faculty Letter to me from **Disability Services Program (DSP)** in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities/medical issues. DSP is located on the 4th floor of Ruffatto Hall, 1999 E. Evans Ave.; 303.871. 2372/ 2278 / 7432. Information is also available on line at <http://www.du.edu/disability/dsp>; see the *Handbook for Students with Disabilities*.

Email Policy

1. If you cannot see me during my office hours, please email me to set up an appointment. I try to accommodate appointments within two school days.
2. I read and reply to email once a day and usually do not read or reply to email after 5 PM or weekends.
3. Your questions about assignments should be addressed in class or during office hours. Please do not expect “zero-hour” clarification of assignments via email. I typically will not reply to emails regarding course matters such as assignment requirements or due dates, readings, etc., that are the result of your unexcused absences or lack of attention to course instruction.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance of all class sessions is mandatory and expected. Each unexcused absence will result in a 10% reduction of your final grade in the class. Missing 5 classes will result in a failed grade for the course. I allow for 2 absences excused for documented illness or school-related travel. If attendance becomes a problem beyond those 2, we need to discuss your continued enrollment. In such cases, documentation of major illness or other extenuating circumstances may allow accommodation if you request a late withdrawal or incomplete if you choose to take the class again. Failure to have work ready by its due date constitutes an absence, will count against you as such, and may result in failure of the assignment.

Grade Scale

A (95-100%); A- (90-94%) = generally, this grade is reserved for those works that surpass expectations. The grade recognizes:

- sophisticated critical writing and editing skills;
- incorporation of multiple, different concepts and techniques with excellent results;
- outstanding use of source materials, research analysis, and synthesis of own content;
- written work contributes greatly to understanding of primary works from various cultural and theoretical perspectives;
- consistently original and substantial contributions to class discussions and workshops.

B+ (85-89%); B (80-84%); B- (75-79%) = meets and in some areas exceeds expectations and criteria. The grade recognizes:

- very effective critical writing and production skills;
- incorporation of multiple, different concepts and techniques, usually with very good outcomes;
- original use of source materials, research analysis, and synthesis of own content;
- written work contributes to deep listening and understanding of primary works from various cultural and theoretical perspectives;
- frequent original or substantial contributions to class discussions and workshops.

C+ (70-74%); C (65-69%); C- (60-64%) = fulfills all requirements. The grade recognizes:

- satisfactory critical writing and production skills;
- a tendency to stick to a one or two familiar concepts and techniques;
- a reliance on untreated source materials, lack of research analysis, and little synthesis of own content;
- written work states the obvious and does little to contribute to understanding of primary works from various cultural and theoretical perspectives;
- infrequent or rushed and unpolished contributions to class discussions and workshops.

D+ (55-59%); D (51-54%) = fails to fulfill some requirements. The grade recognizes:

- less than satisfactory critical writing and production skills; 1
- sticks to one key concept or production technique;

- a reliance on untreated source materials, lack of research analysis, and no synthesis of own content;
- written work is insubstantial and fails to contribute to understanding of primary works from various cultural and theoretical perspectives;
- rushed and unpolished contributions to class discussions and workshops, and some inability to keep up with the schedule.

F (0-50%) = fails all requirements. The grade recognizes:

- an inability to master anything more than basic critical writing and production skills;
- an inability to incorporate multiple concepts and techniques;
- an over-reliance on source materials;
- written work is incomplete and poorly developed in terms of its contribution to understanding of primary works from various cultural and theoretical perspectives;
- lack of contributions to class discussions and workshops, and failure to keep up with schedule.

Plagiarism

I expect all assignments to represent the outcomes of your own critical thinking and production efforts. A student found to have plagiarized another's work – that is, represented someone else's written word or other media production efforts as your own – will receive an F for the course, and I will report the matter to the AHSS Dean's office and the Office of Community and Citizenship Standards.



Cultures of Emergent Digital Practices

15 students

- **Phase 1: 5 groups of 3**
- **Phase 2: 3 groups of 5**

Daily Class sessions

2pm-2:10pm 1) Clip of the day / warm-up writing exercise

2:10-2:30pm 2) Focus Content / Goals of the session + Q&A

2:30-3:05pm 3) Solo student and/or small group work

3:05-3:30pm 4) Discussion & Sharing

3:30-3:40pm 5) Assignments for next session, homework

3:40-3:50pm 6) Q&A

