Course title and number: ENGL 304/ENGL 604
Term (e.g., Fall 200X): Fall 2014
Meeting times and location: TBA

Instructor Information
Name: Dr. Laura Mandell
Telephone number: 845-8345
Email address: mandell@tamu.edu
Office hours: TR 8:00 – 10:30
Office location: LAAH 440

Prerequisites
ENGL 304-Junior or Senior Classification or approval of instructor. No prior knowledge of digital media is required.

Catalog Description
Topics in the studies of digital humanities; introduction to making / interpreting digital materials, the surrogates of books, paintings, etc., that form our cultural heritage, as well as digitally-born literature, art, and culture; reflection on digital cultures / digital archives; theory and practice of creating and researching digital resources.

Course Description
Ever since the rise of mass literacy in the early nineteenth century in the West, “pictures” have been primarily confined to children’s books. They are something you get over, grow out of, allegedly, and never need again once you can read written, typed, and printed language. In this course, we will try to imagine a new world in which reading is never done without images and is sometimes accomplished ONLY THROUGH images circulating via the Internet. We want to learn how to make and read images with the same rigor that we read and write textbooks and literature, articles and essays, newspapers and mail. We also want to understand the impact that images have upon us: how do they work? That question immediately leads to another: how do words work? After all, words are images, too – you are looking at word- images right now! What’s the difference between reading and seeing? Is the gulf between them as wide as we think, traditionally, ever since separating images off from words by confining them to children’s picture books? New Media, especially computers, are introducing images into our activities of reading, thinking, and ultimately knowing the world. How does what we see on a screen affect what we know – how are we “reading” what we see? Finally, how can “seeing” be taught in a digital world of image-word hybrids: what will college be, in the not-too-distant future, as the worlds of image and word crash together?

The thinking we do in this class has a practical goal: to help us design a classroom of the future, the Humanities Visualization Space. We may be on the verge of understanding how beauty can affect thinking and learning.

This course adheres to four principles:

1. Critical Thinking: Learning how page layout, typography, spatial dispensations, and images convey ideas will enhance students’ critical reading skills, allowing them to unpack arguments that are often made visually through the design of books, visual media, and web archives. In addition, this course teaches students “design basics” as they are connected to perception. How does the presentation of information in various media—forms, colors, fonts, pictures, text, sound—affect our
understanding of it?

2. **Communicate Effectively**: In addition to analyzing images, students will learn sound principles for effectively designing information in multimedia environments. This will all be learned using a technologically simple medium such as power point—no advanced technological knowledge is required.

3. **Work Collaboratively**: Students will work in research teams, exploring how digital media have created virtual spaces for artistic and intellectual ends.

4. **Global Competence**: Students will be encouraged to explore and investigate culturally-specific meanings associated with images, symbols, and icons.

5. **Lifelong Learning**: All the students will be creating research and designs, “scenarios,” to be presented to future students in the Humanities Visualization Space in order to teach those future students how to continuously interrogate any new media that come along the pike as well as to discern the difference between information that is good and bad; in preparing visual material s for teaching others these skills, students will acquire them themselves.

**Course Objectives**

1. To give students a basic visual literacy, recognizing how images and spaces are designed for persuasive effects and intellectual benefits;
2. To give students a set of tools for understanding, interpreting, and creating digital literature, games, power-point presentations, and web pages;
3. To give undergraduate students opportunities for learning to collaborate with others effectively; to give graduate students the opportunity to lead teams;
4. To give students the tools they need for understanding the meaning of images in different cultural contexts;
5. To give students the skills they need in order to approach new media and multimedia information—to explore the effects of the former, and any persuasive fallacies that might be hidden in the latter—so that they can become lifelong learners, ready to confront the newest technological advance and analyze its content.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Students should have a set of skills for analyzing images (color, shape, line; cultural information communicated via symbols, indexes, icons, and textual comments). They must demonstrate their capacities to think critically about images and their subtexts using these analytical skills.
2. Students must develop a mental checklist of best practices for analyzing and composing multimedia discourse, understanding how to arrange images, figures, sound, and text into the most persuasive composition, whether delivered in person or online;
3. All students should be able to work productively with others from widely divergent backgrounds, and graduate students should be able to manage teams of people with diverse talents in undertaking projects and have a working knowledge of the principles of project management, including how to use project management tools;
4. Students must demonstrate the capacity to analyze images from multiple cultural perspectives;
5. Students must demonstrate the capacity to transfer analytic techniques from one medium to another, indicating that they have been able to abstract analytic and compositional tools from specific media and so can use those tools to learn more about new media as it evolves.

**Programs**


Unity 3D Engine: [https://store.unity3d.com/](https://store.unity3d.com/)

Or Power Point and Slideshare (handout attached)


**Textbook and/or Resource Material**

All reading materials will be made available in eCampus. For an online orientation to eCampus, please visit [http://ecampus.tamu.edu/student-help.php](http://ecampus.tamu.edu/student-help.php). Video materials will be made available on MediaMatrix, for which you need your NetID: [https://cas.tamu.edu/cas/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fmediamatrix.tamu.edu%2Fcas](https://cas.tamu.edu/cas/login?service=https%3A%2F%2Fmediamatrix.tamu.edu%2Fcas)
In addition, Graduate Students should purchase or borrow the following texts:


### Grading Policies

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<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly responses to readings on Blog</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Weekly class participation</td>
<td>10% (5% attendance; 5% speaking up)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Team work</td>
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<td>Final project or paper</td>
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### Assignments

*For Undergraduate Students*

1. **Weekly Responses on Blog**: Plan on writing approximately 500 words per week in response to the readings assigned for the class periods. You may write shorter blogs on each reading assignment for the week, or one longer blog on one of the readings that grabs your interest. You are encouraged to include pictures, quotations from the reading (with page numbers is best). Responses will include answers to the following questions:
   a) Define one key term in your readings;
   b) Explain in your own words one key concept offered by the author;
   c) What do you think about this idea in particular, and the reading in general.
   By the end of the semester, you will have in effect written a 32-page paper, the equivalent of an Honors Thesis.

2. **Weekly Class Participation**: Speak up at least twice per class for an A, once for a B, once a week for a C. If you are too shy to speak up, then blog a response to something that was said in class or to someone’s blog posting. Two blog comments per class = A; one = B; one per week = C.

3. **Team Work**: Two team projects are due during the course of the semester. Meet with your group and graduate-student leader at least three times before week 6 and then again before week 11, when the projects are due. A) The first project due week 6 requires making a screencast that explains any one of the theories which the class has read so far. Your audience will be high school students or beginning (first-year) college students. The graduate students will help with the technology, but basically, you’ll make a power point, upload it to slideshare.com (which is free), and then create a voice-over for it on slideshare. B) The second project requires creating and explaining a visualization of a text we have read using IBM’s Many Eyes (again, free). Graduate students will help you; your explanation will be made using slideshare. The grade you receive will be for the quality of the final projects themselves.
4. **Final Project or Paper:** You can create a project that both analyzes and creates visual information patterns with multimedia components, from multiple cultural perspectives, explicitly invoking principles extracted from the readings, theories, and examples we have explored all semester. The grading rubric for this project follows the "Learning Outcomes" explained above: the more you are able to demonstrate that you have achieved those outcomes, the higher the grade. Alternatively, you can combine all your blog postings into one coherently organized long paper. Here too your long paper will demonstrate that you have achieved the "Learning Outcomes." I will provide detailed instructions and grading rubrics for the project and paper.

For **Graduate Students**

1. **Seminar Papers:** All of you are required to write a seminar paper for the class, with the following due dates:
   A) Week 4 – turn in a bibliography of the materials you will read for your paper. Some of the class reading may be included, but outside articles and books must also be used.
   B) Week 10 – turn in your bibliography again, this time with annotations, showing me that you have read the materials.
   C) Week 13: Turn in a rough draft of your paper.
   D) Final paper is due by the end of exam week.

2. **Class Leadership:** Each graduate student will lead one team project, holding 6 meetings with the undergraduates involved outside of class time. Each leader will also meet with me after each meeting to report upon how well the group is working and how the project is progressing. We will discuss a) group dynamics; b) the distribution of expertise across group members; c) project-management techniques, including goal setting, timeline development, and workflow issues. The graduate student’s grade for leadership will not depend upon the project grade, nor vice versa: undergraduates will receive a grade for the projects themselves, while graduate students will receive a grade for their leadership capacities as evinced by a willingness to understand group dynamics.

3. **Blog Commentary:** Make four comments each week on the undergraduates' blog postings.

**Late Work**

Late work will only be accepted in cases of university excused absences.

**Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Major Assignment Dates**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading/Viewing/Notes -- Undergraduates (U)</th>
<th>Graduates (G)</th>
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<td><strong>Week</strong></td>
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Critical Viewing
Sut Jhally, “Image-Based Culture”

G: Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle

5  Story
U&G: McCloud, Understanding Comics (chs. 1-5)
Begin Paul Auster, City of Glass

6  Story
U&G: finish McCloud and Auster

Team Work Due

7  Data
All selections by Edward Tufte – 3 excerpts from his books Visual Explanations, Envisioning Information, and The Visual Display of Quantitative Information.

8  Data
Yau, Visualize This (online via library), Ch. 1.
Laure-Marie Ryan, Introduction to Narrative Across Media
Johanna Drucker, “Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display” (DHQ)

9  Smart Objects
U&G: Paul Mijksenaar, excerpts from Visual Function
Things that Think (MIT Lab):
http://www.media.mit.edu/research/things-think

10 Research
Manovich and Douglass, “Visualizing change: Computer graphics as a research method,” pp. 316-338 in Imagery in the 21st century – to be put online or handed out
Many Eyes: http://www-958.ibm.com/software/analytics/many-eyes
Voyant: http://voyant-tools.org/
Geoffrey Rockwell, Stefan Sinclair, “Now Analyze That: Comparing the Discourse on Race” (http://hermeneuti.ca/rhetoric/now-analyze-that)

11 Research
U&G: Wattenberg, et. al., “Beautiful History”
Yau, Visualize This (online via library), Chs. 4-6 on visualizing time, proportions, and relationships

12 Teaching
Anne Burdick, et. al., excerpts from Digital Humanities
Barbara Marie Stafford, “Visual Pragmatics,” from Good Looking

13 Networks
U&G: Matthew Ward, et. al., “Visualization Techniques for Trees, Graphs, and Networks”
G: Franco Moretti, Graphs, Maps, and Trees

14 Science
U&G: Bruno Latour, “Drawing Things Together”
Karin Knorr-Cetina, et. al., “Image Dissection in Natural Scientific Inquiry”
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu

Academic Integrity
For additional information please visit: http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu

The Texas A&M University Official Honor Code says, “An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.” It is no excuse to say that you did not know the Honor Code, and everyone commits to adhering to that code when they come to Texas A&M, upon enrollment.

Attendance
Texas A&M University considers class attendance to be a matter of personal responsibility on the part of each student. University rules related to excused and unexcused absences are located on-line at http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07. One half of the class participation grade will be based upon attendance, both at class and at group meetings.

Excused Absences for Religious Holidays and Make-up Exams:

Texas House Bill 256 (effective 9/1/03) states “An institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.” The Dean of Faculties has provided a list of days of religious observance for the semester, and examinations have not been scheduled on those days. However, should there be a conflict for this reason, you will be allowed to make up the exam. Makeup exams will only be given for excused absences.