

Syllabus – ENGL 756/856

Dr. Kenneth Sherwood
Sherwood@iup.edu
www.sherwoodweb.org

Office: Sutton 347
Email: Sherwood@iup.edu



Background and Overview

For some teachers, teaching with technology has become synonymous with the ubiquitous Learning Management System (LMS) such as Blackboard or Moodle. While I myself do make use of these tools in teaching, I am concerned at the homogenization and narrowing of possibilities represented by this one-size-fits all approach. For many of us, the very "management" promises of the LMS tools represents a problem. They threaten to rob teachers of creative control over their teaching and risk providing students an impoverished experience. In addition, the "lock-in" to a particular tool not only can constrain your thinking about course authorship but it may also present real career problems if you move from one employer to another. Finally, while the adoption of a default LMS tool-set provides some stability and familiarity, it almost certainly robs some of the excitement from exploring new teaching possibilities.

You may choose to use an LMS in teaching future courses. But this course will insure that is an informed choice, and that you have the skills to blend and incorporate tools and practices that suit your students, school, subject, and pedagogy.

Domain of One's own enables students to incorporate new, digital tools into their own teaching of writing and literature. Whether you are a digital native or immigrant, I invite you to join us as we collaboratively learn by exploring available Web 2.0 tools (such as blogs and wikis) and creating and managing a personal webspace on a domain belonging to you. As we learn to utilize these tools, we will become acquainted with relevant theory and methodology, develop instructional strategies and classroom applications, and think critically about how to manage a professional web presence as 21st century academics. No prior digital-teaching experience is required, but you should be comfortable exploring new software with guidance. All students will be required to register for a shared server space through Reclaim Hosting at a cost of approximately \$25-\$45 for the year. Please note, this is not a course in the use of Learning Management Systems such as Moodle or Blackboard. Meets Doctoral research skills requirement. As the course approaches, consult the website: kennethsherwood.com/eng17881 or feel free to email

Rationale

This new course, which has been successfully offered as a special topics course for several years, reflects the interests and needs of graduate students in English who benefit from development of "productive" digital literacy skills. This supports their coursework, scholarship, and eventual teaching skills. It also benefits the program by helping students of varied backgrounds to achieve some common levels of fluency as they look towards further coursework in the doctoral program.

Students will:

- Cultivate a professional online identity for the scholar and teacher with an awareness of changing disciplinary and cultural norms;
- Develop a digital writing "workflow" using appropriate techniques (exs. Markdown, HTML, CSS) to produce and publish on the web;

- Demonstrate working knowledge of simple markup to create and publish an academic website on a hosted server, managing their own web domain;
- Identify and critically evaluate tools for digital learning;

MA-level 756 goals:

- Explore personal learning environments appropriate to the discipline and to the academic goals of an MA student; demonstrate how platforms constrain and enable communication and interaction;
- Enhance their existing digital literacies by producing a project(s) with at least two multimodal elements: sound, images, visual design and typography, interactivity (exs. audio podcast, video, Twine game).

Doctoral-level 856 goals:

- Implement personal learning and teaching environments appropriate to the discipline, including but not limited to blogs and wikis and to academic goals including professional advancement and the job market, participation in disciplinary discourse, and contribution to the community or public sphere; demonstrating theoretical knowledge and practical application of how platforms constrain and enable communication and interaction;
- Enhance their existing digital literacies by producing a project(s) with a full range of appropriate multimodal elements: sound, images, visual design and typography, interactivity (exs. audio podcast, video, Twine game).

Concepts/Areas

1.) Identity

- Digital publishing
- Disciplinary discourses
- Social media in academia
- Publishing
- Collaboration

2.) Workflow

- Introducing Markdown/HTML
- Visual design
- CSS

3.) Publishing

- Website creation
- File transfer
- Domain and subdomain management

4.) Critical Tool/Interface/Platform evaluation

- Beyond the LMS
- Personal learning environments

-Functional analysis

-Pedagogy and platforms: McLuhan, The Medium is the Message

5.) Web applications

-Installation and configuration of open-source web apps

6.) Multi-modal projects

Audio:

- Audio podcasts
- Introduction to audio recording
- Digital audio editing

Visual:

- Design and typography
- Introduction to Photoshop

Interactivity:

- Hypertext and interactive fiction
- Twine

Readings:

The reading load is modest for this week-long course, though you may find yourself doing some additional research. We will draw on some scanned articles/essays/documents. You will access these through the class website.

Summer 2017 Readings (See Wiki for possible adjustments)

For Monday

1. Educause. Seven Things You Should Know About Personal Learning Environments.
2. Sparks, David and Eddie Smith. Excerpt from "Markdown MD A MackSparky Field Guide." Macsparky.com. ND

For Tuesday

1. Downes, Stephen. "E-Learning 2.0." eLearn Magazine, October 2005.
2. Kay, Allan. "Personal Dynamic Media," New Media Reader, eds. Noah Wardrip Fruin and Nick Montfort. MIT Press: 2003.
3. Waters, Audrey. [Selection 1 from] Claim Your Domain And Own Your Online Presence. Solution Tree Press, 2016.

For Wednesday

1. Tour, Ekaterina. "Digital Mindsets: Teacher's Technology Use in Personal Life and Teaching." Language Learning & Technology. October 2015, Volume 19, Number 3
2. Duffy, Peter and Bruns, Axel (2006) The Use of Blogs, Wikis and RSS in Education: A Conversation of Possibilities. In Proceedings Online Learning and Teaching Conference 2006, pages pp. 31-38, Brisbane
3. Nelson, Ted. Selection from Computer Lib. New Media Reader, eds. Noah Wardrip Fruin and Nick Montfort. MIT Press: 2003.

For Thursday

1. Postman, Neil. "Ideology of Machines" from Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology. NY, Vintage: 1993.
2. Richardson, Will. excerpt from Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, and Other Powerful Web Tools for Classrooms
3. Boardley, John. "A Guide to Web Typography," I Love Typography. <http://ilovetypography.com/2008/02/28/a-guide-to-web-typography/>

For Friday

1. DeVoss, Danielle et al. _Because Digital Writing Matters: Improving Student

Writing in Online and Multimedia Environments. Jossey-Bass, 2010

2. Stern, Danielle and Michael D. D. Willits. "Social Media Killed the LMS." in Cutting Edge Technologies in Higher Education. Emerald, 2011.

3. Waters, Audrey. [Selection 2 from] Claim Your Domain And Own Your Online Presence. Solution Tree Press, 2016.

Major Assignments

Participation, Reflection, and Presentations (20%) - I look for active, engaged participation in class through conversation, collaboration with peers, and informed and prepared discussion. You will also reflect each night on the day's coursework through your blog.

In this class, your participation is not only "oral" but may also be mediated through the digital technology of the tools we use. For instance, you will practice using your blog by posting reflections on readings and class discussion. You will also have the opportunity to work with a partner or group, to lead discussion of a relevant informational or critical article. This will involve creating an overview or abstract of the article, adding your own observations, and concluding with two or three discussion questions. **You will sign up for these with classmates.**

Professional Website - (20%) Using basic markdown - html conversion and elementary CSS, you will develop a cluster of individual "professional pages" and post them on your personal domain. The emphasis will be on developing the skills to allow for an easy incorporation of web content into your "workflow." We will not obsess about artful design or tweak our pages with all the latest, dynamic bells and whistles; the goal will be pragmatic. Can you produce and inter-link a set of relevant, content-rich pages with structured markup? Can you include legal, appropriately sourced and edited images? You may include links to other online materials you create and organize external resources of professional use. For those who have previously created such a web page, I will expect you to compose significant new content and develop a website to the next level through additional pages and more sophisticated use of CSS styling. We will also discuss the kinds of content appropriate for creating a professional web presence.

Server App / Web 2.0 Demonstration - (20%) You will choose a digital tool available through Reclaim Hosting with a teaching or research application. You will install it on your website and create mock content. In a presentation of 15 minutes, you will give an overview of the tool, demonstrate and explain (as appropriate) its basic functionality, and outline a specific teaching or scholarly/professional scenario. I will ask you to sign up in groups, but each student in the group must build an instance on their own domain.

Podcast - (20%) Excellent audio is not simple to produce, but in comparison with video, it is relatively easy to incorporate acceptable audio into your digital teaching strategies. You will learn to record, edit, and mix background sound to produce a short (2-5 minute) audio podcast. The topic will be related to digital teaching. A welcome approach would be for you to explain your teaching module. There will be *some* class time reserved for working on these podcasts, but you should anticipate devoting several hours outside of class to this. You may choose to do this individually or in groups.

Multi-modal Composition - (20%) How do you think of technology in teaching or scholarship? What is your emerging digital philosophy? How is the digital environment democratizing education? Or how does online interaction risk dehumanizing teacher-student relationships? Taking an idea from a web 2.0 demonstration, course readings and discussion, or elsewhere, you should compose a reflective and/or informative "essay" using the Twine platform; makes thoughtful use of hypertextual structure or interactivity and incorporate appropriate visual design (images, typography) and other media.

Consider this is both a reflective and an applied project. You must build or make something digital and explain/justify it.

Format

I have tried to be mindful of the constraints of our weekly schedule. There will not be extensive nightly reading, but I have selected some brief readings for our discussion. Similarly, you will conduct some independent reading outside of class for your presentations. I do expect you to devote a reasonable effort to completing this outside-of-class work, which may include discussion questions and technology work.

Workshop / Lab Time – As we learn how to use new teaching tools, I will provide orienting instruction. But we will devote considerable time to hands-on learning of these tools, so that we all emerge with much more comfort and ability than that with which we entered.

I anticipate there will be varied levels of prior experience. Those who are more experienced will be invited to assist in helping their peers, and to form sub-groups that develop advanced skills. The “craft” of the digital teacher involves a good deal of self-directed learning, as one “hacks” one's way towards solutions for specific problems or invents new opportunities. There will not be time for any of us to exhaust what needs to be known about any of the technologies we are exploring; so no matter your level of prior experience and aptitude, I will encourage you to go further – and to contribute what you learn back to the class. For me, graduate-level participation demands that you bring a spirit of “open-ended” learning to everything you do in the class.