ENGLISH COMPOSITION
YOU AND YOUR E-DENTITY

Course Description

Each time you use your email, play an online video game, shop on Amazon, search Google, and post to your Facebook wall, you leave traces of yourself online that form your digital identity, what we might call your e-dentity. In many ways, this online identity is similar to your offline self, but we can also choose to adopt different characteristics on the web, playing with gender, age, race, sexuality, and other forms of identification. Your e-dentity is not just a casual choice but a series of multi-layered decisions that involve ethics, privacy, responsibility, and representation. This course asks you to think about those multi-layered decisions that make up your e-dentity while also situating your personal characteristics in a larger context. Throughout the course, you will analyze written and visual texts, including social networking profiles, maps of online communities, and Twitter feeds; you will research technology and identity from a variety of perspectives; and you will compose analyses and researched arguments based on class discussions, readings, and collaborative work.

Required Texts
  * *(e)-Dentity*. Stephanie Vie, ed. Fountainhead Press, 2011.
  * A rhetoric (addressing research, argument, and/or analysis) of the instructor's choosing.

Assignments & Grade Distributions
  * **Short Writing Assignments, 10%**
    o Throughout the semester, students will be asked to respond to the "Explore," "Invent," "Collaborate," & "Compose" prompts in *e-Dentity*. These short assignments will help build the skills needed for the semester's more comprehensive writing and research projects.
  * **Writing a Technology Autobiography, 10%**
    o Students will begin their analysis of the intersections of technology and identity by reflecting upon pivotal moments from their childhood, making a claim about how these early interactions influenced their development into the person they are today.

- **Analyzing a Social Networking Profile, 20%**
  - Students will rhetorically analyze an online social networking profile (either their own or someone else's).
- **"You're Fired!" Legal and Ethical Ramifications of Life Online, 20%**
  - Students will role-play as an employer who must fire an employee because of their online profile.
- **Exploring an Online Community, 20%**
  - Students will choose an online community to immerse themselves in; after exploring this community for a time, they will compose a recommendation report that explains some "best practices" for interacting within this community based on their observations.
- **Reflecting on Definitions of Digital Natives, 20%**
  - After reading and viewing materials on the topic of digital natives and immigrants, students will compose an audio essay or a video that responds to earlier definitions and explicates the students' own viewpoint.

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SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Course Intro: Are You a "Digital Native"?
Readings: "Introduction: Your e-Dentity" (pg 1-4); "Excerpt from *Born Digital*" (pg 7-20).
Assignments Due: Short essay based on Compose pg 5; Technology Autobiography (pg 181).

Week 2: Complicating the Definition of Digital Natives
Readings: "Dawn of the Digital Natives" (pg 23-27).
Assignments Due: Group work based on Collaborate pg 27; Reflecting on Definitions of Digital Natives (pg 192).

Week 3: Social Connections Online
Screening: *The Social Network.*
Readings: "Excerpt from Public Displays of Connection" (pg 29-44).
Assignments Due: Short essay based on Compose pg. 59; Rhetorical Analysis of an Online Profile (pg 184).

Week 4: The Impact of 140 Characters
Readings: "What Would Shakespeare Tweet?" (pg 65-69); "Twitter was an Imperfect News Channel During Giffords Coverage" (pg 71-74).
Assignments Due: Short essay based on Explore pg 70; Group work based on Collaborate pg 75.

Week 5: Activism in Online Spaces
Readings: "Small Change" (pg 77-87); "Homeless Man in D. C. Uses Facebook…" (pg 89-94)
Assignments Due: Group work based on Collaborate pg 95.

Week 6: Composing on the Web
Readings: "Excerpt from Why I Blog" (pg 97-104).
Assignments Due: Short essay based on Explore pg 104; Create and post in blog based on Compose pg 104.

Week 7: Our Technological Selves
Readings: "Excerpt from Always-On/Always-On-You: The Tethered Self" (pg 135-143).
Assignments Due: Short essay based on Collaborate pg 144.

Week 8: Gaming and Gold Farming
Readings: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock's Avatar" (pg 159-164).
Assignments Due: Short essay based on Compose pg 165.

Week 9: Gender and Identity
Readings: "Excerpt from *Where The Women Are*" (pg 167-178).
Assignments Due: Group work based on Collaborate pg. 179.

Week 10: Exploring Communities and Technologies
Readings: "Look Who's Talking" (pg 145-157). Readings on research and ethics from rhetoric textbook.
Assignments Due: Choose an online community to begin researching for Online Community Project.

Week 11: Research
Students will have the week off from class to conduct primary research in their online community (interviews, observations, surveys) and to meet with the instructor about the research as it progresses.

Week 12: Online Communities of Gaming
Screening: *Life 2.0*.
Reading: Selection on primary research from rhetoric textbook.
Assignments Due: Exploring an Online Community project (pg 189).

Week 13: Ethics Online
Readings: "Scroogled" (pg 119-132).
Assignments Due: "You're Fired!" (pg 187).

Week 14: Ghosts in the Machine
Readings: "As Facebook Users Die, Ghosts Reach Out" (pg 61-64).
Assignments Due: Short essay based on Invent pg 64.

Week 15: Course Wrap Up
Assignments Due: Groups present a reflection on the words that define them at the end of the semester based on Compose pg 5.