

DIGITAL IDENTITIES

WRT426 | FALL 2011

Instructor Information:

Dr. Krista Kennedy

Office: HBC 228

Office Hours: M 2:30-3:30, W 2:15-3:15 & by appt., f2f & online

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I typically return emails within 48 business hours. If you see me online you're welcome to ping me, but after 6 pm I may not respond.

Overview and Objectives:

WRT 426: Digital Identities is a hybrid course that meets in both a physical classroom (HBC 227) and online. Together, we'll consider practical and theoretical ways to address these central questions: *In an age when social media pervades our lives and potential employers always google first, how might we effectively balance personal and professional personas online? How can you display your skills to their best advantage?* Using basic rhetorical principles, we'll consider our digital presences as an integral part of our professional portfolios. We'll develop branding and production plans, assess existing digital profiles, create/revise presences on multiple platforms, and develop a digital portfolio. Our work will be informed by readings on topics such as digital identity, online privacy, and short-form style. When we finish up in December, you should have gained the following experience and skills:

You'll understand how to effectively compose your digital identity for multiple contexts and audiences. You'll be able to conduct agile rhetorical analysis in order to determine what tone and content is best for the situation at hand while still remaining authentic.

You'll have learned to critically evaluate social media platforms. You'll build on existing communication skills, and also understand how to assess privacy risks, optimize search factors, strategize linking, and more.

You will have strengthened your writing and composition skills. Specifically, you will have critically considered writing in short and ultra-short genres that are not often considered in the classroom. You'll also gain familiarity with basic information architecture and project planning principles.

You'll develop market-ready materials for your job search and work to critically extend your professional networks. You'll revise your resume and LinkedIn profile as well audit all of your social presences and create a digital portfolio that showcases your writing.

All of you should walk away from this course with a broad vocabulary and understanding of these ideas and with a sense of the way different modes of communication impact public perceptions of you and your work.

Texts and Materials:

Deckers, Erik & Lacy, Kyle. *Branding Yourself: How to Use Social Media to Invent or Reinvent Yourself*. Indianapolis: Que. 2011.

Sagolla, Dom. *140 Characters: A Style Guide for the Short Form*. New York: Wiley. 2009.

Schwabel, Dan. *Me 2.0: 4 Steps Toward Building Your Future*. (Revised and Updated Edition.) New York: Kaplan Publishing. 2010.

Other materials will be made available on Blackboard via links and PDF. You'll need the most recent version of Adobe Reader in order to access these files. It's available for free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/>.

Our primary online course space will be Google+. If for some reason you don't already have them, you will also need to set up free accounts for the following social media applications: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and the portfolio application of your choice. We'll talk more about this as we begin to use each one. Depending on your design choices for your portfolio, you may need to purchase server space, register a domain name, or purchase templates. Costs for these items vary widely.

Assignments and Grades:

You will be graded on four major components over the course of the semester.

1. Platform Presentation: 50 points
2. Revision/Development Justifications: 200 points (25 x 8)
3. Final Portfolio: 550 points
4. Weekly Short Assignments: 200 points (25 x 8)

Total available points: 1000

Late work: Written assignments are due by the beginning of class or at the time specified for online submission. Major assignments (i.e. not justifications, inventories, etc.) are reduced by one letter grade per *business day*. This means that if you are unable to complete an assignment that is due on a Friday, the points will not be reduced until the following Monday. Tuesday would be the second late day, and so on. If you're going to be late, you might as well take the time to do the best work possible. All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

I do not give incompletes except in instances of documented illness or the death of close relatives. If you are in the D or F range at midterm, you and I will schedule a conference. This may be a time for you to withdraw from the class or sign a contract with me stating that we've discussed the matter and you intend to continue the class.

That said, nobody wants you to do well more than I do. If you have questions or run into problems as we go along, let's talk and make sure you're able to stay on track.

Getting Things Done:

Attendance and Online Participation: You should be participating fully and consistently each week. Since this class relies so heavily on in-class discussion and work, it is not possible for you to make up missed work or work ahead.

Let me be very frank: If you are taking this class because a hybrid course seems like less work, you may want to reconsider now. Since much of the participation is written, you will likely do more writing than in many of your other classes. Because we only see each other once each week, you need to be consistently contributing online in order to make sure the rest of us know you're there and pulling your weight.

Weekly Posts: Because online communication is so central to our work, it counts for almost half of your grade. You should plan on writing at least one substantive post each week. Here is a checklist of aspects to include during the weeks we're responding to readings:

- ✓ It should be insightful, articulate, on-topic, and clearly demonstrate an understanding of the readings and/or work of the week, depending on what we're up to.
- ✓ It should substantiate assertions and contain citations as appropriate. Parenthetical citation is fine. Ex: (Brady, 2006, p. 2).
- ✓ It should be at least 250 words long.

All posts, whether they be reading responses or justifications, *should be posted by midnight on Thursday*. Late posts will lose two points each day.

Regardless of the nature of any given week's posts, you should plan on making thoughtful comments to at least two of your colleagues' posts. "Thoughtful" means articulate and helpful; comments like "Absolutely!" and "Woo-hoo!" do not count. *Comments should be completed by midnight on Sunday.*

If your contributions meet these basic requirements, you'll receive points as designated above. You can feel free to post more, of course. Extra work (either in posts or comments) means up to three additional points per week, but it must be shared with our circle. If you see something interesting and pertinent to the course in the news, on YouTube, or elsewhere, post a link and let us know about it!

Policies

Technology and Privacy: All course materials will be posted, linked, or pointed to from Google+, which serves as our central course hub. All of our online discussions will take place there, and we'll peer review some materials on gDocs as well. As you know, all of the social media applications we will use are public. Never forget that *anyone* can read them. Additionally, because of the nature of this class, we will need to all friend/follow each other on various platforms. Please make allowances for this during the semester; during finals week, we will declare a no-hard-feelings unfriending period. If you have any concerns about the role of technology in this course, you should contact me within the first week of the semester. You should also plan to take advantage of email, chat, Twitter, and/or face-to-face appointments for questions that come up along the way.

Professionalism: It goes without saying that in the classroom, we should all adhere to basic standards of politeness and professionalism. This extends to the work you do online. Even if you're working at home in your bunny slippers, you're still at work when you're dealing with this class. Remain professional at all times. Disagreements will inevitably pop up as we talk through our topics, but they should be handled respectfully, as should peer reviews. If your behavior does not meet these guidelines, you and I will have a discussion and your grade will be affected.

Respect works both ways. I do my best to be courteous and fair in all situations and at all costs. If you ever feel that you've been treated otherwise, please come and talk to me about it.

Grade Disputes: If you have a question about your grade, please wait 24 hours before you discuss it with me. Take some time to think about the situation and carefully formulate your argument. When we talk, you should have a specific rationale for why you deserve a higher grade. Then schedule a time to talk with me and we'll discuss it.

The Writing Center: Experienced consultants at the Writing Center (101 HB Crouse Hall, on the Quad) are available to work one-on-one with you at *any* stage of your writing process and with *any* kind of writing you're creating. Whether you need help understanding an assignment, brainstorming ideas, revising subsequent drafts, or developing editing strategies, face-to-face and online chat appointments are available for 25- or 50-minute sessions throughout the semester. Appointments can be reserved up to six days in advance via their online scheduling program, WOnline. In addition, drop-in appointments are welcome Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and brief concerns, questions, or drafts (max of 5 pages) can be emailed to consultants via their eWC service. For more information on hours, location and services, please visit <http://wc.syr.edu>.

Academic Dishonesty: If you have a question about documentation and/or plagiarism as you complete your work, just ask me. I'll be more than happy to discuss it with you. That said, the SU Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to

proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>

Religious Observances: SU's religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm <http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

Special Needs and Accommodations: Students who need special consideration because of any sort of documented disability should make an appointment to discuss it with me right away. The information you share with me will remain confidential. You should also contact the Office of Disability Service for information and/or assistance.

WRT 426: Schedule of Events (subject to change)		
Week One (8/29 - 9/4)	What are we up to in here? Why should I care?	In class: Introductions, syllabus, schedule, ethos, ambient awareness. Online: Branding Yourself, 3-32. Madrigal, "Why Facebook & Google's Concept of 'Real Names' is Revolutionary" (link). Post response, social media inventory, personal inventory (See Me 2.0, p. 101)
Week Two (9/5 - 9/11)	Branding Yourself	In class: No meeting due to Labor Day holiday. Online: Me 2.0, 3-27, 97-134. Post Brand Discovery Assessment and SWOT analysis.
Week Three (9/12 - 9/18)	Visual Aspects Central Profiles	In class: Headshot Hootenanny Online: Me 2.0, 158-170. Post Situational Analysis & Audience Analysis (see p. 127-29). Develop Brand Biography (BY, p. 23). Create/Revise Google Profile and draft justification for your portfolio. (Justification need not be posted yet.)
Week Four (9/19 - 9/25)	Resumes	In class: Anderson, Resumes (PDF) Online: Post media justification for your resume. Post resume to gDocs for peer review. Comment on two other resumes.

Week Five (9/26 - 10/2)	Linked In	In class: BY 65-85. Online: Create/complete/revise your LinkedIn profile. Post justification. Peer review 2 other profiles.
Week Six (10/3 - 10/9)	Twitter and Kairos	In class: BY 87-106, Whitcomb et al, <i>The Twitter Job Search</i> 14-34 (PDF) Online: 140 Ch, 1-52. Post reading response and tweet 5 times (total) on at least 3 different days.
Week Seven (10/10 - 10/16)	Twitter, Style, and Social Action	In class: 140 Ch, 53-73, 149-158 Online: Whitcomb, et al, <i>The Twitter Job Search</i> 64-84, 104-110, (PDF). Tweet 8 times (total) on at least 5 different days. Create/revise Twitter bio and page design. Post justification.
Week Eight (10/17 - 10/23)	Facebook & Privacy	In class: Opsahl, "Facebook's Eroding Privacy Policy: A Timeline" (link), Chapman, "Privacy vs Profit at Facebook" (link) Online: Audit your FB settings and post justification.
Week Nine (10/24 - 10/30)	Privacy and Intimacy	In class: Thompson, "I'm So Totally, Digitally Close to You" (link), Chan, "What Social Media Can Teach us About Ourselves" (link), Lehrer, "Online Status Anxiety" (link) Online: Audit and revise FB page(s). Post justification. Peer review at least 2 other profiles.
Week Ten (10/31 - 11/6)	Portfolios: Technology	In class: Tumblr: About (link), "Top 10 Tumblr themes for Portfolios" (link), "Ultimate Guide to Using WP as a Portfolio" (link) Online: Begin site development/revision and post justification of your technological choice and its functions.
Week Eleven (11/7 - 11/13)	Portfolios: Architecture/Content & Logos	In class: Information Architecture, 3-52 (PDF) Online: Post production plan and site architecture for your portfolio.
Week Twelve (11/14 - 11/20)	Portfolios: Content and Revision	Conferences. Come with materials you plan to include in your portfolio. Online: Get to work! There should be visible, substantive progress on your site content and design.
Week Thirteen (11/21 - 11/27)	Thanksgiving Week	No classes
Week Fourteen (11/28 - 12/4)	Maintaining the Brand	In class: Me 2.0, 189-204. Online: Portfolio peer review.
Week Fifteen (12/5 - 12/9)	Wrap Up	Final portfolios due by midnight, 12/14