# WRITING 111:
## ECOLOGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES OF READING AND WRITING

Dr. Jimmy Butts
Fall 2015
EMAIL: buttsjm@wfu.edu
OFFICE: Tribble C310
OFFICE HOURS: MTW: 2-3 p.m.
and by appointment

Course Site: ecotechwriting.blogspot.com
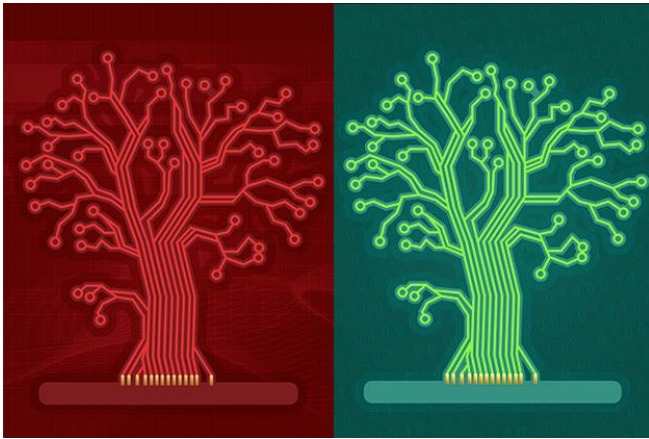
## COURSE DESCRIPTION

-----Fast, faster, warp speed… We now read and write faster than ever before, blazing through the internet, catching blurbs in the span of a millisecond, marking up the web, and changing the future. Writing on computers is now the norm. But how can we move forward by using new technologies of writing across various kinds of new digital media, and respond to older forms of composing? Can tools like Twitter be valid writing spaces for college-level writing and research? And how are these new technologies related to the different kinds of writing you will encounter in college and beyond? This course will begin by looking back at some of the histories of writing technologies, and move into the practice of exploring the vast array of possibilities connected with writing with new media. We will explore the intricacies and grammars of written code, the nuances of typing machines, and the effects of screen time upon language. We will lean into the bleeding edge of new media technology and wonder whether new media lives up to its hype. We will make arguments about how we should write into the future, and play with the different media that we expect to use with as we move forward. Readings will include writings on media theory, science fiction, and some choice articles on digital rhetorics and futurism. We will zoom through a number of short exploratory assignments, completed as missions to level-up your class score. We will correct the grammar of celebrity Tweets, examine online Avatars, embed QR codes, write interactive code, and write commentary in live digital spaces. Finally, we will research one aspect of these futuristic digital media and explore that medium in a multimodal white paper. We will attempt to see what writing will become in the FUTURE!

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Foster **rhetorical knowledge** for the purpose of engaging in thoughtful argument and response to a variety of texts
- Understand and apply **critical thinking** by discussing readings and using writing effectively and ethically
- Explain and illustrate the use of academic **writing conventions** for multiple audiences, contexts, and purposes
- Develop and practice a personalized series of flexible and self-reflexive writing **processes**
- **Research** and engage in academic conversations by analyzing and responding to the work of others
- **Compose in different multimedia** formats for a variety of purposes, **individually** and **collaboratively**

## READINGS & MATERIALS

*The Writer's Handbook*
*I'm With The Bears*
Twelve Tomorrows Anthology (provided)
Codecademy Account

YouTube Account
Labeled USB Drive
Twitter Account (optional)
Laptop computer and cord as per classroom teacher's instructions
Approximately 25 3x5 notecards for in course activities or quick quizzes
Pen and loose-leaf paper

## PLAGIARISM

Don't do it. It's not very creative. You'll get an F on the assignment if you do... along with a talking to.
And it'll go onto your academic record. Just come talk to me if life is so crazily bad that it's tempting you to plagiarize.

## ATTENDANCE

You should hang out with us. Be here. You're paying for it. You get two absences that are unexcused (i.e. other than doctor's or coach's notes or funerals). After that, it's 10 points off for each additional absence. Three tardies equal an absence.

Note: If I see extensive use of your cell phone or the use of any electronic device for non-classroom related purposes (e.g. Facebook), I reserve the right to mark you as absent without direct notification regardless of how much time is left in the class period. *See the technology policy below.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Generally, major assignments should be uploaded to your blog and turned in to me as a hard copy. Turn in all assignments in on time. However, if an assignment is late, I will take off a third of the total points for that assignment per day. I **do not** accept assignments turned in by email; they just get lost...

## GRADING POLICY

*Grades are silly things, not my favorite things. In a perfect world you would just learn and write, and it would be wonderful. But... love them or hate them, we have them. They help us measure ourselves and improve. They help us understand what is and isn't working. So, we work within that framework.*
*Our course will be unique from most other courses in its grading system.*

In this class, you will, complete assignments to earn points. You start out with nothing, and complete assignments to earn your grade. There are more points available than necessary, so think about how you want to *level up* from F to A in this class. Think of it like playing a videogame. The projects you complete will earn you experience points, which will move you up closer to an A as we progress. I find this system to be closer to a real world economy. Also, I find that students prefer it. They like to be able to *earn* an A, and not feel defeated if they're struggling with difficulty in writing, for example. This means that at midterms, you may have only earned enough points to get a C, but if you hang in there, and turn in polished work, you shouldn't have much trouble reaching A territory by the end of the class.

All of our assignments will be graded based on a rubric, but we should consider those rubrics thoughtfully. For example, is clarity in writing always good? When should we not follow a certain convention? Those are the decisions of a master writer, and a student moving towards A papers.

**AS SUCH**, I will most often be looking for *uniqueness* in your writing, and you should be too. So, when the rubric mentions a jumbled organization negatively, this might be a good thing for our purposes. Look at the rubric, play off of it, and know that I'll be grading you along those criteria.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented learning difficulty or believe you qualify for special accommodations (such as extra time to complete tests, etc.), please speak to me as soon as possible so we can develop a plan to ensure your successful completion of the course. Contact the Learning Assistance Center if you aren't sure whether your issue qualifies you for special accommodations.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This course requires the use of computer technologies in and out of class. Students are expected to bring their laptops to class with batteries fully charged, or bring your charger. While some class time is provided for computer literacy instruction, the instructor can provide additional help or recommend other support for advanced software. **Cellular phones should generally be both turned off and stored away during class.**

**Still, I know that we live in a digital world, which I embrace, so here is the weird, strict way we will handle our technological psychosis:**
I am fine if you check your cell phone and send a quick message once in class. If I see you doing this, I will be glad that you have someone to talk to outside of class. However, it's probably best that you not spend lots of class time on your cell phone during class time. Beyond a quick check, it becomes a rude distraction from our time learning together. Hence, if you venture beyond your one allotted quick check, I will take 5 points from you every time I catch you on your cell phone. If the temptation is too much, feel free to place your cell phone at the front of the class with me during our class time together. There may be times that I release you from this technological psychosis, but I will tell you very clearly when that occurs.

## THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center, is a free tutoring service available to the entire student body. It provides students opportunities to discuss questions or problems related to academic writing—from generating a topic and thesis to organizing a draft and integrating appropriate citations. Go there. It's a great resource.

| | 6 points | Needs Work | 8 points | Yes, But… | 10 points | Most Impressive! |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CONCEPT** | There is a significant problem with the logic or sense of the piece.<br><br>The main idea is difficult to figure out. The reader is left wondering what the writer is trying to say. The writer may not have understood the topic or may not have cared about it enough to write something purposeful.<br><br>The writer is still trying to find a topic.<br><br>Little supporting facts or information. The writing may simply be a regurgitation of facts, or a list of found concepts. Logical fallacies may be present.<br><br>The writing is vague in a problematic way.<br><br>The concept is overly generic or broad and/or there is little point or purpose to the piece.<br><br>Random, irrelevant, unnecessarily repeated, or rambling concepts are problematic. | Generally a good topic, even if needs to be developed further.<br><br>There are moments that seem unrelated or irrelevant.<br><br>Logical hiccups, but they don't deter from the main point.<br><br>Partially generic or obvious concept, but well executed and adds a new line of thought.<br><br>Vague moments are eventually clarified. | The concept and main topic are extremely clever, interesting, clear, and focused.<br><br>The main idea is thoughtful and helps the reader to consider new and interesting avenues. The writer crafts the writing with an awareness and respect for the audience and purpose for writing.<br><br>Logical, sensical, and convincingly argued or presented.<br><br>Good connections, use of sources, insightful combinations of thoughts.<br><br>The thesis, or main point, is excitingly unique and goes beyond the generic or obvious.<br><br>The supporting concepts are relevant, interesting, organized, precise, well-chosen, and help support the main idea. |
| **CORRECTNESS** | Some parts of the text contain so many errors in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and/or paragraphing that it is impossible to understand the message well.<br><br>Words are obviously used incorrectly.<br><br>Choppy or rambling sentences require rereading.<br><br>Sentences are difficult to follow, confusing, or nonsensical (in an non-intentional, uncreative way).<br><br>Citations are wrong. Sources are undocumented or incorrect.<br><br>There is not a clear pattern or organization.<br><br>Part of the assignment is missing. | There is a noticeable need for some editing.<br><br>Some words or sentences may not fit.<br><br>Sources are documented but may have some small problem.<br><br>Transitions are common.<br><br>The assignment meets all general requirements, but does do much to do anything beyond the basics. | Capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and paragraphing are used effectively to enhance the readability of the work.<br><br>The polished work looks clean and correct. It looks good.<br><br>The piece is very close to being publishable in some way.<br><br>Sources given credit and are well documented.<br><br>The organization or structure of the piece is well controlled and fits with the argument.<br><br>The assignment exceeds the formal expectations. |
| **CREATIVITY** | The writing is kind of flat, lifeless, and uninteresting.<br><br>The writer fails to connect much with the audience.<br><br>The work is unattractive or plain.<br><br>Graphics are simply cut and pasted from another source without being integrated into the piece.<br><br>Spaces, fonts, or margins are not used properly.<br><br>There is not a sense of personal voice. The language may feel unnatural.<br><br>Visuals are a distraction or are omitted when needed.<br><br>Shows a lack of interest, or a "just get it done" mentality. | There are some creative moves made, although they follow generic patterns. The work is fairly safe.<br><br>The writer is not always involved or excited about the topic.<br><br>Some active verbs and interesting nouns are close to create a picture in the reader's mind, but usually the writer settles for just any word.<br><br>Regular language and design fit the basic needs of the assignment, but do not surprise or elicit emotion.<br><br>The personal voice sounds like an average student, and conveys the concept in an ordinary way.<br><br>Visuals are inconsistent. They may attempt to add something to the text, but miss their target in some way. | The writer evokes a cleverness through a lasting personal tone by taking a deliberate risk and manipulates a variety of conventions for stylistic effects.<br><br>The writer connects strongly with the reader using natural, engaging language.<br><br>Creative words are chosen.<br><br>Sentences flow with an expressive rhythm that invites an interesting engagement with the concepts.<br><br>The personal voice can be strongly heard. The structure varies in interesting ways, adding variety and energy.<br><br>Formatting—in fonts, colors, use of white space, etc.—fits the piece and enhances meaning.<br><br>Visuals are clearly aligned, and add aesthetic attractiveness to the text. The presentation is impressively designed. |

| Assignments | Description | Potential Points | Earned Points |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lead 2 class discussions | Lead a class discussion on one of our readings with a one-page handout giving some brief context about the author and the story.<br><br>Pull out one vocabulary word, explain the main argument, ask us some conversation generating questions, make a connection to something else, and point us to a passage that stands out.<br>---<br>Also you will give us a brief grammar review that you have researched that can help us.<br><br>30 points each | 60 | |
| Content Quizzes | 12 three-point reading quizzes. | 36 | |
| Prophecy | | 30 | |
| (A)Personal Narrative | things and you | 30 | |
| Digital Rhetorical Analysis | Search Strings, Sites, and Selfies: Digital Ethos | 30 | |
| Game Directions | | 30 | |
| Code and Metacode | | 30 | |
| **Explorations** | *You may skip any one of the exploratory assignments below.*<br>*And you must write one assignment collaboratively with another student.* | | |
| Tech Review | | 30 | |
| 3 QR Codes | | 30 | |
| Post-Tech Last Manifestos | | 30 | |
| Minimovies | | 30 | |
| Concept Remix Album Insert | | 30 | |
| Gutenberg Remixes | | 30 | |
| Better Letters | | | |
| **Major Capstone Projects** | | | |
| 100 Page Paper | | 60 | |
| The Slow Sentence | | 30 | |
| #futuresyllabus | | 16 | |
| Arguing for an Ethical Future | Wicked Problems & Elegant Solutions | 60 | |
| Robot Sentences | We will write practice sentences to review and improve our familiarity with grammatical conventions. 100 points for collecting them. | 30 | |
| Vocabulary Final Exam | We will collect vocabulary words from each one of you, and one from me and memorize their meanings. | 30 | |
| Extra Credit | | ??? | |
| =Total Points | | 652 | 0 |
| **Grade Scale** | | | |
| Fragile Bot (0.0) | less than 326 points | | |
| Digger Bot (1.0) | at least 326 points or 50% | 326 | |
| Climber Bot (2.0) | at least 456.4 points or 70% | 456.4 | |
| Builder Bot (3.0) | at least 521.6 points or 80% | 521.6 | |
| Achiever Bot (4.0) | at least 586.8 points or 90% | 586.8 | |

**Commented [BJM5]:** Students write prophecies to suggest possible futures—outcomes that may be positive or negative, with an eye toward the whole world, our environment, and big-picture ecologies. They have to support their claims.

We use Al Gore as an example of a contemporary prophet concerning climate change and take note of his book *The Future*.

**Commented [BJM6]:** This essay was an addition. I wanted students to write about their relationship to a thing. This allows them to see their relationship to objects in the world, where it comes from and where it's going.

**Commented [BJM7]:** We write apocalyptic manifestos on different, future-thinking media. Students write on abandoned scraps of material to engage with what we will write on as we move forward. This has an increased focus on sustainable materials.

**Commented [BJM8]:** This assignment is an addition: Students will simply write a one page letter to make the future better in some way—however, that can be interpreted for them. It could mean writing a company so that they will pollute less, or writing a politician to pass a law on e-waste.

**Commented [BJM9]:** We are going to create a collaborative list of readings that they will generate together. I expect them to add readings that will have an eye toward better futures and sustainability.

**Commented [BJM10]:** Students explore some ethical issue as we move forward to the future. We talk about how all arguments are future-focused. Sustainability will appear in the prompt as something to take into consideration.

Course Schedule: Subject to change…

| | | In Class |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Wednesday, August 26, 2015** | The Syllabus. Introductions. Tell us something about yourself.<br>What do we know about the future? What is different about digital composition?<br>*What is our relationship to technology?*<br>Writing as the first *tekne* |
| 2 | **Friday, August 28, 2015** | What is rhetoric?  What is persuasive about the future?<br>New Technological Capabilities: The 100 Page Paper. The Slow Sentence. |
| 3 | **Monday, August 31, 2015** | What is an ecology?<br>And what does that have to do with the technology and rhetoric?<br>What is the most sustainable writing technology?<br>Writing with Power: Penvention Prototypes |
| 4 | **Wednesday, September 2, 2015** | How to Read and Write as a 21st Century College Student<br>Slow Reading, Hyper Reading, and Machine Reading |  Spritz & Wordle |<br>Decorum. Digital versus handwritten letters. |
| 5 | **Friday, September 4, 2015** | *How to Rock any Class Discussion:  Putting in Your Oar*<br>*What Technology Wants* - My Question |
| 6 | **Monday, September 7, 2015** | Prophecy: *Scriptures, Al Gore & Nostradamus, The Long News* |
| 7 | **Wednesday, September 9, 2015** | Wednesday Practice:<br>One Slowly Crafted Sentence.<br>Grammar Tips and Robot Sentences<br>---<br>Observation. Deduction/Induction/Conduction: How to describe what we see and haven't.<br>Our Rubric. Writing Review So Far |
| 8 | **Friday, September 11, 2015** | Fictions and Arguments About The Future | "The Zebra Storyteller"<br>Vocab | Reading 1 |
| 9 | **Monday, September 14, 2015** | Ecology Walks |
| 10 | **Wednesday, September 16, 2015** | Wednesday Practice: Logos | Conductive Logic | Infographics | Organization | Dissoi Logoi |
| 11 | **Friday, September 18, 2015** | Vocab | Reading 2 |
| 12 | **Monday, September 21, 2015** | Pathos | Future Art: The Futurist Manifesto - The New Aesthetic<br>Tech Manifestos  \  Lanier \ |
| 13 | **Wednesday, September 23, 2015** | Wednesday Practice: Digital Digging. Citing (Good) Sources. Integration. |
| 14 | **Friday, September 25, 2015** | Vocab | Reading 3 |
| 15 | **Monday, September 28, 2015** | Ethos | Social Networks (Gender, Sex, Race, Posthumanism, & Virtual Identities)<br>Twitter Mining, Haraway \ Amber Case |
| 16 | **Wednesday, September 30, 2015** | Wednesday Practice: Praxis | Bogost | Future Games |
| | **Friday, October 2, 2015** | Vocab | Reading 4 |
| | **Monday, October 5, 2015** | Futuristic Music | Remixes | Copyleft | Citing | The Grey Album |
| 17 | **Wednesday, October 7, 2015** | Wednesday Practice: Broken Twitter Grammars & Corrections. How Your Mom Texts |
| 18 | **Friday, October 9, 2015** | Vocab | Reading 5 |
| 19 | **Monday, October 12, 2015** | Better Letters |
| 20 | **Wednesday, October 14, 2015** | Wednesday Practice: Cinema Structures & Writing Structures: Learning from other media. |
| 21 | **Friday, October 16, 2015** | **Fall Break!** |
| 22 | **Monday, October 19, 2015** | Final Projects Overview |
| 23 | **Wednesday, October 21, 2015** | Wednesday Practice: Copyleft | Prose Remediation from Project Gutenberg |<br>(ex. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*)<br>Addition, Subtraction, Substitution, and Transposition |
| 24 | **Friday, October 23, 2015** | Vocab | Reading 6 |
| 25 | **Monday, October 26, 2015** | Nicolas Carr: Is Google Making Us Stupid? |

**Commented [BJM11]:** I won't comment all the way through here, but this was a very good conversation. We tried to consider what exactly an ecology is, and what its limits are. A good talk. We also talked about mining for conflict materials that go into our writing devices.

**Commented [BJM12]:** This reading from Kevin Kelly allowed us to take a step back from embracing all technology. He begins by saying that a chainsaw is a helpful technology, because he built a cabin by hand. But that not all technologies are good.

**Commented [BJM13]:** We took a walk outside and then tried to take note of and describe our environment in writing. This activity was directly borrowed from something we did during the Magnolia Project training.

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|---|---|---|
| 26 | **Wednesday, October 28, 2015** | Wednesday Practice: When should we be Luddites? Technics as our costume. |
| 27 | **Friday, October 30, 2015** | Halloween.  Dress up for extra credit.<br>Vocab \| Reading 7 |
| 28 | **Monday, November 2, 2015** | Sontag "The Imagination of Disaster"<br>The Politics and Ethics of the Future. |
| 29 | **Wednesday, November 4, 2015** | Wednesday Practice:  \| Future, Style, & Posters \| |
| | **Friday, November 6, 2015** | Vocab \| Reading 8 |
| | **Monday, November 9, 2015** | Codecademy.  Computational Grammars. |
| | **Wednesday, November 11, 2015** | More Codecademy.  Computational Grammars. |
| | **Friday, November 13, 2015** | Virtual Class Discussion |
| | **Monday, November 16, 2015** | Workshopping Roundtables |
| | **Wednesday, November 18, 2015** | QR Codes |
| | **Friday, November 20, 2015** | Exam. Responding to Intel's *The Tomorrow Project* using our vocabulary |
| | **Monday, November 23, 2015** | No Class.  Conferences. |
| | **Wednesday, November 25, 2015** | **Thanksgiving Break** |
| | **Friday, November 27, 2015** | **Thanksgiving Break** |
| | **Monday, November 30, 2015** | Peer Review |
| | **Wednesday, December 2, 2015** | Better Futures?<br>Sustainable Presents?<br>What will it take? From your letters and arguments… |
| | **Friday, December 4, 2015** | All Final Papers and Projects Due.<br>Sir Ken Robinson.  The Future of Our Education.<br>Write a letter to your future self.<br>Reflection Roulette.  A Final Reading. |