SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

50169 Writing and New Media

Course Name: Bachelor of Arts in Communication (Writing and Cultural Studies)
Level: 200
Number of Credit points: 8
Prerequisites: None
Grading: Graded

HANDBOOK DESCRIPTION

This subject explores the impacts of new media on writing. Students will examine a range of works in which writing and new media intersect, with a focus on blogs, hypertexts and other non-linear interactive works. They will investigate the emergence of the internet as a publishing space writers, the rise of blogs, and approaches to writing non- linear works. They will look at the relationships of image and text in new media writing, and explore emerging spaces for writing such as mobile phone / sms delivery. They will learn how to structure writing projects for online/ interactive delivery, and issues concerning writing for the internet. Students will gain skills in developing basic online works, will develop a piece of collaborative writing in the form of a hypertext, and an individual project.

CONTRIBUTION TO GRADUATE PROFILE

On completing this subject, students will:
•   have a critical understanding of new media and contemporary cultural forms that support their writing in relation to these media and the formal innovations within them
•   be able to think critically and creatively about future developments in cultural industries
•   have a broad range of skills and knowledge, making for creative and critically informed communications professionals
•   have both general and specific skills in creative writing across a range of genres
•   be able to function within groups and be sensitive to the multiple dimensions of social and cultural difference.

OBJECTIVES

On completion of this subject students are expected to have**:**
a)   Be aware of the impacts of new media on writing practices
b)   Be aware of the use of the internet as an alternative publishing space for writers
c)   Develop skills in writing and planning new media works
d)   Develop a collaborative writing project using new media
e)   Gain skills in critically reflecting on new media writing/ hypertext projects
f)   Develop basic technical skills in developing hypertexts
g)   Extend writing practice through developing a hypertext or other new media writing project

TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Lectures, tutorials, workshops, discussions, in class exercises, concept development, group and individual project development.

CONTENT

This subject explores the impacts of new media on writing. Students will gain an overview of a range of works in which writing and new media intersect, with a focus on blogs, hypertexts and other non-linear interactive works. They will investigate the emergence of the internet as a publishing space writers, the rise of blogs, and approaches to writing non- linear works. They will look at the relationships of image and text in new media writing, and explore emerging spaces for writing such as mobile phone / sms delivery. They will learn how to structure writing projects for online/ interactive delivery, and issues concerning writing for the internet. They will examine key projects in the fields of literary hypertext and new media. Through workshops they will learn the basics of developing online projects using Dreamweaver. Students will gain skills in developing basic online works, will develop a piece of collaborative writing in the form of a hypertext, and an individual project.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment item 1: NEW MEDIA WRITING/ HYPERTEXT REPORT
Objectives: a, b, e
Value: 20%
Due: Ongoing weeks 5,6,7
Task: Working individually, will research a hypertext or piece of new media writing and report on it to the class as a 5-10 minute class presentation. It may be a blog, "literary" hypertext, online poetry, new media narrative, game or other project as approved by the lecturer. Students will critically reflect upon the work, discussing key points of interest eg innovation, creativity, integration of image and text, use of non linear narrative, use of alternative distribution methods etc. The report will be verbal, supplemented by relevant audio visual materials to be provided by the student. A summary of key points must also be submitted to the lecturer, either in Powerpoint or as a written item.

Assessment Criteria:
- Clarity of presentation
- Relevance of information and support materials
- Degree of critical reflection upon the work
- Degree of engagement with issues concerning new media and writing such innovation, image/ text relationships, non- linearity narrative, distribution methods etc

Assignment 2:   COLLABORATIVE HYPERTEXT PROJECT
Objectives: b, c, d, f
Value: 40%
Due: Normally week 9

Task: Working in a small group; collaborate to conceive, plan, write and produce a hypertext involving multiple narrative pathways. While the concept for the hypertext is to be devised by the group, the various paths are to be written by individual members of the group.

     Assessment criteria:
- Creativity achieved within brief
- Demonstrated degree of effective collaborative work
- Degree of engagement with hypertextual writing
- Degree of technical/ aesthetic refinement

Assignment 3:   INDIVIDUAL WRITING PROJECT
Objectives: b,c,f,g
Value: 40%
Due: Normally Week 14

Task: Working individually, students will develop an individual writing project that engages with the intersections of writing and new media. This may take the form of a hypertext, blog, treatment for a more complex /media rich new media work or game, or project for sms/ mobile phone delivery. The length of the individual project is in the vicinity of 2,500 to 3,000 words.

Assessment criteria:

- Creativity achieved within brief
- Degree of creative engagement with the intersections of writing and new media, such as hypertext, non linear writing, impacts of new media on writing practices
- Degree of technical/ aesthetic refinement

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
Since class discussion and participation in activities form an integral part of this subject, students are expected to attend, arrive punctually and actively participate in classes.   Students who have a valid reason

for extended absence from class (e.g. illness) may be required to complete additional assignment work to ensure they achieve the subject objectives.

TEXTS AND REFERENCES

Due to the rapidly changing nature of this field, texts are updated regularly. Online references are provided each semester. Key texts include:-

Amerika, M. (2006- forthcoming) *A History of Internet Art, MIT Press,* Cambridge, Massachusetts

Aronson, L. (2000) *Scriptwriting Updated: New and Conventional Ways of Writing for the Screen*, Allen and Unwin, Australia.

Blood, R and Editors of Perseus Publishing (2002) *We've Got Blog: how weblogs are changing our culture*, Perseus Publishing, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Bushoff, B (ed) (2005) *Sagasnet reader: Developing Interactive Narrative Content*, Munich, High Text Verlag

Korolenko, M (1997) *Writing for Multimedia: a guide and sourcebook for the digital writer,* Belmont: Integrated Media Group

Joyce, M. (2000) *Of Two Minds; hypertext pedagogy and poetics* MIT Press, Leonardo Book 2000, Cambridge MA.

Landow, G (ed) (1997) *Hypertext 2.0: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*, Baltimore, Parallax, Johns Hopkins University Press

Manovich,L. (2001). *The Language of New Media.* MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

Pax, S. (2003) *Salam Pax: The Clandestine Diary of an Ordinary Iraqi*, Grove Press, New York, New York, USA.

Stansberry, D. (1998) *Labyrinths: the art of interactive writing and design,* Belmont: Integrated Media Group

Tofts, D (2005). *Interzone: Media Arts in Australia*, Australia: Craftsman House/ Thames and Hudson

RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS