COMPOSING DIGITAL MEDIA
ENGCMP 610 // CL435 // Tu 6-8:30PM

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Office hours:
Tu 4-5, W 2-4
CL 453

This class is a hands-on introduction to theories, tools, and practices relevant to digital media making. You likely have some experience in this arena. Digital media are less rare, exotic creatures than the fabric of everyday life: if you've written an email or taken a picture with your phone, you've engaged in digital production. This class asks you to think about how digital media move and shape the world, and how you – as media makers – might move and shape the world yourselves.

The theme for this section is *access*. Together, we'll work through questions like: How can digital media help us tell new stories, or present old ones in new ways? Does writing through sound, image, and movement allow us to convey aspects of the human experience inaccessible through written text alone? How do digital technologies themselves raise issues of access? What kind of people do they imagine their users to be, and how can we design digital artifacts accessible to the largest possible audience?

Over the course of the semester, you'll complete three major individual projects (sound, image, and captioning) and a personal portfolio website to showcase them. You'll also write regular blog posts, participate in a group transmedia design project and produce technical tutorials intended for online sharing.

W CREDIT
This is a writing-intensive class meant to help you work on the mechanics of revision, so our work together entails serious public engagement with processes of creation and re-creation. Workshops and discussions will take up a significant portion of our in-class time, and you'll be expected to share your work and comment on the work of others.

COURSE MATERIALS
For this class, you'll need:
- A ≥16GB flash drive or external hard drive
- Headphones
- A blank notebook
- A Box account, via http://pitt.box.com
- Regular Internet access
- Something you can take pictures and record audio with

COURSE GOALS
1) Consider technology's role in acts of making.
In this class, you'll work with specific software (Adobe Photoshop & Premiere, Audacity, Twine) and hardware (smartphones, computers, microphones), but you'll also think broadly about how the media tools we live among shape the ways we think and write.

2) Practice revision within and across media forms.
Each unit begins with a small project and ends with a larger one, so you'll constantly work through how to scale ideas up and down, how to pick out the most promising threads in your own work and develop them further. You'll have opportunities to translate ideas and stories from one medium to another as well, exploring how media form contributes to meaning.

3) Embrace experimentation.
Technology changes quickly. However expert you become, you'll always encounter tools and programs you don't know how to use. Here, you'll get comfortable with the unfamiliar, learning what questions to ask when faced with something new and how to get started on a project without knowing exactly what your finished product will be.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Participation (in-class & online)	20%
Sound Portfolio	15%
Image Portfolio	15%
Text Portfolio	15%
Group Project	10%
Portfolio Website	25%

I care more about thoughtful composition than technical perfection: if you can talk me through the choices you made and the reasons you made them, you can still do well on a project that doesn't quite come together. You'll write a reflection for each major assignment you turn in; think of these writings as your opportunity to make clear to me the work you've done, the thought you've put in. *A beautiful media component won't get an A without a thoughtful reflection*.

Final grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A = 92 – 100 %	All projects exceed expectations,
A- = 90 – 92 %	they are carefully edited and take risks that work.
B+ = 88 – 89 %	
B = 83 – 87 %	All projects meet or exceed expectations,
B- = 80 – 82 %	they take risks that may not always work out.
C+ = 78 – 79 %	
C = 73 – 77 %	All projects meet basic expectations, some work
C- = 70 – 72 %	may fail to take risks or need more careful editing.
D = 60 – 69 %	
F = below 60 %	Expectations not met. Work is incomplete or careless.

COURSE WEBSITE

All readings (and things to watch, listen to, and play) will be posted on the course website: http://www.klcameron.com/cdmt. This is also where you'll write posts for the class blog.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory. Because this is a small, discussion- and workshop-based class, your classmates' experiences are directly impacted by whether or not you show up prepared. Come to class on time, ready to ask questions and take part in conversation. If you arrive more than 15 minutes after class has begun or if you arrive without materials on a workshop day, you will be counted as absent. ***More than two absences are grounds for automatic failure****.* That said, I understand that life doesn't always respect class schedules: ***come talk to me before you miss class*** if you expect to have a problem with this policy. If you are absent, you're responsible for finding out about and making up any work you miss.

LATE WORK

Late work receives no comments, and you lose a full letter grade for each day an assignment is late. If you expect to have trouble meeting a deadline, again, talk to me before the assignment is due. ***Deadlines are not negotiable after you have missed them.***

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

This is a course about technology. Computers, phones, and other devices will be a regular presence in our classroom, and you're welcome to use whatever technology makes you best able to contribute. That said, I expect you to be present and attentive to the work we're doing together. If you are distracted to the point that you're unable to contribute to class discussions, you will be marked absent.

EMAIL POLICY

You can expect me to check email at least once a day during the week, and to make an effort to respond to questions within a day or two of reading them. I expect you to do the same.

OFFICE HOURS

My office hours are Tuesdays 4-5 and Wednesdays 2-3 in CL 453, and you can also contact me by email to set up an appointment at another time. Office hours are a chance for us to have a one-on-one conversation about anything related to the course or digital media more broadly: technical problems you're having, ideas for projects, questions or concerns about grading. I will not discuss individual grades in the classroom. For the sake of everyone's privacy, come to office hours. ***You're required to come see me at least once during the semester***, but when and what we talk about is up to you.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas, or other (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." We'll talk about how to handle other people's creations responsibly, but it is important to note now that videos don't often come "from Google" and that changing a few words or lines in a quotation does not constitute avoiding plagiarism. All instances of plagiarism will result in an automatic 0 on the assignment and a report to the Dean.

THE WRITING CENTER

Located in 317-B O'Hara Student Center, 4024 O'Hara St., the Writing Center is a resource that allows you to work on your writing with an experienced writing consultant. While WC consultants are not necessarily familiar with the media production tools we're using or all of the modes that we're composing in, they can help you think through projects and provide valuable feedback on your written reflections. They can work with you on a one- time basis, or they can work with you throughout the term. Their services are free, but you should call ahead (412-624-6556) or make an appointment online at www.writingcenter.pitt.edu/

GENDER IDENTITY & EXPRESSION

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a name different from the one on the official class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your gender pronouns. Mine are she/her/hers.

OTHER SERVICES

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both me (your instructor) and the Office of Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890/412-624-3346 (Fax), as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drsabout.

Pitt offers free personal and academic counseling at the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930). Specialized counseling services are available to victims of sexual assault; you can contact the sexual assault services coordinator via the main UCC phone line during weekday business hours or at 412-648-7856 (after 5 pm, Monday-Friday or on weekends). In a crisis situation, university police can also connect you with an on-call counselor affiliated with the UCC.