COMPOSING DIGITAL MEDIA

ENGCMP 610 // CL 435 // MW 9-10:15

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Office Hours:
M 10:30-12
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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 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 text) and a final determined by your own interests. You'll also participate in a group media design project and produce technical tutorials intended for online sharing.

COURSE GOALS
1) Consider technology's role in acts of making.
In this class, you'll work with specific software (Adobe Premiere & Photoshop, 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 be working 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, and so 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 projects without knowing in advance 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%
Final Project	25%

As a rule, 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: these writings are your opportunity to make clear to me the work you've done, the thought you've put in, and so you should reserve time to do them well. *A beautiful media component won't get an A without a solid accompanying 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 expectation,
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.

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

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 record audio with

COURSE WEBSITE
All readings (and things to watch, listen to, and play) will be posted on the course website: http://www.klcameron.com/cdms18. 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 significantly after class has begun or if you arrive without prepared materials on a workshop day or if you're clearly texting/socializing online during class, 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
You lose a full letter grade for each day an assignment it 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
I expect that you'll shut off your phone's ringer and that you won't text during class---this is part of you having respect for your classmates. When we're in the lab, I expect that you'll only be logged onto a computer if our work together necessitates it. In my

experience, your active, conversational presence in class is worth a lot more than taking down the perfect set of notes.

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.

OPEN LAB HOURS
TBA.

WRITING CENTER
Located in 317-B 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/

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE/MAJOR DUE DATES

UNIT 1: Sound, Weeks 1-4
Portfolio Due Midnight, Tuesday 2/6

UNIT 2: Image, Weeks 5-8
Portfolio Due Midnight, Tuesday 2/27

UNIT 3: Text, Weeks 9-13
Portfolio Due Midnight, Tuesday 4/3

Weeks 14-16: Final Projects
Final Projects Due Midnight, Sunday 4/22

More information about assignments is available here:
http://klcameron.com/cdms18/assignments

A more detailed and up-to-date schedule is available here:
http://klcameron.com/cdms18/schedule