English 3362: Reading and Writing About Data
Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Kelly
Class Meetings: Mo/We 4:05PM - 5:30PM
Class Location: Ratliff Building North (RBN) 02012

Office Hours: Mo/We 2:30-4:00PM (confirm by appointment beforehand)
Instructor's Office: College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) 236
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Course Description

Today, we live in the age of Big Data insofar as machine-assisted data-gathering technologies have helped us aggregate massive amounts of information and represent long-form trends across a variety of media. Everything from the geo-location systems used to map traffic patterns to climate information that can be used to anticipate the spread of waterborne viruses to crowd-sourced artificial intelligence programs that can predict what you're trying to type on your smartphone all rely on the mass aggregation of quantitative information that is then compiled, synthesized, then re-presented across different platforms.

As data analytic software and methodologies become more central to our personal and professional lives, organizations need individuals who are not only capable of gathering and interpreting data but professionals who are capable of *communicating with and through* data to a variety of audiences. That is to say, businesses and institutions need to be capable of communicating abstract, complex, and highly-specific information to audiences using a variety of audio, visual, and text-based formats.

In this course, students will learn how to analyze (and be expected to apply) the crucial components of data-driven journalism, digital humanities analysis, and information visualization. However, students will also explore the rhetorical dimensions underlying data-driven communication methods and the ways in which data-aggregation technologies are reshaping public discourse. In other words, students will balance their ability to conduct quantitative, data-driven analyses with a critical comprehension of the rhetorical dimensions and cultural impact of the contemporary push towards Big Data practices.

Despite the emphasis on machine-assisted data-gathering and composition, this course is not a Statistics class nor is it a Computer Science lab (meaning, no advanced background in either stats or programming is required). Students will become familiar with AI-assisted reading practices but the primary focus will be how students document their research practices and design decisions in all major projects.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Understand the foundational principles, practices, and research methods that constitute valid data-driven analyses and argumentation.

2. Be capable of analyzing and deploying effective rhetorical features of data-driven, multimodal projects (such as interactive websites, online archives, and information visualizations).

3. Acknowledge the role of data-driven analysis and the importance of effective data communication in a variety of institutional and professional environments (i.e., the role that data plays in hospitals, universities, non-profits, etc.).

Attendance and Late Assignments

Students are allowed four unexcused absences for the semester. Any additional unexcused absence beyond these four allowances will result in a student's final grade being lowered by one entire letter (i.e., an A will be lowered to a B).

Absences due to a valid medical issue will not be counted as unexcused.

Major Projects

Rhetorical Analysis of Data Visualization: students will read and interpret a data visualization of their choice. In doing so, they will analyze and explore what makes for effective and persuasive data-driven communication (meaning, modes of communication that couple the written word with extra-textual forms of data analysis). The goal of this project is to familiarize students with useful (and, in some cases, unproductive) data communication strategies in hopes of applying these same strategies in subsequent projects.

Experimenting with AI-assisted Data Analyses: students will document and describe their experiences gathering publicly-accessible data surrounding a topic or issue of their choice, then using AI-assisted reading practices to locate interesting patterns or trends in their selected data sets. The goal of this project is to familiarize students with the affordances and limitations of using AI as a research assistant for composing mixed-methods, data-driven projects.

Data-Driven Website: students will communicate their AI-assisted research practices by creating a website that narrates the nature of the data they have analyzed and summarizes any important findings they discovered. The goal of this project is to synthesize and apply the work that students have conducted throughout the semester.

Distribution of grades

Rhetorical Analysis of Data Visualization	20%
Short Writing Assignments (Experimenting with AI research Practices)	50%
Data-Driven Website	20%
Attendance and Participation	10%

Class Readings

All class readings will be posted to Canvas.

Additional Course Policies

Policy on AI and AI-Generated Work

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

AI is permitted only for specific assignments or situations, and appropriate acknowledgment is required. During some class assignments, we may leverage AI tools to support your learning, allow you to explore how AI tools can be used, and/or better understand their benefits and limitations. Learning how to use AI is an emerging skill, and we will work through the limitations of these evolving systems together. However, AI will be limited to assignments where AI is a critical component of the learning activity. I will always indicate when and where the use of AI tools for this course is appropriate.

Grade Computation

To compute the final course grade, the following point totals are assigned to the standard letter grades of A through F:

A = 90-100 points
B = 80-89 points
C = 70-79 points
D = 60-69 points
F = 59 points and below

Failure to turn in a final draft of any project will result in an F for the class without exception.

University Policies:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Please see UT Tyler's policy on scholastic dishonesty:
http://www.uttyler.edu/judicialaffairs/scholasticdishonesty.php

This class has a Zero Tolerance Policy for Scholastic Dishonesty. Any deliberate act of scholastic dishonesty will result in immediate failure of the entire course.

UT Tyler Honor Code
Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities
To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

Campus Carry
We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University
All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies
Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Sept. 8.) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are

eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

-Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
-Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
-Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
-Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
-Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. , the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct
Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:
- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test; failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;

- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.

iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

Policy on AI-Generated Work

Unless your instructor tells you otherwise, you must complete all course work entirely on your own. You may not assist other students or use any online sites (e.g., Course Hero or Chegg), technologies (e.g., ChatGPT), tools, or sources that are prohibited. If your instructor permits the use of ideas, images, or word phrases created by another person or by generative technology, you must identify their source. Failure to identify work that has been created by others or by technologies (such as ChatGPT or other AI software) can constitute academic plagiarism. If you have questions about these policies, you should discuss them with your instructor before you begin.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu

UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu

The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.

UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)