

ENGL 4374: Texts, Tech, and Humanities



Meeting Time and Place: Section 061, asynchronous online, Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: T [2-3:30 pm](#), W [10:30am -12pm](#) (in-person/via Zoom) and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a historical survey of reading and writing technologies that create, transmit, and consume knowledge and information from orality to script, to printing, and to digital production.

Moving from orality to script, manuscript to print, and mechanical reproduction to digital media and artificial intelligence, we will examine how technological developments have transformed what it means to read, write, communicate, and tell stories. Rather than approaching technologies simply as neutral tools, this course considers how media shape the texts we create and the ways we interpret them. We will examine the relationships among a text's technological and material form, its meaning, its audience, and the historical circumstances in which it circulates. We will also consider how technological innovations emerge within larger social, political, cultural, and economic systems. Throughout the semester, students will encounter both theories of media and examples of textual technologies, including oral storytelling, writing systems, manuscripts, printed texts, photography, typewriters, computers, hypertexts, comics, podcasts, social media platforms, digital archives, and generative artificial intelligence.

Ultimately, the course asks us to consider a deceptively simple question: **How does the technology through which we communicate change what and how we communicate?**

This expands the historical framing in your earlier course description, which likewise moves from orality and script through print, digital production, and AI.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Explain** major historical developments in technologies of reading, writing, textual production, and circulation from oral culture through artificial intelligence.
2. **Analyze** how the material and technological forms of texts shape their meaning, audience, authority, accessibility, and reception.
3. **Situate** technological developments within larger social, political, economic, and cultural contexts.
4. **Apply** concepts from media studies and the humanities to historical and contemporary textual technologies.

5. **Analyze and compare** textual forms across different media, including print, visual, audio, digital, and AI-mediated texts.
6. **Locate, evaluate, synthesize, and appropriately cite** scholarly research concerning texts, media, and technology.
7. **Evaluate** issues of digital literacy, algorithmic curation, privacy, authorship, access, and artificial intelligence from a humanities perspective.
8. **Develop** sustained analytical arguments connecting primary texts, technological artifacts, and scholarly conversations.
9. **Reflect critically** on how changing technologies influence their own practices as readers, writers, researchers, and users of media.

The emphasis on situating technologies within social, political, and economic systems preserves an important element of the previous course outcomes.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- No texts will be required for purchase. All texts (extracts from chapters and pdfs of scholarly articles will be made available online on Canvas)
- Access to a laptop/computer and internet access to access course materials and readings on Canvas (PDFs, links to videos, reports, handouts).
- Access to MS Word, MS PowerPoint (via OneDrive: log in with your UT Tyler Credentials to access Office365 for free).

COMMUNICATION

Please make sure to email me if you have any questions about projects, come by during office hours appointment, or set up an appointment in advance if the office hours are inconvenient. Begin every subject line for every email or Canvas message with **ENGLISH 4347** and sign the email with your first and last name. Email correspondence should be respectful and appropriate. I only accept correspondence from your UT Tyler email as per [UT Tyler email policy](#).

COURSE RULES

- Listen and learn from one another, respect others' opinions, experiences, beliefs, values, and differences.
- All students are responsible for contributing to both their own learning experience and the learning experience of others.
- There is room for vigorous discussion, and sometimes even heated intellectual disagreement; however, it is expected that each person treats others with the utmost care and respect. Conflict between ideas does not need to become conflict between people. Be kind.

UT TYLER ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND HONOR CODE

This class has a Zero Tolerance Policy for Academic Dishonesty. Any deliberate act of academic dishonesty will result in immediate failure of the entire course. According to the [Manual of Student Conduct](#), "Academic Dishonesty" includes, but is 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 without giving sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student, or the attempt to commit such an act. The [Honor Code](#) is the means through which to apply the ethical ideal of honorable living to the lives of the UT Tyler community. Therefore, 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.”

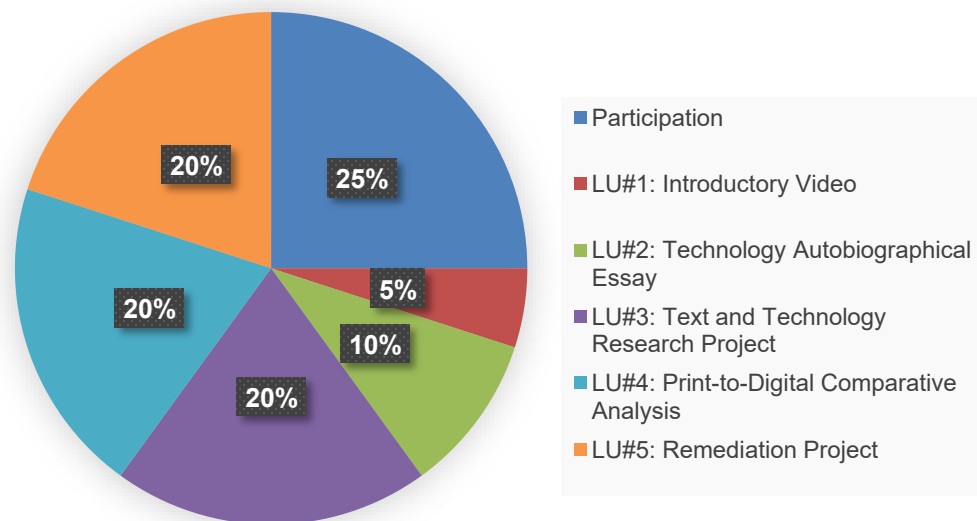
ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities, whether physical, learning, or psychological, who believe that they need accommodations, are encouraged to contact the UT Tyler Office of Student Accessibility and Resources as soon as possible to ensure accommodations are implemented promptly. The UT Tyler Office of Student Accessibility and Resources provides students equal access to all educational, social and co-curricular programs through coordination of services and reasonable accommodations, consultation and advocacy.

- [Apply for Services Here](#)
- [Existing SAR Student Login](#)

Note: The SAR registration process may take up to three (3) weeks to complete.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS



This chart shows course grading: Participation (25%), Introductory Video (5%), Technology Autobiographical Essay (10%), Text and Technology Research Project (20%), Print-to-Digital Comparative Analysis (20%), Remediation Project (20%).

Assignments (Learning Units: LUs)

The assignments in this course are organized into Learning Units (LUs) and are designed to build your skills as a writer and editor through practice, application, and reflection.

Participation (25%)

Regular participation is essential in this asynchronous course. Participation includes completing weekly discussion boards, short exercises called technology labs (where you will test different technologies), and peer feedback activities on Canvas. You are expected to engage thoughtfully with course materials and contribute constructively to discussions and peer review.

You can earn participation points by:

- Completing assigned readings and writing activities
- Participating in respectful, engaging discussions on Canvas
- Contributing to peer feedback and collaborative activities

LU#1: Introductory Video (5%) (Individual)

At the beginning of the semester, you will create a short introductory video (60-90 seconds) for your classmates and instructor. In addition to introducing yourself, you will briefly discuss your own experiences with reading, writing, and technology.

The assignment introduces you to the course's online environment and begins our semester-long consideration of how technologies mediate communication.

LU#2: Technology Autobiographical Essay (10%) (Individual)

For LU#2, you will write an autobiographical essay examining your own history with technologies of reading, writing, and communication. Rather than simply listing technologies you have used, you will tell a story about how particular technologies have shaped you as a reader, writer, student, communicator, or creator. You might consider experiences with books, handwriting, computers, smartphones, social media, video games, audiobooks, podcasts, word processors, digital reading, or other technologies.

The essay asks you to connect personal experience to some of the larger questions introduced during the opening weeks of the course: How do technologies shape the ways we remember, communicate, and understand information? What becomes possible when our technologies change? What might be lost?

LU#3: Text and Technology Research Project (20%) (Individual)

LU #3 is the first substantial scholarly research project of the semester. You will select a technology that has played an important role in the history of reading, writing, textual production, or communication and develop an analytical argument about its cultural significance. Possible subjects might include writing systems or early inscription, manuscripts, the printing press, newspapers and periodicals, photography, the typewriter, recorded sound, radio, or another instructor-approved textual technology.

Rather than simply providing a history of the technology, your project should investigate how it transformed practices such as reading, writing, memory, authorship, knowledge, authority, accessibility, or circulation. You will locate, evaluate, and synthesize scholarly research and place your own analysis in conversation with existing academic discussions. Research-question

development, source evaluation, and synthesis activities will be incorporated throughout the Learning Unit.

LU#4: Print-to-Digital Comparative Analysis (20%) (Individual)

For LU #4, you will examine how a text, genre, or form of communication changes as it moves between **print and digital media**. Building on the research skills developed in LU #2, you will compare two related textual forms or versions and develop an argument about how differences in medium affect the ways texts are produced, circulated, experienced, and interpreted.

Your analysis should move beyond identifying similarities and differences. Instead, you will consider questions such as: **What changes when a text moves from print to a digital environment? What does the digital medium make possible that print does not? What might be lost?**

LU#5: Remediation Project (20%) (Individual, collaboration possible)

Compile For LU #5, you will take an existing text or piece of communication and **remediate it into a substantially different medium**.

For example, you might transform:

- a written narrative into a podcast;
- a short story or poem into a comic;
- a scholarly argument into an infographic;
- a print text into a hypertextual form;
- a historical document into a contemporary digital form;
- a written argument into an audio or visual narrative;
- or another approved text into a different medium.

The goal is **not simply to reproduce the same information in another format**. Instead, you will consider what the new medium makes possible, what it makes difficult, and how your choices alter the audience's experience of the original text.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Your work should be submitted on time. Acceptable file formats for writing assignments are .doc, .docx or .pdf. Acceptable formats for audio recordings are mp3 or mp4. Acceptable formats for video recordings will be outlined on the respective assignment prompts. **All other formats are not accepted** and will be counted as missing. Quizzes or other classroom activities cannot be made up. If you have a valid excuse that is documented, reasonable effort will be made in helping you to make up the assignment. Late formal assignments are deducted **one grade letter per day**. Assignment for this asynchronous, online course are generally due on a Sunday by midnight.

EXTENSION LOG POLICY

You will receive a pool of hours that allow you to extend the due date for any formally submitted assignment as you see fit, as long as you remain within the guidelines below (policy developed by Dr. Micheal Rumore and Dr. Franziska Tsufim). The breakdown within each unit is as follows:

LU#1: 24 hours
LU#2: 72 hours
LU#3: 72 hours
LU#4: 48 hours
LU#5: 0 hours

To receive an extension for an assignment using these hours, simply submit an **extension log** (see template in each Assignment Description on Canvas) to Canvas in place of the assignment. Your logs should set a new deadline by noting how many extension hours will be used and briefly documenting how you will use those hours. You may divide your extension pool into 24-hour “blocks.” **The extension is considered automatically granted as long as you submit your log by the assignment’s original due date, as your hours cannot be assigned retroactively.** You may submit one additional extension log for a previously extended assignment if you meet your own revised deadline and have the requisite hours in your pool. **Note: LU#5 is not eligible for using your extension hours.**

Personal circumstances, emergencies, or necessary accommodations may require extensions beyond the time granted by this policy. If something unexpected happens during the semester—please do not hesitate to reach out.

GRADES

For determining assignments and final grades, the following scale will be used in this course:

- **A:** 90–100 points
- **B:** 80–89 points
- **C:** 70–79 points
- **D:** 60–69 points
- **F:** 0–59 points

AI POLICY

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.

For this course, **AI is permitted only for specific assignments or situations, and appropriate acknowledgment is required.**

This course has specific assignments where artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT or Copilot) are permitted and encouraged. When AI use is permissible, it will be clearly stated in

the assignment directions, and **all use** of AI must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. Otherwise, the default is that AI is not allowed during any stage of an assignment.

Using AI tools outside of these parameters violates UT Tyler's Honor Code, constitutes plagiarism, and will be treated as such.

This document was adapted from AI Syllabus information from Carnegie Mellon University, Stanford University, The University of Texas at Austin, and The University of Texas at San Antonio. This document was edited for grammar using Grammarly, an AI tool for writing.

STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please make sure you eat, sleep, and take care of yourself. Make sure to read the policies that outline student responsibilities at UT Tyler:
<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>.

UT TYLER RESOURCES

- [UT Tyler Writing Center](#)
- [UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#)
- [UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction](#)
- [Upswing \(24/7 online tutoring\)](#) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas
- [Robert R. Muntz Library](#)

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

PART I: ORALITY, WRITING, AND MEMORY

Week 1 | August 24–30: **What Is a Technology?**

Read:

- Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction"
- Chapter 1 from David Nye, *Technology Matters*

Topics: What counts as technology? What counts as a text? Technology, storytelling, materiality, and mediation.

Activities:

- Course orientation
- Introduction to LU#1
- Course Activities: First Technology Lab

Due Sunday, August 30: LU #1: Introductory Video — 5%

Week 2 | August 31–September 6: **Orality, Memory, and the Spoken Word**

Read:

- Walter J. Ong, selections from *Orality and Literacy*

Watch: Short example or demonstration of oral storytelling/oral-formulaic composition

Topics: Oral cultures, memory, performance, storytelling, and knowledge transmission.

Technology Lab: Communicate the same short story orally and in writing. What changes?

LU #2 Workshop: Developing the Technology Autobiographical Essay

Week 3 | September 7–13: **Writing as Technology**

Watch:

- Plato, selections from *Phaedrus*: Theuth and Thamus

Read:

- Walter J. Ong, “Writing Is a Technology That Restructures Thought”

Watch: Short history of early writing systems

Topics: Writing, external memory, inscription, cognition, and technological anxiety.

Artifacts: Clay tablets, early writing systems, quipu

Due Sunday, September 13: LU #2: Technology Autobiographical Essay — 10%

PART II: MANUSCRIPT AND PRINT CULTURES

Week 4 | September 14–20: **Manuscripts and Material Texts**

Watch: Manuscript-making or British Library manuscript video

Topics: Manuscript culture, scribes, materiality, illumination, textual variation, preservation, and authority.

Technology Lab: Analyze a digitized manuscript page as both a text and material object.

LU #3: Text & Technology Research Project introduced

Week 5 | September 21–27: **Gutenberg and the Printing Press**

Read:

- Elizabeth Eisenstein, selections from *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*

Watch: Movable-type printing demonstration

Topics: Gutenberg, fixity, standardization, reproduction, circulation, and expanding readership.

Technology Lab: Compare a manuscript page and printed page.

LU #3 Research Activity: Developing a topic and research question

Week 6 | September 28–October 4: **Print, Authorship, and Knowledge**

Read:

- Selected primary material from early print culture

Topics: Authorship, authority, credibility, print publics, intellectual property, and access.

Research Workshop: Finding, evaluating, and synthesizing scholarly sources.

Week 7 | October 5–11: **Researching Technologies of Text**

Read: 2–3 scholarly sources selected by students for LU #3

Activities:

- Scholarly conversation, source synthesis and MLA documentation
- Drafting and revision

Due Sunday, October 11: LU #3: Text & Technology Research Project — 20%

PART III: MECHANICAL AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Week 8 | October 12–18: **Mechanical Reproduction**

Read:

- Walter Benjamin, selections from “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Watch: Short material on photography, film, and mechanical reproduction

Topics: Aura, authenticity, original and copy, photography, film, and mass reproduction.

Technology Lab: What happens to an object or text when it can be reproduced indefinitely?

Week 9 | October 19–25: **The Medium Is the Message**

Read:

- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Chapter 1, “The Medium Is the Message”

Watch: Selected McLuhan interview or lecture clip

Topics: Typewriter to computer, medium versus content, technological environments, and technology and cognition.

Technology Lab: Compose the same passage using different writing technologies. How does the technology alter the act of composition?

LU #4: Print-to-Digital Comparative Analysis introduced

Week 10 | October 26–November 1: **Computers, Hypertext, and Networked Knowledge**

Read:

- Vannevar Bush, “As We May Think”
- Evens, *The Digital and Its Discontents*, short excerpt

Watch: Demonstration/history of Bush's Memex and early hypertext

Topics: Memex, association, nonlinear reading, hyperlinks, external memory, and networked information.

LU #4 Research Workshop: Select a print/digital pairing and develop a comparative research question.

PART IV: DIGITAL READING AND NEW TEXTUAL FORMS

Week 11 | November 2–8: **How Do We Read Digitally?**

Read:

- N. Katherine Hayles, “How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine”
- Cynthia Selfe, selected material from “Technology and Literacy: A Story about the Perils of Not Paying Attention” (optional)

Topics: Close reading, hyper reading, machine reading, digital literacy, attention, and technological literacy.

Technology Lab: Compare reading the same material in print and digital environments, considering content, interface, navigation, attention, accessibility, and reader behavior.

LU #4 Workshop: Using course theory and scholarly research to move from comparison to analytical argument.

Week 12 | November 9–15: **Digital Culture, Comics, and Remediation**

Read:

- Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, selections from *Remediation*
- Scott McCloud, selections from *Understanding Comics*

Topics: Remediation, multimodality, visual narrative, sequential art, words and images, and digital culture.

Technology Lab: Analyze how the same story or information changes across two media.

Due Sunday, November 15: LU #4: Print-to-Digital Comparative Analysis — 20%

LU #5: Remediation Project introduced

Week 13 | November 16–22: **Podcasts, Digital Humanities, and New Forms of Text**

Listen: Selected narrative podcast excerpt

Watch: Digital humanities project demonstration or short TEDx presentation

Topics: Podcasting, oral storytelling revisited, digital humanities, archives, curation, and new forms of scholarship.

Technology Lab: Is podcasting a return to oral culture?

LU #5 Workshop: Medium, audience, affordances, design choices, and critical rationale.

Week 14 | November 23–29: **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

No assigned reading and no new coursework.

PART V: AI, AUTHORSHIP, AND THE FUTURE OF TEXT

Week 15 | November 30–December 6: **Can Machines Write?**

Read:

- Selected material from the course AI Ethics module

Watch: Selected contemporary video on AI, reading, writing, or authorship

Topics: Artificial intelligence, authorship, creativity, training data, knowledge, textual production, AI literacy, and AI ethics.

AI Ethics Activity: Develop and discuss principles for responsible uses of generative AI in humanities contexts.

Final Technology Lab: Return to Plato

LU #5 Workshop: Final remediation and critical-rationale revision

Due Wednesday, December 9: LU #:5 Remediation Project — 20%

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

- **Sunday, August 30:** LU#1 Introductory Video (5%)
- **Sunday, September 13:** LU#2 Technology Autobiographical Essay (10%)
- **Sunday, October 11:** LU#3 Text and Technology Research Project (20%)
- **Sunday, November 15:** LU#4 Print-to-Digital Comparative Analysis (20%)
- **Wednesday, December 9:** LU#5 Remediation Project (20%)

IMPORTANT DATES

- **First Day of Classes:** Monday, August 24, 2026
- **First Class Meeting:** Tuesday, August 25, 2026
- **Labor Day Holiday:** Monday, September 7, 2026
- **Census Date:** Wednesday, September 9, 2026
- **Last Day to Withdraw:** Monday, November 2, 2026

- **No Class:** Thursday, November 5, 2026
- **Thanksgiving Break:** November 23–27, 2026
- **Last Class Day:** Thursday, December 3, 2026
- **Final Exam:** N/A