**ENGL 290: Digital Textuality**

**Course Description**

What are digital texts beyond the ubiquitous e-book? This course examines the history of experimental literature in the 20th century by exploring hypertext fiction, algorithmic literature, electronic literature, and navigable narrative.

We will take a project-based approach to the study of such digital texts, and students will “get their hands dirty” in the process of generating, remixing, and producing speculative readings of a reading list that spans different languages, the Americas and the Anglophone world, print and digital forms. We’ll explore the long history of hypertext, from Modernist literature, to the Oulipo, and to electronic literature and avant garde video games of the present.

**Course Goals**

* *Conte*xt: Historicize and contextualize experimental and hypertext fiction a diverse body of hypertext literature within significant historical periods and in relation to contemporary technologies of communication
* *Critical engagement*: Interacting with hypertext literature, read, and analyze it based on content, context, and literary criticism
* *Think-through-Doing*: Learn about the process and politics of literary form and genre through composition, remixing, poem generators, and experimentation.
* *Analysis*: Critically read and analyze texts through appropriate, media specific close readings in original persuasive and appropriately supported arguments in a range of media forms.

**Requirements**

**Texts:**

*The Mixquiahuala Letters,* Ana Castillo

*House of Leaves*, Mark Danielewski

*The People of Paper,* Salvador Plascencia

*Patchwork Girl,* Shelley Jackson

**Assignments:**

***\*\*Students must complete ALL assignments in order to pass this course.\*\****

Participation (daily attendance, discussion, in-class activities) 20%

Course Forum and Discussion Moderation (Introduction, hosted discussion) 20%

Midterm 20%

Cut-up Poetry/Remix Assignment & Essay 20%

Final Essay and/or Creative Project 20%

**SCHEDULE**

*This schedule is subject to revision and change. Please refer to the course site*

*for the most updated schedule and for any course-related announcements.*

Week 1 **Introduction**

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| **W 9/7** | Introductions, Class Policies, What is a “digital text”? |
| **F 9/9** | **DUE: Personal Introductions on Blog**  Marshall McLuhan, “[The Medium is the Message](https://www.dropbox.com/s/se7xqk4x1r2nkvd/mcluhan.mediummessage.pdf?dl=0)” (1964)  Chapter 2, Walter J. Ong, [*Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*](http://dss-edit.com/prof-anon/sound/library/Ong_orality_and_literacy.pdf)(1982) pp. 10 – 15, “Did You Say ‘Oral Literature’?”  William Warner, Kim Knight, & UCSB Transliteracies, “[In the Beginning was the Word: A Visualization of the Page as Interface](http://transliteracies.english.ucsb.edu/images/flash_projects/john-morph.html)”  Coleman Hutchison, “[Breaking the Book Known as Q](http://www.mlajournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1632/003081206X96104).” (Access from on-campus, or sign into [EZ Proxy](http://ezproxy.whittier.edu/login) for off-campus access) “The Matter with Q” pp. 34-46; “Reading Past the Page,” pp. 60 – 63, and examine images of sonnets throughout the essay |

Week 2 **Modernism & Dadaism: Precursor to Hypertext Literature**

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| **M 9/12** | **Classroom Constitution**  [Models of Communication](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Models_of_communication)  [“Encoding/Decoding”](http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~jdslack/readings/CSReadings/Hall_Encoding-n-Decoding.pdf) by Stuart Hall |
| **W 9/14** | Ezra Pound, “[A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/detail/58900)”, “[In a Station at the Metro](http://www.bartleby.com/104/106.html)”  F.T. Marinetti, “[Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature](https://www.dropbox.com/s/yqw9nfil9sqybdz/Marinetti%20-%20Technical%20Manifesto%20of%20Futurist%20Literature.pdf?dl=0)” and “[Petroleum Song](https://www.dropbox.com/s/vt3z8belhnkcs7f/Goretti%20-%20Petroleum%20Song.pdf?dl=0)” by Maria Goretti from *Futurism: An Anthology.* |
| **F 9/16** | Tristan Tzara, “[Dada Manifesto](http://www.391.org/manifestos/1918-dada-manifesto-tristan-tzara.html#.V6zaZz4rKX0)” and “[To Make a Dadaist Poem](https://modernism.research.yale.edu/wiki/index.php/To_Make_a_Dadaist_Poem)”  Marcel Duchamp, “[The Fountain](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-t07573)” |

Week 3

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| **M 9/19** | Vannevar Bush, ["As We May Think"](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/" \t "_blank) (1945)  Warren Weaver, “[Recent Contributions to the Mathematical Theory of Communication](http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic933672.files/Weaver%20Recent%20Contributions%20to%20the%20Mathematical%20Theory%20of%20Communication.pdf)” (1949) |
| **W 9/21** | Jorge Luis Borges, “[The Library of Babel](https://www.dropbox.com/s/kvqub4oaj6ckgfl/Borges%20-%20Library%20of%20Babel.pdf?dl=0)”, “[Garden of Forking Paths](http://www.units.miamioh.edu/technologyandhumanities/borges.pdf)”  MC Escher, “[Mobius Strip II](http://www.mcescher.com/gallery/recognition-success/mobius-strip-ii/)”  **Optional**: “[The Extraordinary Hotel or the Thousand & First Journey of Ion the Quiet](https://www.dropbox.com/s/b045drjs5ews5ph/ExtraordinaryHotel-Lem.pdf?dl=0)“; [The Virtual Library of Babel](https://libraryofbabel.info/) |
| **F 9/23** | Alan Turing, “[Computing Machinery and Intelligence](http://mind.oxfordjournals.org/content/LIX/236/433.full.pdf+html)” (1950) |

Week 4 **The Oulipo and Potential Literature**

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| **M 9/26** | Benabou’s “Rule and Constraint” and Queneau “Potential Literature” from [OULIPO: A Primer of Potential Literature](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6k2t3nhk543iq0c/Oulipo%20Motte%20collection%5B1%5D.pdf?dl=0)  Excerpts from Raymond Queneau’s [*Exercises in Style*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/bfew99lf7520yfj/Queneau%20-%20Exercises%20in%20Style.pdf?dl=0) |
| **W 9/28** | *“Mathews’ Algorithm” and Queneau’s “A Story as You Like it” from*[*OULIPO: A Primer of Potential Literature*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/6k2t3nhk543iq0c/Oulipo%20Motte%20collection%5B1%5D.pdf?dl=0)  *Excerpts from*[*Cobralingus: Metamorphiction by Jeff Noon*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/w0qhab9hahkwnkt/Jeff%20Noon%20Cobralingus.pdf?dl=0) |
| **F 9/30** | Raymond Queneau, [One Hundred Thousand Billion Poems](http://x42.com/active/queneau.html)/ [Cent mille milliards de poèmes](http://www.bevrowe.info/Queneau/QueneauRandom_v5.html)  [The N+7 Machine](http://www.spoonbill.org/n+7/),  [The Cut-up Machine](http://www.languageisavirus.com/cutupmachine.html#.V-M0ST4rKME)  [Six Selections by the Oulipo](http://nickm.com/classes/the_word_made_digital/2014_spring/12-oulipo-p.pdf) |

Week 5 **American Postmodernism**

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| **M 10/3** | “[The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism](http://raley.english.ucsb.edu/wp-content/Engl10/Lethem-Harpers.pdf)” by Jonathan Lethem  “[Atrophied Preface](https://www.dropbox.com/s/rpq3ww1jwujbrx0/burroughs_atrophied_face.pdf?dl=0)” from *Naked Lunch* by William S. Burroughs |
| **W 10/5** | [*Excerpts from The Third Mind*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/fowp65kmz24tquu/Excerpts%20from%20William-S.-Burroughs-and-Brion-Gysin-The-Third-Mind-complete.pdf?dl=0)by William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin |
| **F 10/7** | [Cut-Up Machine](http://www.languageisavirus.com/cutupmachine.html#.V6z7ej4rKX0)  [Remix Activity](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ziXrr0bC2ySots64DNKJD2FuSFQHI254wIL0JIu1Ulg/edit?usp=sharing) |

Week 6**The Computer/Early Hypertext Fiction**

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| **M 10/10** | *Indigenous People’s Day*  **Midterm Review** |
| **W 10/12** | **MIDTERM** |
| **F 10/14** | Mid-Semester Break – NO CLASS |

Week 7

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| **M 10/17** | ***The Mixquiahuala Letters (1986)***  *Jean-Francois Lyotard,*[*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/idav/documents/Lyotard_-_Postmodern_Condition.pdf)*:* Introduction (xxiii-xxv), 1. The Field: Knowledge in Computerized Societies (3-6), 4. The Nature of Social Bond: The Modern Alternative & 5. The Nature of the Social Bond: The Postmodern Perspective (11-15) |
| **W 10/19** | *Patchwork Girl*(1995)  Introduction video to [*Pathfinders*](http://scalar.usc.edu/works/pathfinders/introduction?path=index)  [Shelley Jackson’s *Patchwork Girl*path in *Pathfinders*](http://scalar.usc.edu/works/pathfinders/shelley-jackson), especially chapters 1 (Shelley Jackson’s Artist’s Statement), 2 (Shelley Jackson’s Traversal of Patchwork Girl), 3 (The Interview with Shelley Jackson about Patchwork Girl), 6 (Photos of the Folio, etc.), 7 (History).  Recommended: Espen Aarseth, [*Cybertext*](http://www.autzones.com/din6000/textes/semaine09/Aarseth(1997).pdf) (1997) |

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| **F 10/21** | *House of Leaves* (2000)  Introduction, Chapter I-IV, pp. xi- 40, Exhibits and Appendices, pp. 529-End |

Week 8

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| **M 10/24** | *House of Leaves* (2000)  Chapters V-VIII, pp. 41-106 |
| **W 10/26** | *House of Leaves* (2000)  Chapter IX, pp. 107-152 |
| **F 10/28** | *House of Leaves* (2000)  Chapter X, 153-245 |

Week 9

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| **M 10/31** | *House of Leaves* (2000)  Chapter XX 423-489 |
| **W 11/2** | *The People of Paper* (2005) |
| **F 11/4** | *The People of Paper* (2005) |

Week 10

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| **M 11/7** | *The People of Paper* (2005) |

**E-literature and Potential Narrative**

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| **W 11/9** | Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, “[Rain on the Sea](http://www.yhchang.com/RAIN_ON_THE_SEA.html)”  Donna Leishman, ***[RedRidinghood](http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/leishman__redridinghood.html" \t "_blank)***  Jason Nelson, “[Nothing You Have Done Deserves Such Praise](http://www.secrettechnology.com/nothing/nothing44.html" \t "_blank)” |
| **F 11/11** | [Professor at NWSA]  DUE: Forum Assignment  Edward Lewis and Bruno Nadeau, [P.o.E.M.M. = Poetry for Excitable [Mobile] Media](http://www.poemm.net/about.html" \t "_blank)  Erik Loyer, ***[Strange Rain](http://erikloyer.com/index.php/projects/detail/strange_rain/" \t "_blank)***; [The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore](https://vimeo.com/25833596)  WORKSHOP DAY |

Week 11

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| **M 11/14** | Video documentation: Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse, ***[Between Page and Screen](http://www.betweenpageandscreen.com/" \t "_blank)***  Margaret Rhee, [Kim Chi Poetry Machine](http://collection.eliterature.org/3/work.html?work=kimchi-poetry-machine)  High Muck a Much Collective, [High Muck a Muck: Playing Chinese](http://www.highmuckamuck.ca/) |
| **W 11/16** | Shelley Jackson, “Snow, a story in progress, weather permitting”  Talan Memmott, [Lexia to Perplexia](http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/memmott__lexia_to_perplexia.html) |
| **F 11/18** | William Poundstone, [*Project for Tachistoscope*](http://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/poundstone__project_for_tachistoscope_bottomless_pit.html)  WORKSHOP DAY |

Week 12

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| **M 11/21** | David Theo Goldberg and Stefka Hristova, [*Blue Velvet: Re-dressing New Orleans in Katrina’s wake*](http://www.vectorsjournal.org/projects/index.php?project=82);  Sharon Daniel and Erik Loyer, [*Public Secrets*](http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/daniel_public_secrets.html) |
| **W 11/23** | CAMPUS CLOSED |
| **F 11/25** | CAMPUS CLOSED |

Week 13 **Machine Writing and Crowd Sourcing**

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| **M 11/28** | Micha Cádenas, [Redshift and Portalmetal](http://collection.eliterature.org/3/work.html?work=redshift-and-portalmetal) |
| **W 11/30** | [Google Poetics](http://www.googlepoetics.com/)  [Google Brain Team AI poetry](http://www.androidauthority.com/google-ai-poetry-692231/)  [TayTweets](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/25/technology/microsoft-created-a-twitter-bot-to-learn-from-users-it-quickly-became-a-racist-jerk.html)  K. Silem Mohammad, “[The Sonnagrams](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/56767)” |
| **F 12/2** | [Tweet us a Story](http://wlrn.org/post/tweet-us-story-you-can-co-author-story-junot-d-az)” with Junot Diaz  Bruce Mason and Sue Thomas, “[A Million Penguins Research Report](http://www.ioct.dmu.ac.uk/documents/amillionpenguinsreport.pdf)”  WORKSHOP DAY |

Week 14 **Video Games and Navigable Narrative**

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| **M 12/5** | DUE: Speculative Reading Essay  STEAM Network Game (In pairs)  Lydia Neon, [Reset](http://www.lifeinneon.com/games/reset.html)  [Sabbat](https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/s/ex6216bgdr7ebrp/sabbat.html)  [Tintern Abbey First-Person Shooter](https://scratch.mit.edu/projects/10764/) |
| **W 12/7** | [Choice Texas](http://playchoicetexas.com/)  Anna Anthropy, [Witches & Wardrobes](https://sub-q.com/play-witches-wardrobes/) |
| **F 12/9** | LAST DAY OF CLASS  FINAL PRESENTATIONS |

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| **F 12/16** | FINAL  LAST DAY TO SUBMIT FINAL PROJECT |