English 410/510: Digital Storytelling

CRN: 15920 / 16006
Term: Fall 2023
Class Meetings: TR 10-11:20am in Allen 101

About the Professor

Dr. Mattie Burkert
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Pronouns: she/they

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Office Hours: TR 2:00-3:30
Office Location: PLC 235

Office Hours

Office hours take place in my office, 235 PLC, on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Students with appointments will receive priority. To book an appointment, visit **https://tinyurl.com/burkert-office-hours**. Drop-ins are welcome and will be seen on a first-come, first-serve basis during openings between scheduled appointments. If you are considering dropping in without an appointment, you can use the booking link to identify gaps in the schedule. If you are unable to meet in person and/or during scheduled office hours, please email mburkert@uoregon.edu to request a remote (Zoom) meeting or a meeting at an alternative time. Appointments outside of office hours typically book up about two weeks in advance, so please plan ahead.

About this Course

Course Description

This class explores how the ancient practice of storytelling is adapting to our digital world. "Digital storytelling" is a broad term that can refer to a range of new media narrative forms, including hypertext fiction, interactive data visualizations, dynamic maps and timelines, podcasts, video games, and augmented reality experiences. Yet these novel ways of telling stories all draw on much older principles and conventions. Together, we will read and study multimedia narrative texts alongside foundational works of narrative theory in order to analyze and interpret core elements of plot, characterization, setting, point of view, and audience interaction as they are digitally remediated and reconfigured. In our discussions and through written assignments, we will grapple with questions of perspective, experience, and identity that arise when telling our own and others' stories. A final project will challenge each student to put theory into practice, crafting a dynamic digital narrative using research data and digitized primary sources.

This class will help students develop skills that are in high demand across a range of industries and professional careers—including journalism, marketing, creative writing, public relations, advertising, GLAMs (galleries, libraries, archives, museums), public health, political and nonprofit organizing, education, and academia—while making the case that digital

storytelling is most effective when it is grounded in insights and theories from the study of literature, folklore, and culture.

As an elective that counts for the Digital Humanities minor and the New Media and Culture Certificate, this course involves experimenting with digital tools and technologies in a supported learning environment, but no prior technical experience or training is required.

Learning Goals
By the end of the course, students should be able to...
- read, annotate, and synthesize foundational works of narrative theory;
- apply key concepts emerging from these texts to analyze digital narrative texts;
- use search engines and library databases strategically for academic research;
- curate research data and metadata using spreadsheets;
- organize and present these materials digitally to tell an engaging and compelling story;
- discuss problems of identity, perspective, and evidence that arise when telling others' stories;
- and take these into account in order to make and document ethical decisions in digital storytelling project design.

Required Materials
Materials for this course costs up to $60, including approximately $40 in software and up to $20 in supplies. All other readings and course texts (PDFs, audio files, web sites, etc.) are free to students through Canvas, UO Libraries, the open web, or as Open Educational Resources.

Supplies (up to $20)
- at least two green exam booklets, available at the Duck Store register
- occasional printing of readings or assignment drafts

Software for Purchase ($40)
- Shelley Jackson, *Patchwork Girl*: For Mac users, this software is available on a USB stick for $25 from Eastgate Systems: eastgate.com/catalog/PatchworkGirl.html. PC users should go to class first for instructions on how to access the software.
- Gone Home: This video game is available for about $15 across multiple platforms. Students can choose to play this title on PC/Windows, Mac, Linux, Switch, PlayStation, XBox, etc.

Digital narratives / primary texts (free to you)
- Paul Ford, "What is Code?" (*Bloomberg*)
- Matt Daniels, "The Unlikely Odds of Making it Big on TikTok" (*The Pudding*)
- Rye Davies, "These Fragments I Have Stored"
- Jennifer Egan, "Black Box" (*New Yorker*)

- Serial Productions, *Serial*, Season 1 (episode 1)
- Serial Productions, *Serial*, Season 3 (all episodes)

Theoretical/critical texts (free to you)
- N. Katherine Hayles, "Print is Flat, Code is Deep"
- Ian Bogost, "Procedural Rhetoric"
- Espen Aarseth et. al., "A Narrative Theory of Games"
- Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
- Lev Grossman et. al, "Contemporary Seriality"
- Peter Brooks, "Narrative in and of the Law"
- Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact"

ENG 510 / Grad Supplemental Readings (free to you)
- Daniel Punday, "UI Time and the Digital Event"
- Ellen McCracken, "Serial as Digital Constellation"
- Marie-Laure Ryan, "Narrative and Digitality"
- Dorothy Berry, "The House Archives Built"
- Rob Gallagher, "Plotting the Loop: Videogames and Narratability"
- Tzvetan Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative"
- Sean O'Sullivan, "Serials & Satisfaction"
- Sue Lanser, "The 'I' of the Beholder"
- Sharon Mattern, "How to Map Nothing"

Content Warnings
The readings in this course will deal with challenging topics, including racism, cisheterosexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression and discrimination. In addition, text-specific triggers include:
- Jackson: elements of body horror that may be disturbing to some readers
- Egan: a scene of sexual violence through the perspective of the focal character, who enters into and reflects on the experience of a dissociative state
- Brooks: discussion of a sexual assault trial, rape culture, and victim-blaming rhetoric
- Mulvey: pervasive psychoanalytic discussion of genitalia and sexual objectification
- Serial: accounts of sexual harrasment and non-consensual touching; human rights violations towards suspects and detainees, including juveniles; gun violence and gun deaths, including the deaths of children; pervasive discussion of anti-Black racism and police killings of Black people.

I will try to flag especially graphic or intense content in advance so that you can take good care of yourself while engaging with potentially triggering content. If you have individual concerns about specific types of content, please communicate those to me over email or in office hours so I can try to create a safer and more supportive learning environment for everyone.

Assignments and Grading

Your assignments in this class add up to 100 possible points. Your final course grade will be calculated based on the total point you have earned out of 100 according to the following scale:

Grading Scale				
A	B	C	D	F
(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)	(+ / mid / -)
98 / 93 / 90	88 / 83 / 80	78 / 73 / 70	68 / 63 / 60	< 60

What follows is an overview of the assignments and point distributions. More detailed instructions and grading criteria can be located on the specific prompts.

Reading Reflections (20 points):

- You will complete daily in-class reading quizzes, reflections, and exercises in a standard UO bookstore-issued "green book" (exam booklet). You will submit your green book before leaving class each day and it will be returned to you at the beginning of the next class meeting to complete that day's exercises. You are allowed to make up green book reflections for days that you are absent within one week of the missed class. Makeup green books are eligible for credit towards the "Reading Reflections" portion of your grade, but they do not count for attendance; in other words, a day you miss counts as one of your four, irrespective of whether you make up the green book.
- **Undergrads:** each green book exercise is worth 1 point.
- **Grads:** each green book exercise is worth 0.5 points. Your other 10 points for this assignment category come from your participation in asynchronous social annotation of the supplemental readings.

Discussion Leadership (10 points)

- **Undergrads:** You will be responsible for generating a green book / discussion prompt for one class session.
- **Grads:** You will lead the discussion of one of the supplemental readings in the social annotation space.
- Both groups will sign up for a leadership date in week 1. You may switch dates with others in the class without penalty, but you must notify the professor of the change in advance of the relevant class meeting.

Midterm Project (30 points)

- You will write a dialogue or debate between the theorists we have studied so far (choose from Hayles, Mulvey, Aarseth, and Bogost) about one of the digital narratives we have studied (choose from Patchwork Girl, Black Box, or Gone Home).
- **Undergrads:** two theorists, 4-5pp double spaced

- **Grads:** three theorists (at least one taken from the supplemental readings), 7-8 pages double spaced*

Group Project (10 points)
- You will contribute to our class storymap and our class timeline of events in *Serial* season 3.
- **Undergrads:** 1 storymap slide and 1 timeline event
- **Grads:** 2 storymap slides and 2 timeline events

Individual Final Project (30 points):
- You will create a Storymap or Timeline on your own reflecting on your learning in this class or remediating some aspect of the course content.
- **Undergrads:** 10 slides or events
- **Grads:** 15 slides or events

Course Policies

Class Meetings
This is an in-person course: unlike asynchronous online/ASYNC WEB courses, we will meet at the scheduled class meeting times and location. I will accommodate absences as described in the Attendance policy. If you need additional flexibility, UO encourages you to consider ASYNC WEB courses. If you need accommodation related to a medical or other disability, you can request those by working with the Accessible Education Center.

Attendance
Students may miss up to four class meetings this term (the equivalent of two weeks of class), regardless of the reason. This means we do not have "excused" or "unexcused" absences. Use your absences with care so they're there for you if you are sick and need to stay home. **Because in-class work is central to meeting our learning objectives, students who miss more than two weeks of class may fail the course.** If challenges come up for you this term around attendance, please contact the Professor and your TA as soon as you can. Together we can identify what resources or strategies might be available to support you and your learning.

Communicating with the Professor
How will I communicate with you?
When I need to get in touch with individual students, I will do so through email. When I need to get in touch with the whole class, I will post an Announcement to Canvas. Announcements can be automatically forwarded to your UO email, and can even reach you by text. Check and adjust your settings under Account > Notifications.

How can you communicate with me?

I enjoy talking with students about our course materials, the English major and the Digital Humanities minor, career choices and professional opportunities, campus happenings and current events that relate to our class, and more. I'm also available to talk about how you're doing in the class and to strategize about how you can succeed. The best way to have these conversations is in office hours, where I can get to know you as an individual.

For brief questions about course logistics that are not otherwise answered in the syllabus or on Canvas, the best way to reach out is to send me an email or voicemail. (My Canvas Inbox and voicemail both forward to my Outlook account, so there is no need to send duplicate messages.)

I use automated filters to stay on top of emails, so **please use the subject line "ENG 410 YourName Keyword" (for example, "ENG 410 Maya Vasquez Meeting Request").** I monitor my email during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 9-5) and try to respond to messages within two business days. If you have not received a response after two business days, please follow up with another message and/or in person.

Course Deadlines and Late Work

Major assignments are due on Fridays at 11:59 p.m. Assignment pages close the following Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Requests for additional extensions will be considered, but approval is not guaranteed. Please be in touch as soon as possible if you think you might need additional flexibility on a deadline due to extraordinary circumstances.

Workload

The workload in this class is calibrated to the Provost's policy on effort per credit hour. The overall amount of time you spend on this class, as well as the distribution of that effort on different kinds of assignments, will fluctuate from week to week; the goal, however, is to move somewhat steadily towards the accumulation of 120 person-hours of work. You can expect to spend **approximately 3 hours per week in class and 5 hours per week preparing the assigned readings**, a baseline of 8 hours per week over the 10 weeks of the term (80 hours). The remaining **40 hours will be spent on your major assignments** -- approximately 4 hours each on preparing to lead discussion and making your contributions to the group project, as well as 16 hours each on your midterm and final projects.

Grads are expected to put in 160 hours total. In additional to the effort outlined above, grads can expect to spent roughly 20 hours reading, annotating, and engaging with the supplemental readings, as well as approximately 20 hours producing the additional required content for the graded assignments.

Technology Policies

Technical Requirements

Canvas is the place to go for course information and engagement outside of class time. To access our course Canvas site, log into canvas.uoregon.edu using your DuckID. If you

have questions about using Canvas, visit the Canvas support page. Canvas and Technology Support also is available by phone (541-346-4357) or by live chat on the Live Help webpage.

I will make every effort to keep Canvas up-to-date and accurate. If you notice a conflict between the informatoin in the syllabus and that posted to Canvas, or between two different pages on Canvas, please send the Professor a message and rest assured that the discrepancy will be resolved in the students' favor. (For example, if two different deadlines are posted, the later deadline will apply.)

In addition to Canvas, this course requires the use of spreadsheets in Google Sheets. Students who typically use tablets or Chromebooks may need to use a loaner laptop or campus computer lab to complete the major assignments for this class.

Electronic Devices in the Classroom

You may use your phone, tablet, or computer in class to access course readings and materials, take notes, or otherwise support your learning. You may not text message, browse the web, or do work for other courses on your devices during our class sessions. If you are found to be doing so, I will stop class to ask you to put your device away for the remainder of the class session. A repeat offense on a subsequent occasion will result in loss of device use privileges in class for the remainder of the term. If you find the temptation towards distraction overwhelming, consider printing out, buying, or borrowing hard copies of the readings; using pen and paper to take notes; and keeping your devices turned off and put away during class

Privacy

It is your ethical responsibility to respect the legally protected privacy of your classmates and what they share in class and online. It is prohibited to repost, republish, or quote from our class discussions on the web or social media, even if names/identities are anonymized, without the express permission of the instructor and your peers. No personally identifiable information, such as street addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses, should be posted on our course sites or shared note-taking document, nor should any discussion of grades. Any such details arising in the course of class discussion should be redacted from any notes, transcriptions, recordings, etc. to protect against unauthorized access.

Intellectual Property

You **may not** reuse, republish, or remix materials produced by other students in this class. You **may** reuse, republish, or remix documents created by the professor under the appropriate license provided that you adhere to the indicated terms. For example, this syllabus is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial license, meaning you may reuse it in part or in whole provided that you credit the author (Dr. Mattie Burkert) and that you do not sell or make money from the material. **Under no circumstances should you sell or give anything produced in or related to this class to third-party companies like Course Hero, Shmoop, etc.**

Recording of Class Meetings

You **may** record or transcribe our class discussions, provided that you use only UO-licensed or UO-approved software; store the resulting files locally on your computer and/or in your UO-licensed cloud storage account; AND retain them only for your individual use (as you would handwritten notes). To be clear, you **may not** use freemium software like Otter.AI, Descript, ChatGPT, Bard, etc. to process class recordings. Doing so would essentially constitute selling your classmates' federally protected, private educational records in exchange for access to a product.

Generative Artificial Intelligence Use

Learning to use GenAI tools such as ChatGPT and Bard, and to recognize their pluses and minuses, are important emerging skills. Therefore, we will use specific AI tools for some of our activities in this class. You will be given explicit instructions about when and how you can use GenAI for your work; in all cases, you will document your use of these tools, and we will discuss and debrief the results as a class. To be clear: **students may use GenAI tools in this course only with explicit instructor permission, which will be granted on a strictly limited basis for specific tasks and assignments.**

Formal and informal writing submitted for credit toward completion of course requirements must be your own original work done specifically for this course and without substantive assistance from others, including AI systems. You **may not** use AI to help you brainstorm, compose, or edit graded assignments. Written work suspected of being AI-generated or plagiarized may be submitted to detection tools to ensure it is human-created and original. In accordance with UO policy, if your instructors believe you have handed in work created in whole or in part by GenAI tools used without permission, we may submit a report of suspected academic misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for that office to make a determination of responsibility and, if warranted, assess a grade penalty.

If you have a specific need or desire to use a GenAI tool for your work in this class (for example, as part of your note-taking workflow), you **must** speak with me in advance. If permission is given, you will be required to document your use according to guidelines that will be provided.

University Policies

Access and Accommodations

UO is dedicated to fostering inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning environments for all students. The Accessible Education Center (AEC) assists students with disabilities in reducing barriers in the educational experience. You may be eligible for accommodations for a variety of apparent or non-apparent disabilities. If you have or think you have a disability and experience academic barriers, please contact the Accessible Education Center (Location: 360 Oregon Hall; 541-346-1155; uoaec@uoregon.edu) to discuss appropriate accommodations or support. The details of your disability will be kept confidential with the AEC and you are not expected to share this information with others. However, you are invited to discuss any approved accommodations or access needs at any time with the Professor.

Accommodations for Religious Observances

The University of Oregon respects the right of all students to observe their religious holidays, and will make reasonable accommodations, upon request, for these observances. If you need to be absent from a class period this term because of a religious obligation or observance, please fill out the Student Religious Accommodation Request fillable PDF form and send it to your instructors within the first weeks of the course so we can make arrangements in advance.

Your Wellbeing

Life at college can be very complicated. Students often feel overwhelmed or stressed, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationships, or just need help navigating challenges in their life. If you're facing such challenges, you don't need to handle them on your own--there's help and support on campus. As your instructor if I believe you may need additional support, I will express my concerns, the reasons for them, and refer you to resources that might be helpful. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be bothering you, but simply to let you know I care and that help is available. Getting help is a courageous thing to do—for yourself and those you care about.

University Health Services helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

Basic Needs

Being able to meet your basic needs is foundational to your success as a student at the University of Oregon. If you are having difficulty affording food, don't have a stable, safe place to live, or are struggling to meet another need, visit the UO Basic Needs Resource page for information on how to get support. They have information food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation, technology, finances (including emergency funds), and legal support. If your need is urgent, please contact the Care and Advocacy Program by calling 541-346-3216, filling out the Community Care and Support form, or by scheduling an appointment with an advocate.

Academic Integrity

The University Student Conduct Code defines academic misconduct, which includes using unauthorized help on assignments and examinations, the use of sources without acknowledgment, and recording class without "the express written permission of the instructor(s)." Academic misconduct is prohibited at UO. **I will report all suspected misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.** If the Office finds a student has

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committed misconduct, **consequences can include failure of the relevant assignment or exam, or of the course.**

While unauthorized help and use of sources without citation is prohibited, learning together and citing sources is crucial! You can find support at the UO Libraries' Citation Guides research guide. If at any point in the term you are unsure about whether a behavior aligns with academic integrity in our course, please contact me.

Reporting Obligations

I am an assisting employee. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see Employee Reporting Obligations on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website. Students experiencing sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment or violence should call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE [7244] or visit safe.uoregon.edu for help. Students experiencing all forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment may contact the Dean of Students Office at 5411-346-3216 or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator/OICRC at 541-346-3123. Additional resources are available at UO's How to Get Support webpage. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse. Please find more information at Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Academic Disruption due to Campus Emergency

In the event of a campus emergency that disrupts academic activities, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to change. Information about changes in this course will be communicated as soon as possible by email, and on Canvas. If we are not able to meet face-to-face, students should immediately log onto Canvas and read any announcements and/or access alternative assignments. Students are also expected to continue coursework as outlined in this syllabus or other instructions on Canvas.

Inclement Weather

It is generally expected that class will meet unless the University is officially closed for inclement weather. If it becomes necessary to cancel class while the University remains open, this will be announced on Canvas and by email. Updates on inclement weather and closure are also communicated as described on the Inclement Weather webpage.

Schedule

The following schedule is provided for planning purposes only and is subject to change.

Week	Key Terms & Skills	Date	Readings
1	digital storytelling, scrollytelling, data journalism, interaction, code	Tu 9/26	Syllabus
		Thu 9/28	Ford, "What is Code?" Daniels, "The Unlikely Odds of Making it Big on TikTok"
		Fri 9/29	**510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Punday, "UI Time"**
2	electronic literature, medium-specific analysis	Tu 10/3	Hayles, "Print is Flat, Code is Deep"
		Th 10/5	Jackson, "Patchwork Girl"
		Fri 10/6	**510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Ryan, "Narrative and Digitality"**
3	ludology, procedural rhetoric, videogame	Tu 10/10	Davies, "These Fragments I Have Stored"
		Th 10/12	Bogost, "Procedural Rhetoric"
		Fri 10/13	**510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Berry, "The House Archives Built"**
4	gamergate, narratology	Tu 10/17	Gone Home
		Th 10/19	Aarseth, "A Narrative Theory of Games"
		Fri 10/20	**510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Gallagher, "Plotting the Loop"**
5	serialization, Web 2.0, male gaze	Tu 10/24	Egan, "Black Box"; Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure"
		Th 10/26	NO CLASS
		Fri 10/27	**410 & 510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Egan/Mulvey**
6	podcast, research narrative, narrator	Tu 10/31	Serial, Season 1, Episode 1
		Th 11/2	Grossman et. al, "Contemporary Seriality"
		Fri 11/3	**410 & 510 MIDTERM DUE** **510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **McCracken, "Serial as Digital Constellation"**
7	structuralism, plot arc, equilibrium, tension, resolution	Tu 11/7	Serial, Season 3, Episodes 1-2
		Th 11/9	Brooks, "Narrative in and of the Law"
		Fri 11/10	**510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Todorov, "Structural Analysis"**
8	narrative journalism, protagonist, focalization, point of view	Tu 11/14	Serial, Season 3, Episodes 3-5
		Th 11/16	Serial, Season 3, Episodes 6-8
		Fri 11/17	**510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **O'Sullivan, "Serials & Satisfaction"**

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9	tabular data, metadata, Google Sheets	Tu 11/21	White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact"
		Th 11/23	NO CLASS
		Fri 11/24	**510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Lanser, "The 'I' of the Beholder"**
10	TimelineJS, StoryMapsJS	Tu 11/28	Sample Timelines
		Th 11/30	Sample StoryMaps
		Fri 12/1	**GROUP PROJECT DUE** **510 ANNOTATIONS DUE:** **Mattern, "How to Map Nothing"**
11		Fri 12/8	**FINAL PROJECT DUE @ 10AM**

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