

Language, Texts, and Technology

DTC/ENG 375 Spring 2015: Assignments and Grading

CUE 318, 1310–1400 MWF
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office hours MWF 0830–0930 341 Avery Hall and by appointment

Assignments and grading general guidelines:

Assigned work is due no later than the beginning of class on the date in the syllabus and will receive zero credit if turned in late. The only exception is for **discussion board comments**, which earn 75% credit if they are up to 6 hours late, 50% credit if they are up to 24 hours late, and zero credit if they are more than 24 hours late. Note that 20% of your final grade is for preparedness and participation, to include how much you demonstrate engagement in the work of the class, how much you contribute productively to a respectful classroom environment, and how prepared you are for our discussions and collaborative work. I will occasionally ask you to demonstrate your preparedness by assigning short reading quizzes that are easy to excel on if you've done the reading.

Discussion board posts:

There are seven instances on the syllabus (1/21, 2/4, 2/18, 3/9, 3/23, 4/3, 4/15, marked by a ❖ on the calendar) when you'll compose a Blackboard Learn discussion board post worth 30 points each. Each post should be a **minimum** of about 300–600 words. I grade your posts on quality and thoughtfulness, so don't worry too much about having formal or highly polished prose, although writing well will make your posts more engaging. The discussion board will serve as a space for us to initiate and extend class discussion about course topics, and also for you to accumulate your own ideas to which you can return for the midterm and final. Your posts should thoughtfully engage the readings and the classroom discussion and activities, and should serve as a resource for your classmates and a way to build community. Your posts may take any of three forms:

- **Stock.** Respond to the questions in the prompt assigned for homework.
- **Custom.** Respond in a way that links the readings for that lesson to some issue we've discussed in class.
- **Freestyle.** Do research on your own and respond in some insightful and creative way of your choosing to the issues raised since the previously assigned post, perhaps adding and discussing web links that expand our perspectives on those issues.

Some of you have kept weblogs for other DTC courses, so you already have a sense of what makes a good post. The following criteria for discussion board posts are quoted, paraphrased, and slightly modified from George Mason University Professor Mark Sample's September 10, 2010 weblog post at ProfHacker, "A Rubric for Evaluating Student Weblogs," to give you an idea of what makes a good post:

- **Exceptional.** The post is focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis. The post demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. The entry reflects in-depth engagement with the topic.
- **Good.** The post is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Fewer connections are made between ideas, and though new insights are offered, they are not fully developed. The post reflects moderate engagement with the topic.
- **Acceptable.** The post is mostly description or summary, without consideration of alternative perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The post reflects passing engagement with the topic.
- **Unsatisfactory.** The post is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous comments, and displays no evidence of engagement with the topic.

- **Unacceptable.** The post is missing or consists of a few disconnected sentences.

A particularly good post can distinguish itself by linking to other class posts and comments, by setting the agenda for discussion by posting early, by incorporating or linking to multi-modal content (visuals, audio, video, animation) appropriate to the discussion, or by helpfully and respectfully clarifying or responding to points other students have made in their own posts. Always acknowledge your sources.

Discussion board comments:

There are seven deadlines on the syllabus (1/26, 2/9, 2/23, 3/13, 3/30, 4/8, 4/22, marked by a ♦ on the calendar) by which you'll need to have commented on **at least two recent posts** by your classmates, for 10 points each. People who get into the habit of commenting early in the semester will likely do better: read what your classmates are saying and leave thoughtful, detailed comments. Think about the feedback you'd like to have on your own ideas: would it be better to hear "Cool story bro," or to hear at least 150 words about specific connections between course texts and your ideas? The grading criteria are the same for comments as they are for blog entries, although I expect that the comments will be somewhat more relaxed in tone and form. It's absolutely encouraged to respond to the comments people leave you.

Collaborative GDrive syntheses:

On the days discussion board comments are due, make sure you bring to class a networked computing device (smartphone, tablet, laptop) that you can use to access Google Drive. (If you are not present and prepared to participate, you will not receive the 10 points for that day's assignment.) For part of the class, we will each contribute individually to synchronously authored GDrive documents, quoting from the discussion board posts and comments in small groups to collaboratively synthesize a set of notes on the readings and discussions that you can later return to for the midterm and final.

Midterm and final project:

The 120-point midterm is to draft a plan for your contribution to a collaborative final project. Details on the final project follow. You must cite sources and discuss a **problem** relating to the course theme that you want your contribution to address, **background** on that problem, details about the method and **approach** you anticipate taking, **findings** you think you might discover or demonstrate, and **implications** for you, individually, as applied to your academic major. At least four sources and an APA or MLA **list of References or Works Cited** are required: at least one source assigned for this class, at least one blog post or comment or GDrive synthesis authored by someone other than you, and at least one academic or scholarly source that you found on your own or in another DTC course. Your midterm can be in HTML or PDF format, and must incorporate an original multi-modal component (audio, video, animation, illustration, photograph, or design). It must also include, as an **appendix**, a list of 3–6 other people in the class with whom you would like to collaborate with. Total length should be between 1200 and 1800 words.

The 320-point final project must follow through on that plan: I will assign you to teams based on your midterms, and you will work together to assemble and compose a multi-modal final project that creatively and intellectually engages the course themes in ways that you can show off at the end-of-semester DTC showcase. We will discuss possible examples in class, and the project will have a group component as well as a 1000–2000 word reflective final essay linking the project to your individual and professional goals. Grading is as follows:

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| • Instructor assessment of team project quality | 80 points |
| • Class assessment of team project quality | 70 points |
| • Individual reflection | 100 points |
| • Team assessment of individual contribution to project | 70 points |