

**BTMM 4455**  
**Temple University, Fall 2011**  
**New Media Literacies**

**Synopsis**

This course examines the intersection of education and participatory culture, literacy and technology change, the knowledge gap, informal learning and knowledge communities, emerging social skills and cultural competencies across the lifespan.



The concept of literacy is undergoing a transformation as a result of changes in media, technology, education and society. It's always been a slippery concept, actually. Five hundred years ago, it meant the ability to sign one's name to a printed document. Reading comprehension became a component of literacy when printed books flourished during the Enlightenment. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, writing composition and literary analysis gained prominence under the literacy umbrella.

To be literate today, one needs to be both a skilled reader and a competent writer, able to use a variety of technology *tools* (the Internet, word processing, graphic design software, digital camera, editing) in different *social contexts* (including for work, leisure and citizenship activities). You need the ability to access, analyze and compose messages using *symbol systems* (language, image, music, sound) across different *modes* (informational, narrative and persuasive) and *genres* (memos, flyers, social media networks, email, web pages, etc). And because literacy is a form of social action, it involves actively navigating a set of power relationships as a member of a *discourse community* (as a family member, a music fan, part of a team, etc).

In this course we'll look closely at the key concepts, assumptions and operating principles of some new media literacies, including visual literacy, information literacy, media literacy, critical literacy, and digital literacy. We'll consider whether new media literacies exacerbate or ameliorate the digital divide, contributing to knowledge gaps and socio-economic and structural inequalities in the education system. These are some of the questions we will address in this course:

- How do new media literacies develop among children, adolescents and young people both in and out of school?
- What kinds of activities and instructional practices best support learning?
- How does scholarship in new media literacies build new knowledge in the field?
- What are some of the personal, social, cultural, political and economic consequences of changing conceptualizations of literacy?

One source of momentum for new media literacies comes from the variety of stakeholders interested in the topic, including business leaders, government policymakers community education leaders, K-12 teachers, as well as educators and scholars from fields as diverse as linguistics, developmental psychology, English, educational technology, cultural studies, and communication. In exploring the relationship between theory and practice, we'll examine the practices of youth media communities and educators. We'll identify sources of support for and resistance to new media literacies and look at why competence in digital and media literacy is being debated by educational leaders, policymakers and the business community.

**Faculty**

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**Course Meeting Times and Location**

Tuesdays – Thursdays, 2 – 3:20, Anderson 001

**Required Text:**

Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and Media Literacy: Connecting Culture and Classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin/Sage.

Required readings will also be posted on Blackboard. For each class, you will be expected to bring print copies of readings for close reading and careful discussion of the ideas.

**Course Goals and Objectives**

After completing this course, you will:

1. Deepen awareness of yourself as a literate individual and reflect on the diversity of the new literacy practices that you use in the workplace, for leisure and citizenship, and as part of daily life.
2. Gain knowledge of how changes in society and technology shape the concept of literacy from the point of view of linguists, child development experts, educators, and information and communication scholars.
3. Gain knowledge of how literacy practices embody ideologies about the relative value of authorship, collaboration, technology, authority and social power.
4. Appreciate the variety of instructional practices that are used to develop the new media literacy competencies of children, adolescents and adults.
5. Strengthen your reading comprehension and critical reading skills in responding to texts in a variety of genres and forms.
6. Gain research skills in locating and evaluating information to develop your expertise on a topic of special interest related to the course.
7. Develop your writing skills and improve the ability to compose messages and share ideas using a variety of symbol systems and technologies.
8. Activate your creativity, critical thinking and collaboration competencies in creating and implementing original work.

## **Course Requirements**

Specific details about assignments will be available under “Assignments” on the course Blackboard site.

### Weekly Response Papers (30%)

Students will engage with the content of the course through various types of academic and creative work, including blogging, screencasting and other forms of expression and communication. We’ll document our work at:

<http://newliteraciesattemple.wordpress.com/>

### Final Research Project or Creative Proposal (30%)

Working individually or with a partner, you examine a specific topic related to the course, gather information to acquire expertise on the topic, develop an original argument, and write a scholarly paper communicating their ideas. Alternatively, you may create a series of lesson plans, develop a multimedia production, or plan another type of creative project with permission from the instructor. In either case, intermediate deadlines will help structure the learning experience. You post their work online and make a formal presentation of your work to the class.

### Midterm and Final Examination (30%)

An open-book, open-note midterm and final exam assess your ability to apply knowledge gained from this course to applied practical problems in the real world.

### Class Participation (10%)

Attendance, quality of class preparation, in-class participation, contribution to the learning of others, and leadership are evaluated at the semester end.

## **Grading**

Grades represent the instructor’s assessment of your work as compared to clearly identified criteria for evaluation and in relation to the performance of others in the class. A grade of A represents outstanding or exceptional work; an A- indicates high quality but not outstanding work; a B+ represents high quality work but with some limitations or evident weaknesses; a B indicates competent, satisfactory work. A B- in a graduate level course suggests that the student's work is lacking in some important way. A grade of C+ or C represents seriously flawed work. In most classes that would mean doing the assignments but misunderstanding fundamental concepts or presenting them in an unacceptable form. A grade of D represents failure and will be given only if assignments were extremely poorly executed or other failure to adhere to norms of appropriate student conduct. Work not submitted by the deadline will be awarded an F.

There are no make-up opportunities for missed exams, homework or other assignments. Please do not ask for an exception. Because media businesses rely on strict adherence to deadlines, this instructor employs a similar deadline standard. Please do not ask for an exception.

## **Approach to Writing Skills Development and Policy on Revision**

You will develop your literacy competencies (speaking, listening, reading, writing, critical analysis of media, and media composition) by exploring the topics and issues in this class. Weekly informal writing is used every week to help you discover what interests you most about what you are learning. Most writing students do in this course will be public, to be shared with classmates using a collaborative writing tool. Students

will read each other's work and get feedback from "critical friends." Revision is an integral part of the writing experience so you are encouraged to revise up to two of your weekly writing projects for a replacement grade. Revisions will be accepted on the last day of class.

**Policy on Disabilities and Special Needs**

If you have a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation. Also contact Disability Resources at (215) 204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for documented disabilities.

**Policy on Plagiarism**

Students are expected to produce substantial amounts of writing for this course, and it is expected that you will be the author of all the work you submit. Depending on the context and situation, penalties for plagiarism may range from a reduced grade on an assignment to failing the course. Students should use the American Psychological Association (APA) citation format for identifying all materials used for reference and information gathering. Please consult the instructor(s) if you have questions on how to identify the information sources that you use in preparing your work.

**Policy on Attendance and Class Participation**

Attendance at all classes is expected as a sign of your intellectual curiosity and commitment to the learning process. The instructor will use class attendance as one element to assess class participation. More than one missed class in the semester may lower the course grade.

**Freedom to Teach and Freedom to Learn**

Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Academic freedom principles support social responsibility in both the teaching and learning process. If your academic rights to learn are compromised, Temple University offers a grievance procedure. See "Student and Faculty Rights and Responsibilities" at <http://policies.temple.edu>

**BTMM 4455**  
**New Media Literacies**  
**Course Schedule**  
**Fall 2011**  
**Professor Renee Hobbs**

PART I	THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LITERACIES OLD AND NEW
Week 1 August 30 – Sept 1	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>  READ: Hobbs, “Digital and Media Literacy,” Preface, Chapter 1 & 2, (pp. vii – 46)
Week 2 September 6 – 8	<b>Paradoxes of Literacy, Culture and Technology</b> READ: Urban, “Marshall McLuhan and the Book” READ: Bruner & Olson, “Symbols and Texts as Tools of Intellect” READ: Gardner and Jenkins, “How We Got Here”  DUE: Weekly Response #1
Week 3 September 13 – 15	<b>Literacy as a Social Practice</b> READ: Gee, “What is Literacy?” READ: boyd, “Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites” READ: Gee, “Good Games and Good Learning”  DUE: Weekly Response #2
Week 4 September 20 – 22	<b>The Relationship between Learning and Literacy</b> READ: Wells, “Dialogic Inquiry in Education” READ: Bruner, “The Language of Education” READ: Hobbs, Chapter 3, “Critical Questions, Close Reading” (pp. 47 – 66)  DUE: Weekly Response #3
Week 5 September 27 – 29	<b>Old and New Literacies in Early Childhood</b> READ: Dyson, “Where are the Childhoods...” READ: Caravette, “Portrait of the Reader as a Young Child” READ: Mouly, “Visual Literacy” READ: Linebarger & Piotrowski, “TV as Storyteller”  DUE: Weekly Response #4
PART II	TOOL LITERACIES AND LITERACIES OF REPRESENTATION
Week 6 October 4 – 6	<b>Stakeholders in New Media Literacies</b> READ: Hobbs, “Multiple Visions of Multimedia Literacy” READ: Robison, “New Media Literacies by Design” VIEW: PBS Digital Media: New Learners of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century  DUE: Weekly Response #4
Week 7 October 11 – 13	<b>Information Literacy</b> READ: Benett, Maton, Kervin, “The Digital Natives Debate” READ: Inside Higher Ed, “What Students Don’t Know”  DUE: Weekly Response #5

Week 8 October 18 – 20	<b>Tool Literacies</b> READ: U.S. Department of Education, Learning Powered by Technology READ: Northcut & Brumberger, “Resisting the Lure of Technology-Driven Design”  DUE: Weekly Response #6
Week 9 October 25 -27	Workshop Practice on New Media Literacies Midterm Examination
Week 10 November 1 -3	<b>Representation and its Discontents</b>  READ: Hobbs, Chapter 4 “The Power of Representation” (pp. 67 – 80) READ: Kellner & Share, “Critical Media Literacy”  DUE: Weekly Response #7

<b>PART III</b>	<b>THEORY AND PRACTICE</b>
Week 11 November 8 – 10	<b>Collaborative Multimedia Authorship</b>  READ: Hobbs, Chapter 5 “Composing with Media Across the Curriculum” (pp. 81 – 102) READ: Miller & Borowicz, “New Literacies with an Attitude” READ: Alvermann & Hagood, “Fandom and Critical Media Literacy”  DUE: Weekly Response #8
Week 12 November 15 – 17	<b>Discourses of Empowerment and Protection</b>  READ: Hobbs, Chapter 6 – 7, “Protection and Empowerment” & “Life Online” (pp. 103 – 142) READ: Willard, “School Response to Cyberbullying and Sexting”  DUE: Weekly Response #9
Week 13 November 22  NO CLASS Nov 24 Happy Thanksgiving	<b>Digital Literacy and Democracy</b>  READ: Hobbs, Chapter 8, “What in the World” (pp. 143 – 166) READ: Hobbs, Chapter 9, “Infusing DML Across the Curriculum” (pp. 167 – 187) READ: Rheingold, “Using Participatory Media and Public Voice” READ: O’Neill, “Media Literacy and Communication Rights”
Week 14 November 29 – Dec 1	<b>Student Presentations</b> DUE: Presentation
Week 15 December 6	<b>Synthesis</b>  DUE: Weekly Response #10
Friday, Dec 9	DUE: Final Paper or Project
TBD	Final Examination

## READINGS

- Alvermann, D. & Hagood, M. (2000). Fandom and critical media literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* 43(5), 436 – 44
- Bennett, S., Maton, K. & Kervin, L. (2008). The ‘digital natives’ debate: A critical review of the evidence. *British Journal of Educational Technology* 39(5), 775 – 786.
- Boyd, D. (2007). Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In D. Buckingham (Ed.), *Youth, identity and digital media*. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Bruner, J. (2006, 1982). The language of education. *In search of pedagogy volume II: The selected works of Jerome S. Bruner* (pp. 80 – 90). New York: Routledge.
- Bruner, J. & Olson, D. (2006, 1978). Symbols and texts as tools of intellect. *In search of pedagogy volume II: The selected works of Jerome S. Bruner* (pp. 21 – 34). New York: Routledge.
- Caravette, L. (2011). Portrait of the reader as a young child. *Children and Libraries* 9(2), 52 – 57.
- Dyson, A. H. (2001). Where are the childhoods in childhood literacy? An exploration in outer (school) space. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* 1(1), 9 – 39.
- Gardner, H. & Jenkins, H. (2010). Appendix: How we got here. Our Space: Being a responsible citizen of the digital world. Available: <http://newmedialiteracies.org/our-space-being-a-responsible.php>
- Gee, J.P. (2005). Good games and good learning. *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* 85(2), 33-37.
- Gee, J. P. (1989). What is literacy? *Journal of Education* 171(1), 18-25.
- Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and media literacy: Connecting culture and classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin/Sage.
- Hobbs, R. (2006). Multiple visions of multimedia literacy: Emerging areas of synthesis. In M. McKenna, L. Labbo, R. Kieffer & D. Reinking (Eds.), *International handbook of literacy and technology*. Volume II (pp. 15 – 28). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
- Inside Higher Ed (2011, August 22). What students don’t know. Available: [http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/08/22/erial\\_study\\_of\\_student\\_research\\_habits\\_at\\_illinois\\_university\\_libraries\\_reveals\\_alarmingly\\_poor\\_information\\_literacy\\_and\\_skills](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/08/22/erial_study_of_student_research_habits_at_illinois_university_libraries_reveals_alarmingly_poor_information_literacy_and_skills)
- Kellner, D. & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy, democracy, and the reconstruction of education. In D. Macedo & S. Steinberg (Eds.), *Media literacy: A reader* (p. 3 – 23). New York: Peter Lang.

- Linebarger, D. & Piotrowski, J. (2009). TV as storyteller: How exposure to television narratives impacts at-risk preschoolers' story knowledge and narrative skills. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 27, 47 – 69.
- Miller, S. & Borowicz, S. (in press). New literacies with an attitude: Transformative teacher education through digital video learning tools. In M. Finn & P. Finn (Eds.), *Teacher education with an attitude*. State University of New York Press.
- Mouly, F. (2011). Visual literacy: Exploring this magical portal. *Children and Libraries* 9(1), 12 - 14.
- Northcut, K. & Brumberger E. (2010). Resisting the lure of technology-driven design: Pedagogical approaches to visual communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 40(4), 459 – 471.
- O'Neill, B. (2010). Media literacy and communication rights: Ethical individualism in the new media environment. *International Communication Gazette* 72, 323 – 338.
- Rheingold, H. (2008). Using participatory media and public voice to encourage civic engagement. In W.L. Bennett (Ed.), *Civic life online: Learning how digital media can engage youth*. (pp. 97 – 118). The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
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- Urban, W. (2004). Marshall McLuhan and the book: A reconsideration. *Historical Studies in Education* 16(1), 139 – 154.
- Wells, G. (2000). Dialogic inquiry in education: Building on the legacy of Vygotsky. In C. Lee and P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
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