Research Project & Presentation

Unit 3: How has technology impacted discourse communities?

Weight: 25% of final grade

SLOs:

- Interpret and analyze discourse that deals with issues of cultural and/or global diversity in a variety of forms.
- Identify factors defining cultural identities and analyze how these are employed in a variety of discourse.
- Use written and oral discourse to develop and present meaningful and interesting ideas that show the students’ voices, a willingness to take intellectual risks, and an ability to enter an academic conversation.
- Communicate competently in several genres and in response to the needs of different audiences.
- Create discourse through a more sophisticated process that includes editing, proofreading, and revising multiple drafts.
- Critique their own and others' works and assess their own development as producers of discourse.
- Construct effective research strategies and arguments, use resources effectively, evaluate a broad range of sources, including library resources, cite information sources in compliance with established norms, and weave such scholarly sources into a longer interdisciplinary research project.
- Appropriately cite sources using a consistent professional style (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) at an intermediate level.

Assignment:

In order to make this large project more manageable, it has been divided into four smaller segments.

1. The Research Paper—As we have seen through many of our readings and class discussions, advances in technology aren’t always considered positive by everyone. Your task is to research a particular technological advancement and its effect on a particular group (like speakers of Spanish, women after 9/11, a religious denomination, adolescents in 1960, etc.). Try to keep your focus on a definable group and not on society at large. As this project is rather extensive, be sure to pick an advancement that interests you.

After conducting some initial research, you will then create an argument (with a clearly defined thesis) about the technological advancement, how it has impacted that particular group, and whether its impact should be viewed as positive or negative.

Think to yourself: Based on what I have learned about this group, should this “advancement” have happened in the first place? Or was it, like Postman says, a technology that has had a negative impact? Integrate your research findings into your argument as support. It is entirely possible that you may begin with a particular thesis in mind, and then need to change it based on your research findings.
Your paper should have a clear, arguable thesis with several strong supports. Though your paper is ultimately an argument, it should be significantly research-based. In other words, use the sources you collect to support the argument you wish to make.

Your final paper should **utilize at least ten sources** and demonstrate to me that you are able to strongly research, document, and integrate sources into your work. Of your ten+ sources, only two may be websites, at least seven must be scholarly in nature (come from peer-reviewed journals, books, studies, etc.), and all must be credible. Note: Sources from Wikipedia, Ask.com, Yahoo Answers, or other mediums that can be edited by anyone with a computer and an email address are not credible. If it helps support your argument, you should also feel free to incorporate the calculation skills you are learning into creating your argument. This would be considered you sort of conducting your own research.

Your paper should follow proper MLA formatting and documentation, demonstrate careful editing and proofreading, and be written to an academic audience. Don’t forget to include a Works Cited page.

The minimum length requirement is: **3,000 words (not counting the Works Cited or Annotated Bib.); see the rubric for other requirements.**

The final paper should appear as follows (all in the same document):

- Paper (don’t forget a title!)
- Works Cited
- Annotated Bib

As with the CDA Essay, we will write a rough draft and hold conferences to help you with this assignment.

### 2. The Research Project Proposal

— Before beginning the paper, you will write a project proposal explaining your plans for the project. It’s important to understand that the proposal is not a contract; sometimes your research findings cause your thesis to change. Your final grade won’t be affected if you need to deviate from your original plan; such changes are perfectly natural. However, the proposal gives you a place to start, and it lets me know that you’re doing serious thinking about what you will explore. It also helps me assist or make recommendations if I foresee a problem. You should address the following in your proposal:

- The technological advancement you plan to explore and your reason for choosing it
- The group you plan to analyze and your reason for choosing it
- The specific resources/types of resources you will consult
- (Possibly) A research timeline (a good place to start would be with the dates on the schedule)
- Problems you foresee arising in your project and how you will overcome them
- What you expect to discover (sort of like a hypothesis)
- A preliminary thesis—what do you plan to argue for in your final paper?
- (Possibly) A preliminary bibliography of sources you have consulted.
- (Anything else that will help me better understand how you plan to approach this project)
You should also think of the Research Proposal from a rhetorical standpoint—how can you best convey an image of yourself as a savvy, organized researcher to your audience? Odds are that you will have to one day craft a proposal in your career, and often proposals are directly tied to funding—think of this as practice for presenting a positive, capable image of yourself.

For the purposes of the proposal, you are welcome to use headings in your writing.

Minimum length requirement: **500 words**

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**3. The Annotated Bibliography**—The Annotated Bib is essentially a Works Cited page with some additions. Each entry will also contain:

- A brief summary or description of the work
- Evaluative comments
- Some indication of how the source will inform your research
  (Read and follow guidelines in Chapter 20 of *Everyone’s an Author*)

A draft of the Annotated Bib will be due well before the final paper (see dates on the schedule); the final Annotated Bib should begin on the last page of the Research Paper. As you complete the annotated bib, you should know that some of the sources you use in the actual paper may change. What’s important is that you are actively doing research that will help inform your writing.

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**4. The Prezi Presentation**—In addition to writing the research paper, you will present your final project to the class by conducting a Prezi presentation. Prezi ([http://prezi.com/](http://prezi.com/)) is an online tool that lets you create and store your presentation online. It can then be viewed by other Prezi users (depending on the privacy settings you choose), but only the original creator can edit it.

It’s important to remember that you will use Prezi as a presentation aid. Putting your research paper on the screen and then reading directly from it is not a speech. It’s reading. We can do that ourselves. You will need to follow the presentation aids guidelines found in *A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking* (chapter 7), such as using a minimal number of words per “slide,” using colors/fonts that aren’t distracting, etc. This presentation should follow all the appropriate speech criteria (have a clear thesis, intro, body, conclusion, etc.) Be sure to practice your delivery. Also, keep in mind that your entire paper will not fit into the speech—you will need to carefully select what main points and sources you will use to support your argument in the speech.

All outside information in the speech (anything that isn’t your original thought) must be verbally cited. For instance: “According to a 2001 study conducted by Joe Smith and published in the *Journal of Communication*...”

As with our Autoethnography Speeches, you will turn in a speech outline before you begin speaking and keep one copy to speak from (2 copies total).

Length requirement is **7-9 minutes**. See the rubric for how your presentation will be assessed. In order to give you more power over how your presentation will be assessed, we will design the visual aid criteria portion of the assignment sheet together in class on 4/2.