

Faculty of Education
University of Prince Edward Island
ED 673
Building a Culture for Reading in a Digital Age
Summer Session II, 2012

Course Facilitator: Bonnie Stewart **Email:** bstewart@upei.ca

Class Time: July 4-10th, 8:30am-4:30pm **Location:** HSB 106

Course Overview

We live in a time when the place and practices of reading – and many other social, cultural, and learning activities – have been visibly altered, in part due to the advent of digital technologies. This course will examine how this so-called Digital Age operates, and will explore what it means to be literate within it, as a citizen, an educator, and a learner.

The course is more of a “what does it mean to...?” course than a how-to course, as best practices for navigating the emergent and complex culture of the Digital Age have not yet truly solidified. Rather, ED 673 aims to have us explore together what reading has meant within our culture, and how it has shifted, both in practice and in its social and educational role.

One of the key concepts within this course is digital literacies: we will learn what they mean and how they work, and we will put them into practice, using various social media technologies and platforms to see how digital communications operate and affect our own reading.

Since this course is about digital-era reading, we'll operate on digital principles: the course will be participatory, meaning your input is part of making it happen. In this course, you are not a vessel for me to fill with expertise, but part of a learning and knowledge network to which we all contribute. All writing will be online and networked: we will be each others' audience. Rather than writing solely for me, you will be writing for – and getting and giving – responses from the class.

In addition to digital literacies, we will explore the development of reading habits in children, youth, and other digital citizens, and the shifting but significant role of libraries in digital culture. Gender issues and encouraging world-minded reading will also be part of our focus, as will the ways in which visual literacies and other cultural, non-textual literacies become increasingly important in a digital age.

A key goal of this course is to encourage you to disrupt and challenge your own reading assumptions and practices, and to identify the ideas and narratives that shape your reading and your approaches to reading for educational purposes.

Required:

Moodle will be a central component of the course, where assignments, discussions, and feedback will all be posted. You should log in to Moodle by June 24th to access the texts (readings and podcast links) for the preview week and to post your introductory reflection.

* IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE LOGGING INTO MOODLE, **EMAIL ME AT** bstewart@upei.ca*

Course outline

As a five day Masters' credit course, this will be an intense learning experience.

In order to minimize pressure to read and write during the course, there will be a preview period of two weeks before the course, so you can complete some of the more conceptual foundational readings, and begin to practice the processes of reflection and commenting that will be such an important part of participation in the course.

You will also have one week after we wrap up the course to complete and submit your final paper. It will be due as a Moodle attachment on Wednesday, July 18th.

Preview Week(s) – Building Connections and Foundations – June 20th – July 3rd, 2012

Because this course is so short and intensive, we'll have a few online prep activities beforehand, to connect and ensure the conversation is started. This will allow me to then focus some of the course content specifically to your interests, and allow us to make the most of our limited in-class time.

Pre-readings:

It's impossible to really get our minds around what reading means in the digital age if we don't have a clear sense of what it's already meant, historically, in terms of cultural identity and our concepts of knowledge and truth.

1. Ramsay, S (2010): The Hermeneutics of Screwing Around; or What You Do With a Million Books <http://www.playingwithhistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/hermeneutics.pdf>
2. Stewart, B (2012): A Brief History of Reading and Culture (my blog – part of the course text) <http://theory.cribchronicles.com/2012/06/20/a-brief-history-of-reading-and-culture>

Pre-listening (podcast):

CBC's Ideas: Closing the Book

<http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/episodes/2011/09/26/closing-the-book-2/>

Preview Week Assignments:

1. Introductory Reading Reflection:

The first activity, on Moodle, will be to post approximately 750 words introducing yourself and exploring a bit of your relationship to reading. What's your professional and educational context? What do you remember of learning to read and childhood reading? What are your reading practices – of all kinds, for work and pleasure, online and off – these days? Texting and social media count; so do emails. **Please post your reflection by Friday, June 30th.**

2. Comment(s) on other(s)' reflection(s): As the course is participatory, **you will need to respond** – by clicking “reply” and commenting – **to at least one other person's post** by Tuesday, July 3rd.

3. Comment(s) on the Brief History of Reading & Culture blog post: after reading the post, please leave a comment on the blog taking up some aspect of the post as relates to your own thoughts/experiences regarding reading. Watch the blog space for responses to your comment(s) and/or emerging conversation.

Conversation the first morning of class will focus on the content of your introductory reflections, the blog post, the podcast, AND the reading/listening assignments for July 4th.

Day #1 – July 4th, 2012

The Digital: Networks, Literacies, Cultures of Scarcity vs. Abundance, and the Myth of Digital Natives

Readings:

1. Jones, J. (2012) Social Reading and the Foundations of Digital Literacy
<http://dmlcentral.net/blog/john-jones/social-reading-and-foundations-digital-literacy>
2. White, D. & LeCornu, A. (2011) Visitors and Residents: A New Typology for Online Engagement
<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3171/3049>
(video version: <http://tallblog.conted.ox.ac.uk/index.php/2009/10/14/visitors-residents-the-video/>)

Listening:

CBC's Afternoon Edition: Digital Literacy and Students

<http://www.cbc.ca/afternoonedition/episode/2012/02/15/digital-literacy-and-students/>

Day #2 – July 5th, 2012

Participatory Media: Supporting & Enacting Digital Literacies

Readings:

1. Krozser, K. (2010) Reading in the Digital Age: or Reading How We've Always Read
<http://booksquare.com/reading-in-the-digital-age-or-reading-how-weve-always-read/>
2. Stewart, B. (2012) What Producership is and Why It Matters
<http://theory.cribchronicles.com/2012/07/03/what-producership-is-and-why-it-matters/>
3. boyd, d. (2009) I Want My Cyborg Life
http://www.zephoros.org/thoughts/archives/2009/07/13/i_want_my_cybor.html

Day #3 – July 6th, 2012

Tools and Practices for Digital Literacies

Your assignment for this class will be to find a reading or resource related to reading or digital literacies generally, and share/assess it with your small group during class time.

Day #4 – July 9th, 2012

Institutions in the Digital Age: Schools, Libraries, Gender

Readings:

1. Losh, L. (2012) Going Low-Tech to Teach New Literacies
<http://dmlcentral.net/blog/liz-losh/going-low-tech-teach-new-literacies>
2. Moody, G. (2012) Reinventing Public Libraries for the Digital Age
<http://www.techdirt.com/blog/innovation/articles/20120422/04463518597/re-inventing-public-libraries-digital-age.shtml>
3. Fry, E. (2012) It's 2012 Already: Why Is Opinion Writing Mostly Male?
http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/its_2012_already_why_is_opinio.php?page=2
4. Bloom, L. (2012) How To Talk to Little Boys
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lisa-bloom/how-to-talk-to-little-boy_b_1473167.html?ref=topbar

Day #5 – July 10th, 2012*Visual Literacies & Critical Perspectives***Readings:**

1. McCann, A. (2012) What Your Profile Picture Says About Where You're From
<http://www.buzzfeed.com/atmccann/what-your-profile-picture-says-about-where-youre>
2. Smith, Z. (2012) The North-West London Blues
<http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2012/jun/02/north-west-london-blues/>
3. Birkerts, S. (2010) Reading in a Digital Age
<http://theamericanscholar.org/reading-in-a-digital-age/>
4. Richardson, W. (2012) My Kids are Illiterate. Most Likely, Yours Are Too
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/will-richardson/my-kids-are-illiterate-mo_b_750177.html

Post-course Week – Wrapping Up – July 11th – 18th, 2012

Your final written assignment – the course paper – is due Wednesday, July 18th. It is a 2000 word argumentative essay taking a position on building a culture for reading in the digital age. In it, please use the two final readings for the course – Birkerts and Richardson – as foundations either for or against aspects of your argument (or both!). If you'd like to connect with Richardson on Twitter, for additional research/questions, I'll be happy to introduce you. The paper can be posted on Moodle, or posted on your own blog so long as you notify me when it goes up.

Assignments:

This is a graded course. There are three types of assignment in the course: participatory assignments (30%), a presentation (25%), and three formal writing assignments (45%).

The **participatory** assignments are about contributing, rather than about mastery. There are three different spheres of contribution that will make up this course: the physical classroom, the Moodle classroom, and the public digital world. In the first two, your contributions will only be visible to our class members. In the last, your contributions will be part of the larger unfolding conversation on open digital platforms: in this case Twitter and two of my blog posts that serve as readings for the course, though you are welcome/encouraged to expand beyond those to other platforms.

I will assign participatory grades: they are primarily about presence and scale of contribution. A 9/10 will be granted for being present, engaged, and on-time as per class assignments in all three spheres. Full marks will be reserved for going the extra participatory mile and really fostering or leading support and discussion within any of the spheres.

Class Participation (class discussions/leadership) – 10% of final grade

Moodle Participation (forum discussions/commenting on others' work) – 10% of final grade

Public participation (Twitter/blog comments discussion) – 10% of final grade

The **class presentation** assignments are both about research and presentation. They will take place on the afternoons of Monday, June 9th and Tuesday, June 10th. Presentations will be one half-hour long, including class discussion, and topics and schedule will be sorted out during the first day of class.

Your goal in the class presentation is to explore, in detail, either a technology (such as the e-reader), a practice (such as texting) or a concept (such as visual literacy) related to reading in a digital age. You

will research and prepare a participatory presentation or activity about the changes occurring and their implications for education. You are encouraged to explore from both positive and critical perspectives.

The class presentations will be graded by all of us. Peer grading will count for 30%, my grading will count for 30%, and your own reflections and assessment of your research, your learning, and your performance as a presenter will count for 40%. Grading templates will be provided for these participatory activities, and constructive feedback will be made available to presenters from both peers and professor.

Class Presentation – 25% of final grade

The **writing assignments** will be graded on quality and depth of analysis: a reflective but professional or scholarly approach is appropriate. The first two writing assignments are only 750-1000 words, because of the compressed nature of the course; the final paper is 2000 words. Synthesis of new ideas and research concepts (where appropriate) with existing knowledge is expected in the final paper.

Reading Reflection (due on Moodle June 30th) – 10% of final grade

750 words introducing yourself and exploring a bit of your relationship to reading. What's your professional and educational context? What do you remember of learning to read and childhood reading? What are your reading practices – of all kinds, for work and pleasure, online and off – these days? Texting and social media count; so do emails.

E-reader Reflection (due on Moodle July 8th) – 10% of final grade

750 words assessing your experience with the Kobo reader (we'll have a class set to use!) and the way the Kobo's affordances (including technological design and the way e-books are marketed and sold on the site) shape usages and reading practices.

Final Paper (due on Moodle July 18th) – 25% of final grade

2000 word argumentative essay taking a position on building a culture for reading in the digital age. In it, please use the two final readings for the course – Birkerts and Richardson – as foundations either for or against aspects of your argument.