

# Writing for Digital Media

Writing for Digital Media teaches writing skills for a digital age.



LitMUSE

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Image Credit: Gerald R. Lucas



igital media differs from that of print in several key ways, and because of these differences, to use digital media successfully, writers must develop specific skills for its mastery. A project-oriented course, NMAC 3108 introduces students to these skills, encourages them to develop their **professional personae**, provides multiple opportunities to develop digital literacies, and teaches them to become fluent practitioners of new media. This section of WritDM is taught as **hybrid online**. Before doing anything else, be sure you're ready for this particular challenge:

### Considerations for Online Courses

So, you're thinking about taking an online course?  
Read the following carefully before committing.

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## Introduction

Welcome to NMAC 3108, Writing for Digital Media. The document you're reading is your syllabus. **Everything** you need for this class is on this page and linked off of it—including *all assignments*. Bookmark it now and return here if you get lost or confused, or you can always return to [LitMUSE](http://LitMUSE).

Since this is a hybrid online section, I have tried to make the lessons and procedures as simple to follow and to understand as possible with a minimum amount of face-to-face time. That said, there is bound to be a bit of confusion, at least at first, and we may need more classroom hours than I allot below. Do your best to work through it by **carefully and completely reading this document** (and links). I promise, there is an answer to your question. If all else fails, you may [contact me](#), check the [FAQ](#), or ask a question on Slack (see below). **Trust yourself** to follow directions and find the answers. Be careful and deliberate.

*If you are uncomfortable making decisions,  
researching your own answers, and working on your*

*own, you may be more comfortable in a traditional, face-to-face section.*

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**Team: [litmuse.slack.com](https://litmuse.slack.com)**  
**Channel: #writdm**

This course will probably be unlike any college course you have ever taken. It is designed to let you—the students—**discover and create your own knowledge** using the powerful digital devices and platforms we all have access to. I'm assuming, since you're taking this class online, that you are **comfortable with working by yourself**, are confident in your ability to take risks, do not need the constant reassurance of an authority figure, and have a basic Internet literacy. You will learn more about my approach shortly.

*For a head start on how to approach all work in this course, see "How to Do Well in My Class," "HackEdu," and "Research & Response."*

Again, read this document through carefully before beginning. You might want to **take notes** as you go, jotting down questions you have—there may even be a quiz. I bet they are answered by the time you're ready to begin the first lesson.

### Be an Expert

Adopt a professional approach to thinking and working to transition out of student thinking.

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Much initial confusion and anxiety can be mitigated by just reading this document and links carefully and completely.

## Instructor Information

- Dr. Gerald R. Lucas | [@drgrlucas](#) | [About](#)
- Office: CAS-117 (Macon campus)
- Office Hours: MW 12:15–2pm in CAS-117; TR 8–9:30am and 11–11:30am online; and via appointment on Slack and/or Skype
- Email: gerald.lucas [at] mga [dot] edu

I try to make myself as available as much as possible during the first couple weeks of a semester, including evenings and weekends. If you need to chat with me, **direct message** me on Slack and we'll arrange a video conference via Skype (or similar service), if necessary. Please do not expect a response on any social media after 5pm on weekdays or anytime during the weekend. I may be available, but I also need some down time. Thanks for your understanding.

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## Course Information

**Prerequisite:** At least a “C” in ENGL 1102

**Description:** This class addresses digital writing in various forms. In developing Web and other projects, students will consider issues such as language, information architecture, communication, collaboration, and community.

**Classroom Hours:** Three per week, both face-to-face and online.

### Goals

In this course, you will use lessons, texts, and daily practice to improve your writing for the screen while developing your online, professional persona. Specifically, students will develop:

1. writing skills most appropriate for several digital platforms;
2. a professional persona that targets a specific expert community;  
and
3. a collaborative sense of composition.

You will read, write, and workshop (discuss each other’s work online for the purpose of improvement). Though this class teaches you how to target an expert, digital audience and the basics of how to publish writing for the web, it is not a technology class; it is **primarily a writing class**, though we will undoubtedly address technology throughout. That said, our primary concern is writing, not the tech we do it with.

*Again, if you are uncomfortable researching and figuring out some things on your own, this may not be the section of NMAC 3108 for you.*

### Student Learning Outcomes

By successfully completing the course, students will demonstrate:

- The ability to analyze and evaluate issues in new media and communication.

- Proficiency writing for the web.
- Proficiency collaborating on a writing project.

### Staley's Declassified WritDM Survival Guide

My Top Ten Tips to do Well in NMAC 3108

litmuse.net



## Texts

The following texts will be necessary throughout the semester. The class' main **required** text, Carroll's *Writing for Digital Media*, may be purchased or rented as an ebook by following the link below.

- Barr, Chris. *The Yahoo! Style Guide*. St. Martin's Griffin (2010).  
**RECOMMENDED**
- Butterick, Matthew. *Butterick's Practical Typography*.
- Carroll, Brian. *Writing for Digital Media*. Routledge (2010).  
**REQUIRED**
- Lynch, Patrick J. and Sarah Horton. *The Web Style Guide*.
- Various links (Web sites, videos, and PDFs) within lessons.

## Technology Requirements

All students should have **their own newish computer** with a **high-speed Internet connection**. For minimum computer requirements, see those Second Life outlines. I require all students to have a couple of Internet accounts on social media platforms, including Slack and Wikipedia. A tablet for reading PDFs is convenient, but not a requirement of the course. Since this is a course about digital media, we will also use digital media daily in our lessons. Therefore, students are expected to get and stay connected throughout the semester. Have a mobile device? You should set it up for use in this class, especially with Slack since we will use this as our primary means of class communication. Specific directions will follow in the first lesson.

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## Policies

Students are held accountable for knowing and practicing each of the course policies. Consider them like the law: the excuse “I didn’t know” will carry no weight.

**As a Middle Georgia State University student, it is your responsibility to read, understand, and abide by the MGA Student Code of Conduct.**

Students may withdraw from the course and earn a grade of “W” up to and including the midterm date: **March 15, 2016**. After midterm, students who withdraw will receive a grade of “WF.”

## Revision

Writing is a process. Only through rewriting and revision do these skills improve. Therefore, I encourage students to **submit work early** so they may **revise before final evaluation**. Each lesson will have multiple components. Students may submit any of these components before the *soft* due date. Post drafts of work to Slack for early consideration and feedback from both the professor and your peers. I will look at any submitted **a couple of days before the final due date** (called the “soft” due date—see “Lesson Schedule” below) and make suggestions for improvement. Once I record a final grade (after the “hard” due date), it will not change. Revisions must be completed before evaluation. Again, this is primarily a writing class:

*Your writing, therefore, is the most important aspect of your performance in this course and will comprise the bulk of your final grade. Consider anything you write as potentially evaluated.*

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## Requirements

Writing for Digital Media is composed of **four lessons** and a **research journal**, each worth 20% of your final grade. Each lesson will be

comprised of **various assignments**, each of which allows you to build skills that will help you in the lesson's contribution.

*Students must complete all assignments in each lesson in order to successfully pass the course. All assignments within lessons will be due when the lesson is due.*

Projects you complete online should be able to **stand alone**; that is, assignments should not reference the class, but target a particular **professional audience**—the research journal is the exception here. Remember, these are **public documents**, not just assignments; your audience, if you're considering yourself as part of an expert community, is not necessarily your classmates and professor. More on this in Lesson 1.

Please read each lesson at **the beginning of the semester**, so you have an understanding of what will be expected of you during the semester. Some assignments will take longer to complete than others. **Work a bit every day**—*do not procrastinate*. The following will be components of each lesson and will compose its final grade.

### **Research and Process Journal (RPJ)**

This requirement asks students to write **at least one blog post at least every two weeks** and submit it to the class publication. Posts will be between **400 and 500 words, multimodal**, and address what you have learned about the course content: writing for digital media. In other words: this journal demonstrates your progress in the course—what you have learned where. It should exhibit your best writing, respond to other classmates' posts, incorporate **support** for all suppositions (links), and show your engagement with the course materials on an continuous basis.

*You must write a minimum of eight posts during the semester: four before midterm and four after. The final post—a self-assessment—is mandatory for all. Students should write two posts per lesson.*



Read more about the RPJ and how to submit your posts:

### Research and Process Journal

A crucial part of education begins with documenting your progress as a learner, thinker, ...  
medium.com



See the posts [recommended by LitMUSE](#) to get examples of solid work. Check out [Medium Help](#)—especially [Getting Started](#)—to learn about posting on this platform. Keep in mind that you are not writing for print, but writing for the screen. More on this in Lesson 1.

Our course's RPJ is called, appropriately enough, *Writing for Digital Media*. **Submit your [Medium username](#) to me (DM via Slack) during the first week of class. All posts must be submitted to the class RPJ before to due date to be counted. Late posts will not be accepted.**

### Writing for Digital Media

A research and progress blog for students in NMAC 3108.  
medium.com

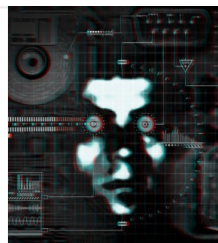


## Lessons

Click each link below to read more about each lesson. Read each lesson carefully at the beginning of the semester. Most will require careful planning and organization. Know what each requires and **do not procrastinate**. The majority of failures happen because students do not follow this advice. Experience has shown that this is particularly true for Project #3.

### 1: Establish Your Persona (#WDM1)

One of the first steps in writing for the screen is developing your digital persona.  
litmuse.net



## 2: Write for a Publication

Your goal for this assignment is to publish two posts in any Medium Publication.

litmuse.net



## 3: Wikipedia Post

For this lesson the class will make a single contribution to Wikipedia.

litmuse.net



## 4: Creative Contribution

This assignments asks that you bring together what you have learned this semester about writi...

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## Contributions

The contribution is the major submission of each lesson: it's what all the assignments are working toward. Your contribution should be your best work, illustrating all the concepts covered in the lesson, and grow on the concepts you learned in previous lessons. Contributions will be the heaviest weighed in evaluation.

The final lesson will have you choosing your own medium for composing a **creative contribution**—a video, a super blog post, a podcast, an animation, a presentation, etc.—anything but a traditional academic essay, hopefully using a platform you have not used during the semester. The idea here is to be creative in your approach. Additional details will follow.

## Daily Work

Each lesson includes other assignments meant to teach necessary ideas and skills. Each lesson will include additional assignments, like reading, social media posts, short writings, and the like. While the contribution will be weighed most heavily, do not ignore any additional

components of each lesson as they will also be included in the evaluation. Failure to complete daily work will have a significant impact on final grades. Much of this daily work is incorporated into your RPJ posts.

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## Lesson Schedule

All project hard due dates are **Tuesdays by midnight**, and all soft due dates are the **preceding Friday**; all RPJ posts are **Thursdays by midnight**.

Be sure to plan ahead and begin lessons early. Note that each lesson has both a “**soft**” and a “**hard**” due date. The latter is the *final* due date, while the former is the last day to submit the assignment for revision. Submitting before the “soft” date will allow students to improve their writing before final evaluation (see “Revision” above). Please note: just because you submit a draft by the soft date does not guarantee that I will have the opportunity to offer feedback. All soft submissions should be done in **#writdm** on Slack.

All RPJ posts must be submitted before midnight on the due date to *Writing Digital Media*, the course blog:

Writing Digital Media

A research and progress blog for students in NMAC 3108.

medium.com



As noted above, RPJ posts are always due on **Thursdays by midnight** by the date under which they appear below. Use the tag indicated in parentheses when publishing and submitting your post.

### Week 1

- **T 01/10**: Read syllabus completely, including links. Create an account on Medium and on Slack. On Slack, introduce yourself in **#writdm**, discuss what you plan to learn this semester in this

course, what kind of expert we should consider you (see “[Be an Expert](#)”) indicate what you still have questions about, post a photo of yourself holding Carroll’s book (smile), and share your [Medium login name](#) (I need this to add you as a writer to [the course blog](#)). Be sure to take the Slack tutorial (in-app or via [Slack Guides](#)) so you know how to use it (it’s very easy). Fill out your profile on each platform, including a photo of your face. Complete ASAP, taking the quiz at the end of “Online Basics”:

### Humanities Basics

A primer for college students in the liberal arts.

litmuse.net



### Online Basics

Before you begin work, get your online tools set up.

litmuse.net



- **R 01/12:** RPJ (1): What have you learned about the course and how to do well in it? What questions do you still have? For extra points, answer someone else’s question using [Medium’s response feature](#) correctly. Remember that your audience for RPJ posts is future students; do not address them directly, but keep them in mind when writing. (Use **WDM1** as one of your keywords under the “Publish” menu.)

## Week 2

- **T 01/17:** Begin [Lesson 1](#). Complete [Humanities Basics](#) and [Online Basics](#) if you have not done so.
- **R 01/19:** RPJ (2): In what **two crucial ways** does writing for digital platforms differ from writing on paper? What are the best practices for composing a “story” on Medium? Use both the assigned readings and **other research** for support. (Keyword: **QkCon**)

### Week 3

- **T 01/24:** Work on Lesson 1.
- **R 01/26:** RPJ (3): “100 Words”—in *exactly* 100-words, answer one of the “Questions for Consideration” in Lesson 1 following the directions on “100 Words.” Support your post with at least one of the assigned readings and at least one other source you find online, citing each correctly. Practice all of the concepts you learned in your reading. All you write—including titles, subtitles, quotations, etc.—count as words. (**100 Words**)

### Week 4

- **T 01/31:** Lesson 1 due by midnight.
- **R 02/02:** RPJ (4): Discuss the About Page project. What did you learn? What resources were key to your completing the project? What challenges did you have and how did you overcome them? Etc. (**AboutPg**)

**NOTE:** You should have **at least two** RPJ posts written and submitted by this point.

### Week 5

- **T 02/07:** Begin Lesson 2. **In-class meeting to discuss questions about Lesson 2.**
- **R 02/09:** RPJ (5): Discuss any aspect of Carroll’s chapter 7. You might consider how his discussion of publishing and editing online relates specifically to Medium in general and Lesson 2 specifically. (**WDM2**)

### Week 6

- **T 02/14:** Continue Lesson 2.
- **R 02/16:** RPJ (6): Write an **audience analysis** of one of the publications you have chosen for Lesson 2. See Carroll, Chapter 5, pp. 115–116, assignment #1 for guidance. (**Audience**)

### Week 7

- **T 02/21:** Continue Lesson 2.

- **R 02/23:** RPJ (7): Open post—what did you research and learn this week about writing? How are your submission posts going? Have you heard from editors? What challenges have you had? How have you overcome them?

## Week 8

- **T 02/28:** Lesson 2 due by midnight. Look ahead to Lesson 3.
- **R 03/02:** RPJ (8): Discuss your experience in writing for a publication. Keep it positive; if you had challenges, discuss how you overcame them. Link to your two posts for Lesson 2's contribution. (**Publication**)

**NOTE:** You should have **at least four** RPJ posts written and submitted.

## Week 9

- **T 03/14:** Begin Lesson 3. (Use **#wdm-wiki** on Slack for collaboration). **In-class meeting to discuss questions about Lesson 3.**
- **R 03/16:** RPJ (9): Identify aspects of the assigned Wikipedia entry that need work. How will you best add to the entry? Find a similar entry on Wikipedia that can help you with development. How important is research? Develop a plan of attack. (**Wiki**)

## Week 10

- **T 03/21:** Work on Lesson 3.
- **R 03/23:** RPJ (10): Discuss strategies for collaboration online. How have you added to the class' approach to the wiki assignment? What approach has the class decided upon? What have you read to help you? (**Wiki**)

## Week 11

- **T 03/28:** Work on Lesson 3.
- **R 03/30:** RPJ (11): Open post on Wiki writing. What did you learn and accomplish this week? What challenges did you overcome? Be sure you use sources to support your ideas. (**Wiki**)

## Week 12

- **T 04/04:** Lesson 3 due before midnight.
- **R 04/06:** RPJ (12): Discuss your work on the wiki. How would you rate your efforts? Why? Justify your assessment with specific evidence. What more needs to be done that your class did not have time to do? (**Wiki**)

**NOTE:** You should have **at least six** RPJ posts written and submitted.

### Week 13

- **T 04/11:** Begin Lesson 4. **In-class meeting to discuss questions about Lesson 4.**
- **R 04/13:** RPJ (13): What are you doing for your creative contribution? How will you target your expert audience? What additional sources from your expert community have helped you? (**CreativeCon**)

### Week 14

- **T 04/18:** Work on Lesson 4.
- **R 04/20:** RPJ (14): What platform have you decided to use for your creative contribution? What others did you consider? Outline the reasons for choosing the one you did. How did your expert community help? (**CreativeCon**)

### Week 15

- **T 04/25:** Work on Lesson 4.
- **R 04/27: Mandatory RPJ:** Write a self evaluation of your performance this semester. What skills have you learned? What is your final understanding of writing for digital media? What grade would you give yourself? Be specific and support your assessment with specific evidence. (**Self Evaluation**)

### Week 16

- **T 05/02:** Lesson 4 due before midnight.

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*This is a hypertextual document from Dr. Lucas' course web site [LitMUSE](#) and is **not** intended for print. The most current and accurate course information will always be online. Last updated: **Jan 03, 2016 at 10:01.***



