

Writing for Digital Media

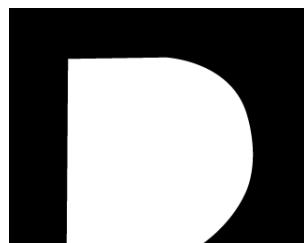
NMAC 3108 | Online Summer 2017 | Dr. Gerald Lucas



Gerald R. Lucas

May 8, 2017 · 10 min read

Writing for Digital Media teaches writing skills for a digital age. This project-oriented course will focus on collaborative editing.



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 **an online professionalism**, provides multiple opportunities to develop digital literacies, and teaches them to become fluent practitioners of new media. As this section of WritDM is taught **fully online**. Please be sure you are aware of the implications before attempting it.

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. Bookmark it now and return here if you get lost or confused, or you can always return to LitMUSE.

Since this is an online section, I have tried to make the lessons and procedures as simple to follow and to understand as possible. That said, there is bound to be a bit of confusion, at least at first. 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 or ask a question on Slack (see below). **Trust yourself** to follow directions and find the answers. Be careful and deliberate.

Also, use this syllabus as a model for how you should approach digital writing as a college student and a professional.

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.

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,



Sign up for Slack immediately and join the #writdm-sum17 channel. Install the app on your mobile device or computer to begin using Slack.

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.

Team Name: litmuse.slack.com

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

Again, read this document through carefully before beginning. You might want to **take notes** as you go, jotting

down questions you have. I bet they are answered by the time you're ready to begin the first lesson.

Instructor Information

- Dr. Gerald R. Lucas | [@drglucas](#) | [About](#)
- Office: CAS-117 (Macon campus)
- Office Hours: Via appointment on [Slack](#) and/or Skype
- Email: gerald.lucas [at] mga [dot] edu

Since this is a fully online course, most office hours will be virtual via Slack and/or Skype. 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 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 platforms on digital media;
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 a 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 address various digital media 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.

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.

- Barr, Chris. *The Yahoo! Style Guide*. St. Martin's Griffin (2010).
RECOMMENDED
- Carroll, Brian. *Writing for Digital Media*. Routledge (2010).
REQUIRED
- Lynch, Patrick J. and Sarah Horton. *The Web Style Guide*.
- Mailer, Norman. *The Short Fiction of Norman Mailer*. (PDF in #writdm-wiki).
- 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 & Procedures

Classroom Policies - LitMUSE

Course policies for all the classes of Dr. Lucas. Course materials for the students of Gerald Lucas, Ph.D.

litmuse.net



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 College 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: **July 7, 2017**. 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**. Students are encouraged to submit writing early for editorial feedback and revision. Post drafts of work to Slack for early consideration and feedback from both the professor and your peers. We will look at any submitted **a couple of days before the final due date** and make suggestions for improvement. Once I record a final grade, 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, including Slack posts and emails. See “Participation” below.

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Requirements

Writing for Digital Media is composed of **the following components**:

- Project 1: Course Publication (RPJ) (50%)
- Project 2: Wikipedia Contributions (40%)
- Participation (10%)

Each requirement will be on-going throughout the semester, will require **regular contributions**, and be comprised of **various assignments**.

Students must complete all assignments in each project to successfully pass the course. All assignments within lessons will be due when the project is due unless otherwise noted (see “Dates” below).

Projects you complete online should be able to **stand alone**; that is, assignments should not reference the class, but target a particular **professional audience**. 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.

Please read each project 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*.

Project 1: Research and Process Journal (RPJ)

This is a how-to publication about writing on a wiki in general and Wikipedia specifically that will be edited by every member of the class: a **Wiki Primer**, if you will. Students will write articles that target new wiki contributors, help their classmates edit those articles, and publish articles consistently throughout the semester.

Each contributor will be responsible for publishing a minimum of **three well-researched and written articles** about wiki writing—one due before midterm and two after (see “Dates” below). Posts will be a **maximum of 500-words, multimodal**, and address what you have learned about the course content: writing for digital media—specifically about writing for the wiki (see below). In other words: this journal

demonstrates your progress in the course and what you have learned about writing for a wiki. 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 on-going basis.

In addition, students will have editorial responsibilities in making sure that every article published is as “publication-ready” as possible. In other words, the writing is precise and error-free, conforms to the publication's style manual, addresses an appropriate topic, and uses the best practices of the medium. For more details, read:

Research and Process Journal

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

[medium.com](#)



Our course's RPJ is called, appropriately enough, *Writing for Digital Media*. Be sure you submit your Medium username (the part following the @ in the URL of your [profile page](#)) to me (DM via Slack or just follow LitMUSE) during the first week of class so I can make you a writer and editor.

Writing for Digital Media

A research and progress blog for students in NMAC 3108.

[medium.com](#)



Read my [introduction to our publication's special edition](#). It provides you a focus for your writing and editing. All published articles should use appropriate **tags**, using “v1” to be included in the special edition. All posts should be added first as a **draft**, then **edited** by others and **revised** (maybe several times) before final publication. You will earn two grades on this requirement: one for your individual posts (a minimum of 3) and one for your editing.

Project 2: Wiki Contributions

For this project, students will edit entries on Wikipedia; one they will edit as a class, and others each will work on individually.

For the first part of the semester, students will make **at least four critical edits** to existing Wikipedia entries of their choice. These should correspond to each student's interests and expertise, and should concentrate on adding a well-supported and edited contribution to an existing Wikipedia entry. Students may choose different entries to update, or concentrate on one. Each **weekly contribution** (even though they are all due on the same date, do not wait until the end to do them all) should include at least one correctly-cited reference and add at least 100 non-trivial words or a significant edit of existing content.

The collaborative entry will be *The Short Fiction of Norman Mailer*. This post needs help, especially in editing and analysis. E.g., story summaries should be cut at least in half; secondary sources need to be added; and the critical interpretations should be fleshed out. Follow the directions in “[Collaboration](#)”; this part will be due at the end of the semester. Even though it has a final date for all contributions, like part one, students should aim to make **a significant edit each week**. In my experience, those who wait until the last minute score significantly lower on these assignments.

To get started on Wikipedia, see “[Writing on a Wiki](#)” and [take the Wikipedia tutorial](#); you should also do your research on Wikipedia best practices. There are many tutorial videos on YouTube; just be sure they are recent. Finally, be sure you create an account on Wikipedia so you will receive credit for all of your work.

Participation

Regular and consistent communication and class participation is required. You should check Slack daily during the week, respond to posts that that you peers make (and that I make), etc. All communication and participation will be included in this requirement. Poor communication, ignoring my posts, or lack of responsibility will cost you a letter grade. Do not be MIA and do not procrastinate. Get your work done on-time so that you can help each other edit and revise. All work not explicitly defined in the lessons above will count as participation and reflect on your professionalism.

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Dates

- **May 31:** Class Begins; Sign up for Slack (install on your mobile device, too) and Medium (follow [LitMUSE](#) or DM me your username on Slack so I can add you as an editor to the course publication); Read the syllabus and links completely and post any questions to **#writdm** on Slack.
- **June 9:** Read Carroll, *Writing For Digital Media*, chapters 1 through 3; Lucas, “Writing Top Ten,” “Writing Today,” and “The Editor’s Checklist”; Nielsen, “Usability 101,” “How Users Read on the Web”
- **June 23:** 4 Wiki edits due; 1 RPJ post due—published on Writing for Digital Media
- **June 27:** Midterm Grades Due
- **July 7:** Drop Date
- **July 25:** Last Day of Classes—Collaborative Wiki edit due; 2 RPJ posts due
- **July 28:** Final day for any (late) work submissions to receive partial credit
- **Aug 1:** Grades Due . . .

Last updated: 18 May 2017.

Please do not print this document; access it online as information may change.

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