

DS 340: Identity & Representation in Online Culture

Grand Valley State University W2019, TR 4-5:15 pm, AuSable 2113

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Slack Messenger is the best way to reach me and you can expect a response within 24 hours.

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Students will examine the default norms of digital communication (e.g. whiteness, heterosexuality, binary gender) and explore intersectional identities online (e.g. race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, ability status). The course will investigate dominant and marginalized communities' use of digital spaces and media, considering the ethics of online communication, research, and participation. Part of the Identity Issue. This course meets the General Education knowledge and skills goals on the attached General Education sheet (last pages of syllabus).

Please make sure you read the following requirements prior to the second week of classes as all course expectations as well as assignment instructions are listed in the pages that follow.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the role intersectional identities have in the development and growth of communities
2. Describe how communities form across geographic borders
3. Analyze the digital practices of key minority cultures
4. Locate their digital practices within a historical and global context
5. Analyze the ethical implications of cybertourism, identity tourism, digital racial, gender, and ability passing

This is an upper-division discussion-based course. Students have a responsibility to come to class prepared to discuss the materials. This means reading, thinking and writing about the material prior to class time. Be prepared for the work to be personally and academically challenging. You are expected to read, listen, and watch thoughtfully, attentively, and respectfully, and to ground your discussion in the texts and a critical integration of knowledge and experience.

TEXTS

- Anna Anthropy. *Rise of the videogame zinesters: How freaks, normal, amateurs, artists, dreamers, dropouts, queers, housewives, and people like you are taking back an art form.* (2012) New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Zoë Quinn. *Crash Override: How Gamergate Nearly Destroyed My Life and How We Can Win the Fight Against Online Hate.* (2016) New York: Public Affairs Books.
- Additional readings found on Blackboard

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignment Overview

Participation & Attendance	20%
Reading Journal	25%
Digital Media Tracking & Analysis	15%
Digital Zine or Digitally Archived Zine	20%
Twine Group Project	20%

Participation & Attendance: 20%

Active participation is a critical part of the learning experience in this course.

We will explore a variety of issues, some of them quite controversial and complicated. Thus, it's important that we all respect each other's needs, values, and views. There is no way for this class to succeed if students don't prepare materials thoughtfully and participate fully in the class. I expect each of us to arrive each week fully prepared to thoughtfully enter into an ongoing discussion.

Personal opinions play a role in class dialogues but do not substitute for a concerted effort to grasp the scholarly material in the course. Understanding the material does not mean you have to embrace all or any of the viewpoints represented. However, it does require that you read it, think about it, and discuss it. Please keep in mind that we address this class from a perspective that assumes inequality exists. If at any time anyone is disrespectful to anyone in the class, I reserve the right to remove posts and address students individually.

Students are also expected to participate online either in the in-person meeting or asynchronously outside of the meeting using Slack: <https://ds340identifi-fge1289.slack.com/>. Students will be assigned weeks to prompt Slack discussion outside of class.

For more information about guidelines for participation grading, please see the Participation Grading Rubric Blackboard.

Reading Journals: 25%

You are required to turn in **a reading journal on either Tuesday or Thursday each week before**

class. These journals, submitted in the Reading Journal section of Blackboard, will consist of brief summaries of the reading/viewing/ listening assignments for the day you submit it, using the Reading Journal feature in Blackboard. Each entry should summarize the readings/viewings for the week, briefly touching on each by name and summarizing their connections, comprising a 150-200 word summary of the key arguments/insights from the assignment. Entries are due **before class on the appropriate day each week, prior to coming to class.**

Students should also copy and paste these entries into GoogleDocs or Word to facilitate access during discussions and while working on other writing projects.

Successful journal entries will do the following:

1. Identify the articles/videos/chapters
2. Identify the authors' main argument (ex. key points). You should be able to paraphrase this argument and make connections between materials. It's okay if your understanding is incomplete—go with what you understood.
3. Discuss any lingering questions they have about the reading **and** any connections that they see with other readings/videos/etc discussed in class by name. **This last section will be required in all entries submitted in or after Week 3.**

Online Media Consumption Log & Analysis: 15%

Between 1/10 and 2/20, students will track their online media usage in an excel spreadsheet (provided on Blackboard). This tracking and analysis assignment is designed to raise students' awareness of the amount of digital media they use, how they use it, and what it costs in terms of time and money. Students should upload a copy of the tracking log and media analysis paper to Blackboard by **February 28 by 4 pm and bring a copy to class to discuss.** Further information is available in the assignment on Blackboard.

Digitized Zines or Digital Zine: 20%

After gaining an understanding of the historical function of independently-published magazines (zines), digital zines, and online archiving of zines, students will have a choice to create either a digital zine or a physical zine that they digitize. More information will be made available on Blackboard by early February. Zines will be due and presented in class on **February 19**.

Twine Group Project: 20%

After learning about the foundations of using Twine as a game development platform, students will work in small groups using Twine and Google Drive to create a collaborative video game which communicates the experience of or issues related to marginalized communities. More information will be made available after Spring Break. Twine games will be due and presented during finals on **April 25 from 4-5:50 pm**.

COURSE POLICIES

[Refer to GVSU Course Policies](#)

Access and Accommodations

We all come to learning with different needs and I strive to do what I can to make this class accommodating to a variety of needs and learning styles. If you need accommodations, either for documented disabilities or for other reasons, please contact with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your needs. Please note that the only way to guarantee accommodated your needs in all classes is to work with Disability Support Resources.

Students with disabilities that have been certified by Disability Support Resources will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. Disability Support Resources is at 4015 James H. Zumberge Hall on the Allendale campus and can be reached at 616-331-2490 or dsrgvsu@gvsu.edu. Look at <https://www.gvsu.edu/dsr/> for more information.

Attendance Policy:

You are expected to attend every class session. Students are allowed **two unexcused absences**. Please use these absences wisely. **For every additional absence you will lose three percent per absence from your overall course grade**. For example, if you miss three additional classes, nine points will be deducted from your final grade.

Please notify the professor if you have a personal emergency or health issue causing you to miss class.

Written Assignment Guidelines

Standard grammar and essay guidelines should be followed. All written assignments must be completed in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins. The professor reserves the right to not accept assignments that fail to adhere to these guidelines. All citations must be standardized (i.e. please be consistent with your use of MLA, Chicago, or APA). For questions about citations, please visit sites such as EasyBib.com or Purdue OWL.

Written assignments uploaded to Blackboard, must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format. No other formats will be accepted. Please visit the following link if you have difficulty uploading your assignment to Blackboard:

http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/47FDD052-F754-BF04D8DBE5FB47C87DE8/bb911_handouts/stu911_handouts/stu911_assignmentsupload.pdf

If the professor provides you with comments or edits on paper drafts, you are responsible for integrating the feedback into your written work to enhance your paper during the revision process. Failure to do so with result in grade deductions at the discretion of the professor and you must revise and resubmit your paper.

Your Mental Health

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance.

Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the quarter are encouraged to contact University Counseling Center at 616-331-3266

for appointments at both the Allendale and Pew campuses. This service is free and confidential.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

All students are responsible for doing their own work and plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. Plagiarism, or the use of another's words without proper citation, or any form of cheating during an exam or quiz, will result in an F for the assignment and possibly the course. A report will be made to the student's dean and the Center for Academic Integrity so that they may also take appropriate disciplinary action. You may refer to GVSU Student Code Section 223.01 for GVSU's policy. All of the following would constitute plagiarism:

- Using someone else's idea without citing the source where you found that idea.
- Using someone else's structure or organizing strategy without citing it. This often occurs when a writer takes a paragraph out of a source and simply paraphrases each sentence while leaving the original author's structure intact.
- A verbatim (copied directly) phrase or passage that is not quoted

Grading

If the professor provides students a rubric for the assignment, they highly suggest students review the rubric to ensure they are meeting all of the assignment benchmarks. In other words, make sure you are fulfilling all of the necessary components of the assignment.

Grade distribution:

A = 100-93

B- = 82-80

D+ = 69-67

A- = 92-90

C+ = 79-77

D = 66-60

B+ = 89-87

C = 76-73

F = 59-0

B = 86-83

C- = 72-70

Definitions:

[A] Outstanding. Work displays thorough mastery of material, exceptionally good writing, and genuine engagement with the subject-matter. This grade is reserved for those students who attain the highest levels of excellence in thought and scholarship.

[B] Good. Work displays accurate understanding of the material; writing is clear and free of mechanical errors.

[C] Fair. Work displays basic grasp of material, though there may be the occasional misunderstanding or inaccuracy. Writing quality acceptable.

[D] Marginal. Work displays a grasp of the material adequate for credit, but quality of work indicates lack of effort or aptitude.

[F] Unacceptable. Excessive absences, assignments not completed, or assignments unworthy of credit.

COURSE PLAN

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time. This document is an agreement between professor and student concerning course expectations.

Zoë Quinn, *Crash Override* / Anna Anthropy, *Rise of the Video Game Zinesters* / Otherwise, access from Blackboard

Date Due	Topic	Reading/Activity Due
Week 1 T, 1/8	Introduction to the class and each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read syllabus completely before attending class Bring a device to access https://native-land.ca/
R, 1/10	Language and Norms in Textually-Mediated Social Worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Barton and Carmen Lee, "Preface" and "Language in the Digital World," pp. viii-14 David Barton and Carmen Lee, "Acting in a Textually-Mediated Social World," pp. 23-41 <p>F, 1/11, 5 pm: 100% Tuition Refund Deadline</p>
Week 2 T, 1/15	Evolutions of Social Networking and Norms of Digital Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gil Press, "Why Facebook triumphed over all other social networks" Luke Kinsella, "Facebook less popular among younger generations" Jose Van Dijck, "Twitter and the Paradox of Following and Trending," pp. 68-88
R, 1/17	Online Dating: From 1965-present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Susan Wildermuth, "The Effects of Stigmatizing Discourse on the Quality of On-Line Relationships," pp. 73-84 Molly Niesen, "Love, Inc.: Toward Structural Intersectional Analysis of Online Dating Sites and Applications," pp. 161-178
Week 3 T, 1/22	Race and Gender in Online Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brendesha Tynes, Joshua Schuschke, and Safiya Omoja Noble, "Digital Intersectionality and the #BlackLivesMatter Movement," pp. 21-40 Azadeh Aalai, "What is the real impact of hashtag activism?"
T, 1/24	Race and Gender in Online Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jenny Ungbha Korn, "Black women exercisers, Asian women artists, white women daters, and Latina lesbians: Cultural constructions of race and gender within intersectionality-based facebook groups," pp. 116-182 Nicholas Wu & Karen Yuan, "The Meme-ification of Asianness"
Week 4 T, 1/29	#GamerGate, Online Cultures, and Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arthur Chu, "I'm not 'that creepy guy from the internet': How GamerGate gave the geek community a bad name" Zoë Quinn, <i>Crash Override</i>, Ch 1-4, pp. 1-76
R, 1/31	#GamerGate, Online Cultures, and Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoë Quinn, <i>Crash Override</i>, Ch 5-8, pp. 77-145 Lisa Nakamura, "The Unwanted Labor of Social Media: Women of Color Call Out Culture As Venture Community Management," pp. 106-112 <p>F, 2/1: 75% Tuition Refund Deadline</p>
Week 5 T, 2/4	#GamerGate, Online Cultures, and Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoë Quinn, <i>Crash Override</i>, Ch 9-End, pp. 147-238
R, 2/6	Digital Repositories & Zine Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elke Zobl, "Persphone is Pissed!: Grrl Zine Reading, Making, and Distributing Across the Globe," pp. 156-175 Explore/read 2-3 zines from one of these archives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Transgender Archive Zine Collection Grrrl Zine Database

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zine Archive • Queer Zine Archive
Week 6 T, 2/12	Work Period to Work on Digital Zines or Digitizing Physical Zines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No readings, bring materials to class
R, 2/14	Work Period to Work on Digital Zines or Digitizing Physical Zines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No readings, bring materials to class
Week 7 T, 2/19	Digital Zines or Digitizing Physical Zines	Digital Zines or Digitized Zines Due Before Class
R, 2/21	Midterm Reflection	No readings. Students should come to class with at least one thing that they have learned, one question about what we've done so far, and one discussion question that moves beyond opinion.
Week 8 T, 2/26	No class meeting	Students should work on fine-tuning their digital media analysis during this time
R, 2/28	Online Media Consumption, Costs, and Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy K. Baym & danah boyd – “Socially Mediated Publicness: An Introduction,” pp. 320-329 • Taylor Lorenz, “Teens are Debating the News on Instagram” • Digital Media Tracking Sheet and Analysis Due on Blackboard, 4 pm bring to class
Week 9	<i>Spring Break!</i>	
	March 8: Deadline to Drop with a W grade	
Week 10 T, 3/12	Evolution of Online Communities: Fan-Produced Media	Judith Fathallah, “Digital fanfic in negotiation: LiveJournal, Archive of Our Own, and the affordances of read–write platforms,” pp.1-17 Sarah Trombley, Section II of “Visions and Revisions: Fanvids and Fair Use,” pp. 650-676
R, 3/14	Evolution of Online Communities: Fan-Produced Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBA
Week 11 T, 3/19	Identity Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Nakamura, “Head-Hunting on the Internet: Identity Tourism, Avatars, and Racial Passing in Textual and Graphic Chat Spaces,” pp. 31-60 • Lisa Nakamura, “Syrian Lesbian Bloggers, Fake Geishas, and the Attractions of Identity Tourism”
R, 3/21	Digital Blackface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexander Robertson, Walid Magdy, Sharon Goldwater, “Self-Representation on Twitter Using Emoji Skin Color Modifiers,” pp. 1-5 (download PDF at link) • Lauren Michelle Jackson, “We Need to Talk About Digital Blackface in Reaction GIFs” • Alexis Priestley, Sarah K. Lingo, and Peter Royal, “‘The Worst Offense Here Is the Misrepresentation’: <i>Thug Kitchen</i> and Contemporary Vegan Discourse,” pp. 349-371
Week 12 T, 3/26	Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Digital Archives, and Digital Innovations	Watch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising Voices, “Indigenous Language Digital Activism Network” (5:34) Explore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgian College, Online Resources for Learning Anishinaabe Read

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ashlee Cunsolo Wilcox, Sherilee Harper, Victoria Edge, 'My Word': Storytelling and Digital Media Lab, and Rigolet Inuit Community Government, "Storytelling in a digital age," pp. 127-147 Rhiannon Johnson, "Ojibway youth dubs popular cartoons in Anishinaabemowin and Cree" – also watch 3:08 video embedded at top of the page
R, 3/28	Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Digital Archives, and Digital Innovations	<p>Watch/Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded framing from Dr. Benson Gibagadinamaagoom: "To bring life, to sanction, to give permission" About Us Gigagadinamaagoom: Mission Statement Francis Densmore (2 videos & associated text, videos between 2:02 and 4:11) Ask the Elders (5 videos & associated text, videos between 2:05 and 10:00) <p>Download and Bring to Class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thunderbird Strike (available on iOs & Android phones/tablets and Windows computers)
Week 13 T, 4/2	Justice-Focused Games and Backlash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hayley R. Cooks & Shoshana Magnet, "Contests for Meaning: Ableist Rhetoric in Video Games Backlash Culture" (this is a full length article reading hosted online) Alison Harvey, "Twine's Revolution: Democratization, depoliticization, and the queering of game design," pp. 95-107
R, 4/4	Indie Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anna Anthropy, <i>Rise of the Video Game Zinesters</i>, Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-67
Week 14 T, 4/9	Indie Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anna Anthropy, <i>Rise of the Video Game Zinesters</i>, Chapters 4-6, pp. 69-141
R, 4/11	Making Video Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anna Anthropy, <i>Rise of the Video Game Zinesters</i>, Chapters 7-Appendix, pp. 143-185 Play 2 games selected from one of these links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games About Disability Games About Gender Identity Games About Race Games About Colonialism
Week 15 T, 4/16	Making Video Games	Work session to work on group Twine game
R, 4/18	Making Video Games	Work session to work on group Twine game
Finals R, 4/25	Present/play Twine Games Final Project Due	Final project presented between 4-5:50 pm

GVSU's General Education Program

The goal of the program is to prepare you for intelligent participation in public dialogues that consider the issues of humane living and responsible action in local, national, and global communities.

The program is designed to increase your knowledge and skills in the following areas:

Issues Skills goals:

1. Collaboration is the process of working together and sharing the workload equitably to progress toward shared objectives.
2. Problem solving is the process of designing and evaluating strategies to answer open-ended questions or achieve desired goals.
3. Integration is the process of synthesizing and applying existing knowledge, past experiences, and other perspectives to new, complex situations.

Ensuring that undergraduate students receive a broad general education has been a primary goal of colleges and universities since their inception. In this era of increasing specialization and growing demand for professional expertise, it is vital that we continue to emphasize the value of general learning.

GVSU maintains that a complete education involves more than preparation for a particular career. A career occurs in the context of a life, and a sound general education helps one “make a life” as well as “make a living.” The university is committed to assuring that all undergraduate students, regardless of academic major, receive a broad education rooted in the arts and sciences.

Teaching in the liberal tradition is at the heart of Grand Valley's identity, and this focus is critical in our General Education Program. Liberal education transcends the acquisition of information; it goes beyond the factual to ask important evaluative and philosophical questions. Liberal learning holds the fundamental principles and suppositions of a body of knowledge up to inquiry, question, and discussion. It helps a person recognize the assumptions under which he or she operates and encourages the examination and questioning of those assumptions. Liberal learning begins in the General Education Program and continues through the more specialized studies comprising each student's major and minor areas of study.

Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies.