

Comm 292 Transmedia Narratives

Fall 2017

Professor Liz Fakazis

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Office Hours: Tues/Thu 2-3 p.m. and by appointment

About this Course

Legend has it that J.K. Rowling got the idea for a children's story while stuck on a train in London. She then spent the next five years planning out the books, relying mostly on old-fashioned pen and paper. What happened next, however, was hardly old-fashioned, as a truly transmedia empire, including novels, comics, cookbooks, movies, action figures, Lego sets, theme parks, costumes, Quidditch matches, and "extension" narratives, was built.

Henry Jenkins, media scholar and avid gamer, writes that "a transmedia story represents the integration of entertainment experiences across a range of media platforms" and the expansion of narrative worlds by producers and "consumers." Each expansion contributes "to a new mode of storytelling, one which is based on an encyclopedic expanse of information which gets put together differently by each individual, as well as processed collectively by social networks and online knowledge communities."

In this class, we will carefully read, analyze and apply two of Jenkins' best-known books on transmedia, as well as works by other transmedia scholars and professionals, as we work toward an understanding of its early history, recent developments, and central concepts. We will also explore how transmedia has been adapted not only for entertainment, but for civic engagement and nonfiction narratives as well. In the process, we will engage in both analytical and creative thinking and writing.

The success of this class will depend on your careful reading of the texts, thoughtful preparation for class, and engaged discussion. It will also depend on the quality of your written work and team projects. My primary role will be to introduce you to materials, theories and concepts, facilitate discussion, and give you critical feedback. In other words, I see us as working together.

Division of Communication Learning Objectives for Communication Majors

In addition to the learning goals described above, this class will help you achieve the Division's objectives for all Communication majors, especially objectives numbers 1, 3, 4 and 5.

1. communicate effectively using appropriate technologies for diverse audiences
2. plan, evaluate and conduct basic (quantitative and qualitative) communication research
3. use communication theories to understand and solve communication problems
4. apply historical communication perspectives to contemporary issues and practices
5. apply principles of ethical decision making in communication contexts

Readings

Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2006. Available for purchase from University bookstore.

Other required readings will be distributed via electronic reserve. Please print these out, and read and take notes on them by the due dates announced in class.

Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Date
Personal Essay	October 18
Mid-Term Exam	October 25
Critical Essay	November 15
Final Exam	December 13
Final Project/Presentation	December 19, 2:45-4:45 p.m.

Personal Essay (15 percent)

Essay (5-6 pages) in which you describe a media franchise with which you have been meaningfully engaged. Specific guidelines will be distributed in class.

Critical Essay (20 percent)

Essay (5-7 pages) in which you analyze a commercially-produced narrative that acts as an extension of a core text. Guidelines will be distributed in class.

Final Project (25 percent)

You will work in teams to develop a proposal for a transmedia narrative, including intended audience, media platforms, integration strategies, among others. Guidelines will be distributed in class.

Midterm and Final Exam (30 percent)

Exams will cover readings, lectures, discussions.

Weekly assignments (10 percent of final grade)

Additional Policies

Be prepared and engaged – in other words, participate in all in-class and out-of-class activities, and do so to the best of your ability. If you are consistently unprepared or unwilling to participate, the quality of your work will suffer, and your grade will reflect that.

Attend class. If you do not attend, you cannot participate in a vital part of this course, and your work and grade will reflect that. You can be excused from class for documented personal and family medical and other emergencies, and some UW-SP sponsored activities (such as attending conferences). I will not grant you an excused absence for family vacations or other things that can be scheduled in advance. In the case of an excused absence, I will do my best to help you make up in class assignments and to work with you on any necessary extensions for due assignments, though this may not always be possible. You will not be able to make up in-class work or exams, or to be granted an assignment due date extension for unexcused absences. If you must miss class for an excused or un-excused absence, be sure to get notes and assignment guidelines handed out in class from a classmate. DO NOT ASK ME TO GO OVER WHAT YOU MISSED.

Do NOT plagiarize. All work produced in this class must be your own and it must be produced specifically for this class. If you wish to draw on previous work you have done, you must get approval from me in advance. If you use other's work, you must cite it appropriately. This includes anything you borrow from traditional or

digital media. Please familiarize yourself with the University's policy on academic misconduct, which includes plagiarizing. If you are caught plagiarizing you may receive an "F" for the course.

Leave technology in your bag. Please turn off or silence your cell phones before coming to class. You will not be permitted to use laptops, tablets, or any recording technology in class unless you need ADA accommodations or translators, and unless you get approval from me in advance. When we are in the lab, turn off the monitors unless instructed otherwise.

Contact me. If you need to get in touch with me, please send me an e-mail at lfakazis@uwsp.edu. I check my messages Monday through Friday, first thing in the morning and just before I leave the office at the end of the workday. I will respond during those working hours as quickly as possible. You may also make an appointment to come see me during my office hours, or at another mutually convenient time.

Be professional and respectful. Any ethical or legal misconduct is grounds for dismissal from the course.

Accommodations. I will do my best to provide necessary accommodations. Please come talk with me as soon as possible.