

Assignment 1--Developing a Website

Introduction:

In Humanities Core this year, you will engage in various forms of writing and creativity. As you might expect, you will be writing a number of academic essays. While these will be directed toward an academic audience, they will differ in their disciplinary methods, formal conventions, and treatment of evidence. In addition to these academic essays, you will create work for a broader audience. In writing for this audience, you have different contexts to consider: Who composes this audience? What contexts should you give them for your argument? What is your purpose in writing to this audience--to inform, prompt reflection, incite change? How will you best define your writing identity to achieve that purpose? And how will that identity take shape as your writing progresses? You will find that, like with all forms of writing and intellectual creation, you will need to ask yourself these questions throughout the process.

Your first assignment is to develop a website that will represent your experiences this year in HCC, your life on campus, and your thoughts on public events. A website is a good place to start thinking about writing because it asks you to situate yourself the way you do as a writer: considering purpose, audience, voice, medium, etc. For example, on the main page of your website, it is conventional to state explicitly the purpose of the website and "who" you are. Your purpose and voice will likely change as you gain new experiences, read new texts, and converse with the audience to whom you are speaking. That change over time defines the writing situation, one in which you begin with an idea that becomes complicated in the very process of writing.

Assignment:

Design a website that connects your intellectual experiences in Humanities Core with your private intellectual life and public events. Your website can include as many sub-pages as you wish, but it must include a blogging page designed around your work in Humanities Core.

In Fall Quarter, you will be assigned six required blog entries that respond to humanistic research questions. Combined, these entries will equal 25% of your writing grade. Some of your blog topics will be self-directed or determined by your section leader; others will be determined for you so that you can exchange ideas about our texts with others in the course.

Your blog posts can be posted at any time before the due date. When posted, you must send a link to your instructor to receive credit. Keep in mind that you will have to cite your sources accurately. Your instructor will inform you about what citation style to use. Despite its seemingly informal appearance, the blog genre does not exempt you from citing your sources, something you should do in all public forms of writing.

The final blog and your website as a whole will be due at midnight, Friday, Dec 12. The blog entries, combined, will equal 25% of your writing grade; the website as a whole will equal 5% of your writing grade.

Your Blog Prompts:

1. Blog #1 (250-500 words)--A topic of your choosing. Keep in mind that this is your introduction to Humanities Core. At this point, you don't need to identify yourself or have a clear sense of the purpose of your entire website. But you will want to think about how the texts you've read, the questions posed, the conversations in section, or the news you read in the media make your entry into this course "news." Possible questions to get you started (Write on only one!):
 - Link or find an image of today's warriors. How might these compare to the descriptions we have read in *The Iliad*?
 - What does a study of humanities mean to me? Why is humanistic study important or unimportant? How does war feature in this course of study?
 - Consult a news report on a present conflict and think about the different kinds of people involved in this clash. What are the stakes for each group?

2. Blog #2 (250-500 words)--A topic of your choosing. Practice posing research questions about the texts you are reading and hearing, or about current events you think apply to those texts. Then, do research on one of these questions and use your blog entry to answer it.

3. Blog #3 (250-500 words)--Representations of the Thirty Years' War. After reading Grimmelshausen and von Guericke, develop some research questions on the effects of the Thirty Years' War. For example, how was--and is--this war remembered? And why is it remembered in this way? How has the representation of the Thirty Years' War changed over time? Do some research on additional representations of the Thirty Years' War to help you answer your questions. Look for primary sources that offer firsthand experience (these could include images), using our library resources. (Pay special attention to your research process. Instructors may ask you to write a separate blog on your practice and how it works for you).

4. Blog #4 (500-750 words)--Brecht. Choose a scene from *Mother Courage and her Children* and answer the following research question: How does this scene use the conventions of epic theatre to make an argument about war?

5. Blog #5 (250-500 words)--A topic of your choosing. Keep your research questions in mind!

6. Blog #6 (250-500 words)--A topic of your choosing. Possible questions to get you started (Write on only one!):

- Have my definitions of "war" changed over the quarter? How so?
- How has my understanding of "the humanities" changed?
- Pick a conflict taking place at the moment and consider if, from the perspective of both parties, the conflict is "just."

Student Learning Goals:

- Gain a clear sense of the writing situation, in which audience, purpose, voice, genre, and medium are considered.
- Use forms of visual rhetoric to present a specific position.
- Create a consistent website identity.
- Learn to develop research questions as a preliminary step in the writing process.
- Gain facility in humanistic method by using interpretation to link class content to other contexts.
- Develop blog that responds to appropriate audience, articulates a clear purpose and voice, and adheres to organizational and stylistic conventions of genre.
- Demonstrate that collaboration and regular written responses lead to the development of ideas.
- Practice active revision, whereby the final submitted draft exhibits the generation of ideas, careful reflection and working through of numerous revisions, editing and proof-reading, and reflection on the composition process itself.

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The Design Process:

First, you will need to create your website. You may already have a content management system or site builder--such as WordPress--that you prefer; and you are welcome to use these sites. If you have no preference, you may use Sites in UCI Google Apps at <http://sites.google.com/a/uci.edu>, a site building tool available to all UCI students. You can access directions for creating a website on Google Sites at: <http://learn.googleapps.com/sites>. As you are building your site here, you may

choose to use the HCC Template provided. If you choose another template, ensure that one of your pages is set up for blogging as an "announcements" page.

Once you have created your site, you will begin to develop your website; a process, which, like other forms of writing, requires brainstorming and drafting. You may prefer to work backwards by first composing the subpages of your site. Or you may start by designing your home page, which integrates all components of your site. The homepage is, perhaps, the most challenging because it requires that you articulate the purpose of your site. Will your site be politically oriented, focusing on how our studies in Humanities Core relate to global events? Will it be community oriented, investigating connections between HCC and your local community? Ethically oriented, examining philosophical problems that arise in the course? Artistically oriented, using artwork as a framework to analyze the texts we encounter in HCC? Reflective, examining how you are affected by the things you learn? Or a combination of these? You might very well find that your purpose--and thus the look and content of your website--will change as the quarter progresses.

Remember that your site is not a personal diary that shares intimate details of your life. You are creating a website for a broad audience composed of people invested in politics, humanistic study, ethics, education, and military culture. They may include your professors, members of the military, pacifists, refugees, people of all political orientations, people who identify strongly with their race, gender, sexual orientation, or nationality, lawmakers, parents, and other members of your local community. This audience will be interested in your interpretations and reflections on issues of common interest, not in day-to-day problems arising in your personal life. Your content must reflect the diverse interests of your audience.

Design:

Design is a part of this content, for it is as rhetorically persuasive as your writing. How will you use color, font, images, video clips, links, etc. to portray "who" you are and what your site will address? You have several weeks to perfect the design of your website, but you will already want to begin by planning your design--brainstorming, making notes and sketching before creating your pages. As you plan, ask your peers for their reactions and suggestions. These preliminary stages require as much revision as your academic essays. Take time to review "Designing What You Write" as you plan your sitemap.

Look at the following examples of websites that include blogging to see how they use design to reinforce their content. Keep in mind that the site builder these sites use--Wordpress--also informs content:

- Lawrence Lessig's website is at: <http://www.lessig.org/>. In browsing this site, you will get to know Professor Lessig, and the many cultural and political debates in which he is invested. Notice that his voice is straightforward and reasonable. His homepage is organized simply, with tabs that are easily located and color and image choices that help focus, instead of distract, the viewer. His blogging identity is matter-of-fact, as he often speaks directly to the reader in focused, precise sentences. His politics are based on a desire for transparency of power, which he attempts to replicate in his design.

- Julia Lupton, former HCC Director, has a website entitled “Thinking with Shakespeare” at: <http://thinkingwithshakespeare.wordpress.com/>. You will notice that Professor Lupton’s subtitle, “Research, Teaching, Collaboration, and Design,” articulates the purpose of her blog--to think about the ways in which her research, her teaching, her investment in collaboration, and her interest in design overlap. The spatial organization of the homepage highlights this focus on collaboration because it places a list of postings next to the most immediate blog entry. By placing them together, Lupton visually demonstrates collaboration in action--each blog post is happening within the context of many conversations. Compared to Lessig’s website, Lupton’s has many more interactive elements that demonstrate how design can perform collaboration.

Privacy:

Part of creating a blog is deciding what kind of visibility you will have. Remember: the information on your website is, at least initially, available to a wide audience. You will need to bear this in mind at every step, being especially protective of people’s privacy. Always consider your audience and their possible counter-arguments or objections to the claims you make. You will want to be especially careful about divulging private information about persons not speaking in a public forum, such as friends discussing a heated topic in a private setting or family members sharing their memories at the dinner table. Instead, focus on the issues themselves. If you have questions about what kinds of disclosure may or may not be appropriate, contact your instructor for guidance.

Reflect carefully on how you wish to establish access settings for your website--whether you want to limit access to members of your class, require passwords, etc. You should know that, in UCI Google Sites, the default settings allow anyone with a UCI Google Apps Account to edit your webpage. You may change these by clicking on the “Share” button and adjusting the settings. If you are unsure what kind of access you want to allow, you may want to begin by making these settings private until you have a better sense of your audience. If you wish to engage a large public, but have privacy concerns of your own, you may use a pseudonym to make your identity anonymous. Simply inform your instructor of your intent; and he or she will be sure to keep this information private.

When developing websites, there is always a risk of producing contentious material, especially on a topic as contested as war. On the flip side, this element of risk also serves as a productive element of this communicative form because it leads to collaboration and debate. Simply tread with care. Here, as in all forms of writing, you are responsible for what you create.

Intellectual Property

As you are composing your webpage, you will undoubtedly be inspired by many images, articles, videos, etc., that you find on the web. Please keep in mind that these are the work of another person and must be cited appropriately. The UCI

Libraries offer you guidelines for citing images and videos at the following link:
http://libguides.lib.uci.edu/art_citeimages.

Some of these images may still be under copyright and might require you to receive permission from the copyright holder prior to publication. If you are unsure whether or not an image or video can be used on your page without getting prior permission from the copyright holder, you should first consider if your purpose and audience for this website can be governed by the Fair Use Doctrine. The Fair Use Doctrine allows certain copyrighted materials to be used in the contexts of teaching, learning, and scholarship. Most likely your website will be governed by the Fair Use Doctrine, but this depends upon the use you are making of it. To better understand these limitations, visit the UCI Libraries guide at:
http://libguides.lib.uci.edu/copyright_how_to_use.

If you want to include an image whose copyright status you are unsure of, you may use the [Digital Image Rights Computator \(DIRC\)](#) to determine an image's copyright status.

Blogging

One of the more challenging aspects of developing your website will be determining what your blog entries should entail. The blog is one of the more difficult genres to define, some blog entries offering readers as little as one word or one image to decipher, others producing entries the length of a newspaper article. Their purposes vary widely: some may be analytical, some satirical, some reflective or anticipatory.

As a rule of thumb, blog postings introduce and analyze a pertinent "news" issue on which readers can comment. Blogs have a clearly identifiable author whose post focuses on his or her individual opinion about this issue. Over multiple postings, comments, and responses, blogs often show development of this issue.

To be persuasive, your blogs should be analytical, and sometimes reflective or anticipatory. They should respond to a research question: an arguable question that requires some exploration and analysis to be answered. In answering that question, they should integrate and analyze credible evidence; make connections between texts, previous posts, or the blogs of others; and they should consider multiple perspectives or arguments.

For you to accomplish all of this in your blog posts, you will need to engage in careful drafting. One deceptive component of well-written blogs is that they sometimes seem to be spontaneously written, coming straight from the mind of the writer. Don't let this fool you! Blogs, like most other forms of writing, are deliberately crafted and edited.

Your section leader will likely ask you to comment on others' blogs, respond to comments written by others on your blog, and may offer comments him-or-herself; however, she or he may not respond to each blog you write. Please keep in mind that your blogs will be graded as a whole at the end of the quarter, both as a group and as they relate to the website design as a whole. You should keep a file of all of

your blogs, which you will upload to turnitin.com at the end of the quarter. Your instructor will privately provide comments on this file--not on the website itself. See the Website and Blog Rubric posted on the HCC website for a clear sense of how your project will be assessed.