



**Eamon O'Connor**

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**Hours:** Wednesdays 11:55a-1:55p  
(or by appointment)

## **DIG4154 WRITING FOR INTERACTIVE MEDIA**

### **Spring 2025**

**Course Meetings:** Mondays 1:55-2:45pm NRG 0205; Wednesdays 1:55-3:50pm, NRG 0205

**Course Modality:** Face-to-Face (F2F) Live, & Online Asynchronous

### **Course Description**

Everywhere you look, it's interactive media! From chatbots and voice interface systems to apps, ads, technical documentation, game prompts, and more, language-based interactions are a ubiquitous presence in our everyday lives. So common have these systems become that we often overlook the complex of rhetoric, psychology, and information architecture purring under the hood. How do the writers and designers of interactive media use words (among other tools) to create experiences that are not just clear and usable, but engaging, natural, and fun? A classic composition course with a digital twist, this class will explore the unique challenges of writing for systems that are designed to talk back to us, drawing inspiration from UX design, procedural art-making, and new media theory. Students will not only practice writing with clarity and purpose, they will also learn how words fit into larger technical and social systems, and how to anticipate and plan for all manner of contingencies that beset us in the messy world of interactive media.

### **Course Prerequisites**

[None]

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will:

- Write fluid, adaptable prose for interactive contexts
- Be conversant in the concepts and vocabulary of conversational design

- Prototype verbal interactions using flowcharts, diagrams, and pseudocode
- Understand how to use logical operators to control an interaction flow
- Use computational algorithms to read and write electronic text
- Be familiar with the history and practice of procedural writing in creative and business applications

## Materials & Books

### Required

- *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition* by Joseph Williams and Joseph Bizup (Pearson, 2016)
- *Uncreative Writing* by Kenneth Goldsmith (Columbia University Press, 2011)

### Supplemental

- Supplemental readings will be made available via Canvas

### Technology Requirements

- Students will need a computer with internet access to view assignments and other resources on Canvas.
- Students will need to download the [Python](#) programming language (free)

## Course Schedule

**This schedule is only a guide and is subject to change.** Please refer to Canvas for the most accurate, up-to-date assignments and readings. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due the day they are listed on the Canvas, not the following day. Please note this schedule does not include in-class exercises that may be assigned.

Week	Subject	Readings	Assignments Due
1	Basics and 'Correctness'	Chapters 1 & 2 of Uncreative Writing Basics & 'Correctness'  Lectures 1 & 2	Basics and 'Correctness' Quiz
2	Language as Material	Chapters 1 & 2 of Uncreative Writing	Assignment: Reading Response For

		<p>Video: How the End of Net Neutrality Could Change the Internet</p> <p>Video: Adam Curtis - Eliza</p> <p>Video: Transformers, Explained: Understand the Model Behind GPT, BERT, and T5s</p> <p>Language As Material Lectures 1 &amp; 2</p>	<p>Revenge Of The Text</p> <p>Discussion Post</p>
3	Semiotics & Speech Acts	<p>Introducing Semiotics</p> <p>Semiotics &amp; Speech Acts Lectures 1 &amp; 2</p>	<p>Assignment: Reading Response</p> <p>Semiotics &amp; Speech Acts Quiz</p>
4	Introducing Python	<p>Learn Python the Hard Way</p> <p>Intro to Python Lectures 1 &amp; 2</p>	<p>Assignment: Python Exercise</p> <p>Command Lines and Python Quiz</p>
5	Actions & Characters	<p>Chapter 3 of Uncreative Writing</p> <p>Actions &amp; Characters Lectures 1 &amp; 2</p>	<p>Mid-Course Feedback Survey</p> <p>Assignment: Chapter 2 Exercise</p>
6	Cohesion & Coherence	<p>Chapter 6 of Uncreative Writing</p>	<p>Assignment: The Hot Take</p>

		Cohesion & Coherence Lectures 1 & 2	
7	Style & Voice	Figures of Speech Voice & Style Lectures 1, 2, & 3	Assignment: Writing Dialogue To A Video Style & Voice Quiz
8	Documenting Process	A Business With No End Documenting Process Lectures 1, 2, & 3	Assignment: Documenting a Process Part I Assignment: Documenting A Process Part II
9	Towards a Poetics of Hyperrealism	Chapter 4 of Uncreative Writing Video: Orders of Simulacra Video: Can We Trust The Media Towards A Poetics of Hyperrealism Lectures 1, 2, & 3	Assignment: Poetry Machine Discussion Post
10	The Inventory & The Ambient	Chapter 10 of Uncreative Writing Video: What Is an API? Video: Where Did English Come From? The Inventory & The Ambient Lectures 1, 2, & 3	Assignment: Collecting Collections Discussion Post

11	The Art of the Prompt	The Art of Writing Little Things Well  The Art Of The Prompt Lectures 1, 2, & 3	Assignment: Pizzabot
12	Making a Text Adventure	Twine Cookbook  Text Adventure Lectures 1, 2, & 3	Assignment: Text Adventure Brainstorming Discussion Post
13	Concision	Chapter 9 of Uncreative Writing  Concision Lectures 1, & 2	Assignment: Writing Exercise  Assignment: Final Project Progress Report #1
14	Shape	Chapter 10 of Uncreative Writing  Shape Lectures 1 & 2	Assignment: Writing Exercises  Assignment: Final Project Progress Report #2
15	Elegance	Chapter 11 of Uncreative Writing  Elegance Lectures 1, & 2	Assignment: Writing Exercises  Assignment: Final Project Progress #3
16	Ethics for Writers	Chapter 12 of Uncreative Writing  Ethics For Writers Lectures 1 & 2	End-Of-Course Feedback Survey  Assignment: Final Project Discussion Post

## Grading Criteria

Assignment / Assessment	Total Points	% of Grade
Weekly Exercises	300	30
Project #1	150	15
Project #2	150	15
Final Project	300	30
Class Participation and Attendance – Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, both in class as well as in course online forums and outside class.	100	10

## Grading Scale

Letter Grade	% Equivalency
A	94 – 100%
A-	90 – 93%
B+	87 – 89%
B	84 – 86%
B-	80 – 83%
C+	77 – 79%
C	74 – 76%
C-	70 – 73%
D+	67 – 69%
D	64 – 66%
D-	60 – 63%
E, I, NG, S-U, WF	0 – 59%

More information on grades and grading policies is here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

## Materials and Supply Fees

Material and supply and equipment use fee information are available from the academic departments or from the schedule of courses (Florida Statutes 1009.24). The total course fee for this class is \$0.00. The total course fee for each course is listed on the UF Schedule of Courses. (<https://registrar.ufl.edu/soc/>)

## Course Policies

### Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

The instructor is responsible for communicating the specific details of what percentage of your grade (if any) will be assigned to participation, and how class participation will be measured and graded. The UF Digital Worlds Institute is committed to the idea that regular student engagement is essential to successful scholastic achievement. No matter if the class is held in a traditional classroom, an online classroom, or a combination of the two, interaction with your peers and the instructor will empower you to greater achievement.

**FOR INSTRUCTORS TO EDIT** - State whether attendance is required and if so, how will it be monitored? What are the penalties for absence, tardiness, etc. What are the arrangements for missed homework, missed quizzes, and missed exams? If your course is following the HyFlex model, clearly state how you measure attendance and engagement across multiple modalities.

**EXAMPLE:** In our course, attendance is mandatory. You are required to attend the class on time to receive full credit for attendance as well as participate in the class by asking questions, answering questions, or engaging in the media in other forms during the live class. Attendance and participation will be jointly graded on Canvas using the Attendance tool. By arriving on time to class you will receive 50% of your grade. By participating/engaging throughout that class, you will receive the other 50% of your grade for that day. If you arrive late to class you will not receive your initial 50% of your grade for that day.




In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition, or debate. Students must provide appropriate documentation in advance of the absence when possible. No documentation is needed for an absence due to religious observation.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

### Course Modality

Course modality is the way in which a class is offered/delivered to students by the instructor. All students, regardless of the modality, will achieve the same learning objectives. Students can check their class schedules or reference the top of this syllabus to see the format(s) available for each of their individual classes. The modality of a course does not vary during a semester, and students are expected to adhere to the instructor-defined attendance guidelines for that format. Use the guide below to familiarize yourself with the various ways classes are offered at the Digital Worlds Institute.

## Know Your Course Modality

		
<b>Face-to-Face (F2F)</b>	<b>Online Asynchronous (OA)</b>	<b>Online Synchronous (OS)</b>
Students attend class F2F in a classroom. Class sessions may be recorded for students to view later.	Students watch the posted recording of the class session or studio recording online at their convenience.	Students participate in a class in real-time through Zoom.
<b>Hybrid</b> refers to a course that is partially Face-to-Face (F2F) and Online Asynchronous (OA)		
In a <b>HyFlex Model</b> , students have the flexibility of moving across all three modalities as needed or desired.		

## Course Technology

The students will be required to have access to and use a personal computer with access to the Internet. Word editing software will be required for written assignments.

The University of Florida and Digital Worlds requires that students have access to and ongoing use of a laptop/mobile computer for DIG courses in order to be able to function in the current learning environment. Digital Worlds requires each DAS major's laptop computer to meet certain minimum specs for heavy graphics use, the requirements documented below must be met.

<https://digitalworlds.ufl.edu/programs/ba-in-digital-arts-sciences/technology-requirements/>.

## Course Communications

Students can communicate directly with the instructor regarding the course material through the course management system (CANVAS) using "Canvas Mail".

## Course Recordings

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.



## Creation of Original Content Ethics

For original projects and all assignment deliverables, students should remember that representations of acts of violence, coarse and offensive language, sexual behavior, bodily function and ability, neurodiversity, and personal identity are likely to cause extreme audience response, regardless of the creator's intentions. In addition, the recreation of such actions and subjects for fictional purposes may unintentionally traumatize or negatively impact those who collaborate in the creation of the images. While the university encourages students to explore themes and tell stories that may include this difficult subject matter, they should be cautioned against modes or styles of representation that might be considered unnecessarily offensive or potentially triggering. Instructors, faculty, and university administrators reserve the right to not show or share any student work they feel is inappropriate for their classroom or for public exhibition, as there may be concerns about the impact of such work on the community. We encourage students to consult with their faculty when producing work that might be considered controversial, and to err on the side of being cautious when it comes to making decisions about a project's content - in other words, make the PG-13 version of your story, not the R version, and certainly not the "unrated" version. This is also to help students understand that most professional creative situations have strict guidelines and limitations on such content and how it is produced: your ability to tell stories effectively with "less" is a strong professional skill that will aid in the dissemination of your work to a broader audience.

## Course Technology Support

### Technology Support Center

The [Technology Support Center](#) provides computer support for Digital Worlds students who access Zoom, lecture recordings, student equipment, facilities, and other technology-based resources.

<http://digitalworlds.ufl.edu/support>

For computer assistance related to Zoon, lecture recordings, student equipment, and facilities requests please email [support@digitalworlds.ufl.edu](mailto:support@digitalworlds.ufl.edu).

### UF Computing Help Desk

For support related to account services, technical consulting, mobile device services, software services, administrative support, application support center, and learning support services, please contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 352-392-4357 or [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

## University Policies

### University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code

(<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **Class Demeanor**

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

### **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### **Netiquette Communication Courtesy**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats, more information can be found at: <http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

### **Software Use**

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### **Student Privacy**

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/ferpa-confidentiality-student-records/>

### **Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>

## Campus and Academic Resources

**U Matter, We Care:** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

**Student Health Care Center:** Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

**University Police Department:** [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

**UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

**E-learning technical support:** Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

**Career Connections Center:** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

**Library Support:** Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

**Writing Studio:** 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

**Student Complaints On-Campus:** [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).

**Online Students Complaints:** [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents the instructor's current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

