UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON – NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Electronically submit this completed form with attachments in one file to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee.

**COLLEGE (check one):**
- Arts and Sciences  X  Business  Education

Proposal Submitted By: Zach Whalen  Date Prepared: 9/22/2014

**Course Title:**  Electronic Literature

Department/discipline and course number*:  ENGL 350

*This course number must be approved by the Office of the Registrar before the proposal is submitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of credits proposed:</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Prerequisites:</th>
<th>none</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will this be a new, repeatable “special topics” course? (Do you want students to be able to take this new course more than once if the topic changes?)</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of first offering of this new course:  **FALL SEMESTER, 2015**

Proposed frequency of offering of the course:  Alternating academic years

List the faculty who will likely teach the course:  Zach Whalen

Are ANY new resources required?  NO  X  YES  Document in attached impact statement

**This new course will be (check all that apply):**
- Required in the major
- General Elective  X
- Elective in the major  X
- General Education**

**AFTER the new course is approved, a separate proposal must be sent to the General Education Committee.**

Catalog Description:
A survey of born-digital literature including: hypertext fiction, interactive fiction, playable media, net.art, and other genres of literary work produced and experienced through computers.

**COURSE HISTORY**

Was this course taught previously as a topics or experimental course?  YES  ☒  NO  ☑

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number and Title of Previous Course</th>
<th>Semester Offered</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 376VV: Electronic Literature</td>
<td>Spring 2012</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 376VV: Electronic Literature</td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 376VV: Electronic Literature</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>N/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X  CHECK HERE if the proposed course is to be equated with the earlier topics or experimental offerings. This means that students who took the earlier “topics” course will only be able to take the new course if they made a C- grade or lower in the earlier course.

**NOTE:** If the proposed course has not been previously offered as a topics or experimental course, explain in the attached rationale statement why the course should be adopted even though it has not been tried out.

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:**
1. **Rationale Statement** (Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve?)
2. **Impact Statement** (Provide details about the Library, space, budget, and technology impacts created by adding this new course. Include supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. as needed.)
3. **Sample Syllabus**

Department Chair Approval: ___________________________  Date: _____________

CCC Chair Approval: ___________________________  Date: _____________

UCC Chair Approval: ___________________________  Date: _____________

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (July 2013)
New Course Proposal
ENGL 350: Electronic Literature

Rationale
This course Electronic Literature, originally conceived as a 200-level special topics course and later adapted to a 300-level special topics in literature elective, is a survey of the cultures and genres of literary work that is produced and consumed through digital platforms. The course begins with a historical overview that identifies algorithmic predecessors and key early works from the 1950s and 60s, moving through major works in the primary genres of digital poetry, hypertext fiction, and interactive fiction. Along the way, aesthetic movements and manifestos like Dada, Fluxus and Flarf are considered for their contributions to digital aesthetics. For each major genre, students deepen their understanding by creating works in those modalities with accessible tools like Twine and Inform 7. These platforms introduce some programming capability but are accessible for students with no prior experience writing code.

This course contributes to the English major by introducing perspectives, literary genres, and creative voices that most students are unfamiliar with. And inversely, many students find that the insights of a literary approach to electronic media deepens critical engagement with media they are more familiar with.

ENGL 350 will be an upper-level literature elective for English majors, an elective for Digital Studies minors, and an elective for Communication and Digital Studies majors.

Impact Statement
This course will not require any new resources, but it will benefit most by taking advantage of the opportunities available in the new ITCC.
Sample Syllabus for “ENGL 350: Electronic Literature”

[formerly ENGL 376VV: Electronic Literature]

When: 11:00 - 12:15

Where: Combs 349

Who: Zach Whalen (www.zachwhalen.net, @zachwhalen, zwhalen@umw.edu, x2355)

Overview and Outcomes

For as long as computers have been capable of expressing symbolic communication, people have been using computers to expressive creative literary ideas. As platforms evolve, authors, programmers, and designers find new modes and new audiences for born digital literature. This class will be a survey of the history, genres and forms of Electronic Literature.

Students enrolled in this class will have an opportunity to

- acquire or develop knowledge of historical and contemporary electronic literature
- gain experience using digital tools for creative expression
- apply literary critical methodology in analyzing non-traditional textuality

Requirements

This class requires no textbooks. The only purchase you’ll need to make is a video game later on this semester. Otherwise, all content will be free for you to access. You do need accounts with the following sites or services:

- Google
- Twitter
- UMWBlogs

Assignment Summaries

Blogging Community. (20%)

Working in groups, students will rotate through three roles: Blogger, Respondent, Historian. Blog entries will focus on specific e-lit works.

Mid-Term. (20%)

This is an exam – given in the week before Spring Break – that will cover all the content presented so far. Will include identifications and short essay questions.

Creative Project. (10%)

Use digital technology to make something interesting.

Analysis. (10%)

Write short essay focusing on a digital text. Use literary theoretical methods as needed, but focus on the uniquely digital content of the work.

Final. (20%)

Design and implement a project that contributes something new and valuable to the field of e-lit.
Participation. (15%)

This is crucial. To participate means to attend class prepared to discuss the assigned work. A pattern of non-attendance will result in a zero participation grade.

Grading

Philosophy

The assignments in this class invite you to encounter electronic literature through a number of critical and creative ways. Each assignment will have clear grading criteria or rubrics, but generally speaking, you can earn an A in this class if you participate fully and if you produce uniformly excellent work. An A is reserved for work that demonstrates the highest intellectual engagement, creativity and attentiveness to detail. Some basic technical proficiency will be necessary to complete some assignments, but other, non-technical factors will always be the most important criteria in evaluating any assignment for this class.

Schema

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment / Letter Grade Schema</th>
<th>Final Grade Calculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter Grade</strong></td>
<td><strong>Percentage of Points Possible</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100% to 94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>&lt; 94% to 90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>&lt; 90% to 87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>&lt; 87% to 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>&lt; 84% to 80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>&lt; 80% to 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>&lt; 77% to 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>&lt; 74% to 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>&lt; 70% to 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&lt; 67% to 64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>&lt; 64% to 61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 61% to 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policies and Expectations

Decorum

Students are expected to treat the instructor and fellow students with the appropriate degree of respect, both in class and in online discussions. Communication, either in person or through electronic media, that is deemed abusive, threatening, or harassing in nature will not be tolerated.

Late Work

Unless otherwise noted, assignments may be submitted after their due date, but your work will be worth fewer points, equal to a 10% deduction for the first 24 hours after the specified due date and time, followed by a 20% reduction for each 24-hour period following. Effectively, this means work that is more than 5 days late will not be graded.
Academic Dishonesty
The UMW Honor System is in effect for our course. I may authorize specific assignments as collaborative work, but all other work must be your own, as per Article 1, Sections 1 and 2 of the University of Mary Washington Student Honor Code.

Computer Use in the Classroom
This class is about literary work created for computers. Likewise, the classroom where we meet is full of computers. What's more, you're welcome to bring your own computing devices to class. I simply ask that you be responsible with your computer use. Often, we'll do specific computer-based tasks in class, such as the quizzes that will take place at the beginning of class every day. Other times, I'll be lecturing about something, and you are welcome to take notes or use Twitter as a backchannel while that's going on. While we are having a discussion-based, however, I must ask that you keep your attention away to the screen and instead engage fully with the conversation around you. Failure to do so, i.e. Facebook chatting while I'm attempting to draw you in to a discussion, will result in my revoking your computer use privileges.

Disability Accommodations
The Office of Disability Resources has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you already receive services through the Office of Disability Resources and require accommodations for this class, get in touch with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Please bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in the strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not contacted the Office of Disability Resources and need accommodations, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.), I will be happy to refer you. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability. Their phone number is 540-654-1266.

Course Outline

Week 1
• Introductions
  • Hypertext

Week 2
• Hypertext continues

Week 3 (Jan 26 – 31)
• Interactive Fiction

Week 4 (Feb 2 – 8)
• Games and Gamelike things

Week 5 (Feb 9 – 15)
• Digital poetry

Week 6 (Feb 16 – 22)
• Exam

Week 7 (Feb 23 – 1)
• Tools

Week 8 (Mar 2 – 8)
• Spring Break!

Week 9 (Mar 9 – 15)
• Tools

Week 10 (Mar 16 – 22)
• Creative Projects Due

Week 11 (Mar 23 – 29)
• Analyzing E-Lit: Character, performance, narrative

Week 12 (Mar 30 – 5)
• Analyzing E-Lit: Code, language, text

Week 13 (Apr 6 – 12)
• Analysis
  • Proposal for Final Project

Week 14 (Apr 13 – 19)
• Longer form work (TBD)
  • Draft of Final Project

Week 15 (Apr 20 – 26)
• Longer form work (TBD)
  • Kemp Symposium

Finals Week
• Final project due at beginning of assigned final exam time: May 1 at 12pm