



Engl 482: Writing Technologies

mon/wed 10-10:50 engl bldg 108
fri 10-10:50 in engl bldg 304

instructor: spencer schaffner, assistant professor
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office hours: mon 1-2 / wed 3-4 (engl bldg 300)

This course has two main elements:

- 1** The first involves our efforts to uncover, explore, analyze, and understand a wide range of writing technologies. This will involve some historical work, personal experimentation, and social research. The goal of this first element will be to understand all writing as connected to technologies of production, display, and distribution.
- 2** The second element of the class involves learning a newer writing technology: the coding and design web documents using html, css, and javascript. No previous experience designing and coding websites is required; students with advanced coding skills are still encouraged to enroll.

Visit the course website

<http://www.english.uiuc.edu/Schaffner/teaching/fall2006/482>

to view all assignments for the course, the course policies, and download revised copies of this syllabus. Most readings and links are bundled under "482" at the right-hand side of the page at

<http://del.icio.us/metaspencer>

Required Text and Materials:

1 book: Ellen Lupton's *Thinking with Type: A Critical Guide for Designers, Writers, Editors, & Students*.

1 USB flashdrive (512mb or more recommended)

2 accounts: <http://del.icio.us> & <https://netfiles.uiuc.edu>

Grade Distribution

20% of your grade: participation and discussion

This portion of your grade is based on your contributions to class discussion, active maintenance of a del.icio.us account, collaboration with other students on group projects and efforts, regular and consistent participation (first 2 missed days excused; additional days missed = 2% off final grade).

80% of your grade: writing and projects

20%	reading response papers (graded \checkmark - \checkmark \checkmark + and averaged together; lowest dropped)
10%	writing on clay project
10%	campus handwriting project (EUTO)
10%	typewriting research project (EOTU)
10%	design your own typeface project
10%	major site revision
10%	project on campus online writing (EOTU)

Policies:

Policies in this course regarding diversity, academic integrity, late work, participation, missed classes, and much more can be found by clicking on "policies" from the course website or going directly to

<http://www.english.uiuc.edu/Schaffner/teaching/policies.html>

You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with these stated policies and responding with a quick email letting me know that you have read them. Please see me immediately if you have any trouble fulfilling your obligations in this course.

Course Calendar

If a reading is listed as available at "/history.482.," locate it at <http://del.icio.us/metaspencer/history.482>. Please print readings (when possible and manageable) and bring the paper version(s) with you to class.

Week 1: Introductions

Wed
Aug 23 introductions; overview of the course
assignment given: set up your del.icio.us and netfiles.uiuc.edu accounts for Friday

Friday
Aug 25 *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
overview of our web work

- the basic architecture of the web, how it works, how we'll be using it
- explanation of scripting software, how it works, how it differs from what we'll be doing
- the dynamics of code and display
- working with directories
- organizing your directories in /482
- organizing your bookmarks on del.icio.us

due today: email spencers@uiuc.edu with your netfiles and del.icio.us account names. They should read "<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/NETID/482> and <http://del.icio.us/USERNAME>

Week 2: Writing on Clay

Mon
Aug 28 **read for today:** Dennis Baron's "From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technology" (/history.482)
due today: reading response paper for "From Pencils to Pixels" (bring paper copy to class and store .doc on your flash drive); see reading-response assignment sheet for details
assigned today: "writing on clay" project and website

Wed
Aug 30 **due today:** parts 1 and 2 of "writing on clay" assignment

Friday
Sept 1 *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
introduction to html

- resizing your images (if necessary)
- two part structure of an html web page (head and body)
- the fundamental parts of a page (html, head, body)
- index pages
- /images folders
- how tags control text and objects
- basic tags to know

- online resources for coding in html
- controlling text with inline tags (font, size, color, attributes)
- links

Due by the end of class: a simple index.html page in /482 with growing list of assignments by due date (most recent at top)

Week 3: Handwriting, Pens, and Pencils

Mon **no class -- Labor Day**
Sept 4

Wed **due today:** part 3 of "writing on clay" assignment
Sept 6 come to class prepared to discuss your project
read for today: Wilson, Shari "The Surprising Process of Writing" and comments from readers at the bottom of the page (/handwriting.482)
read for today: Eugene Hsu's homepage (/handwriting.482)
assignment given: "campus handwriting" (EOTU)

Friday **due today:** *handwritten* reading response paper to Wilson's article (bring paper copy to
Sept 8 class and store digital .jpg or .gif on your flash drive)
meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)
introduction to html continued

- different kinds of links (internal; external; same page targets)
- images (hosted, resized, "stolen" bandwidth)
- embedded objects of other kinds (vids, sounds, gifs)
- background colors
- background sounds
- redirects
- iframes and the architecture of syndication

Week 4: Handwriting, Pens, and Pencils cont.

Mon **read for today:** Daniel Chandler's "The Phenomenology of Writing By Hand"
Sept 11 (/handwriting.482)
read for today: Susan Snyder's "Penmanship: A lost pursuit for students" and Seema Mehtah's "Remember Penmanship" (/handwriting.482)
due today: *handwritten* reflective response to "The Phenomenology of Writing By Hand" and two penmanship articles (bring paper copy to class and store scan or digital image of response on your flash drive)

Wed **due today:** part I of "campus handwriting"
Sept 13

Friday *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*

- Sept 15 introduction to tables
- several ways to control text (divs, javascript, css)
 - elements of a table

Week 5: Handwriting, Pens, and Pencils cont.

Mon **due today:** part II of "campus handwriting" (sent as .doc attachment to Spencer)
Sept 18

Wed **peruse for today:** histories of the pencil & images of handwriting on flickr (/pencils.482
Sept 20 & /handwriting.482, /graffiti)

Friday *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
Sept 22 pages and sites

- designing and building a functional, stylin' page
- designing and building a functional, stylin' site
- menus and navigation

due today: "campus handwriting" part III

Week 6: The Typewriter

Mon **read for today:** Wendell Berry's "Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer" and Nate
Sept 25 Cougill's "Why I Bought a Typewriter on eBay" (/typewriters.482)

due today: typed (on a typewriter) reading response to Berry and Cougill

assigned today: research on the typewriter (findings presented at <http://typewriters.pbwiki.com/>; password "engl482"; to receive credit, log on using a unique name or screen name)

Wed typewriter composition in-class activity
Sept 27

Friday *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
Sept 29 basic css

- embedded style sheets (controlling typefaces and typography)
- external style sheets (.css files in directories)

Week 7: The Typewriter cont.

Mon **read for today:** Auster and Messer's *The Story of My Typewriter* (1 copy on reserve at
Oct 2 the Undergraduate Library; 1 copy in Spencer's office)

due today: typed (on a typewriter; several can be found in the undergraduate library)
reading response text to Auster and Messer's book (remember to store a .jpg or
.gif of your response on your flash drive)

Wed
Oct 4 **due today:** typewriter research at <http://typewriters.pbwiki.com>
discussion of findings (come prepared to present on your sections of the wiki)

Friday
Oct 6 **class does not meet today — Spencer out of town for a conference**

Week 8: *Thinking With Type*

Mon
Oct 9 **read for today:** "Letter" section of Ellen Lupton's *Thinking With Type* (note the book's companion website at <http://www.thinkingwithtype.com>)
due today: reading response to "Letter" section of *Thinking With Type* — utilizing some of what you've read in *designing* your response
assigned today: "invent your own typeface" assignment

Wed
Oct 11 **examine for today:** links at /type.482
come to class prepared to discuss what you examined and read

Friday
Oct 13 *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
more advanced css

- css menus
- controlling tables, <p>s, and other elements
- animated .css

Week 9: *Thinking With Type* cont.

Mon
Oct 16 **read for today:** "Text" section of *Thinking With Type*
due today: reading response to "Text" section of *Thinking With Type* — utilize some of what you've read in *designing* your response
assigned today: major revision of site #1 or #2 (clay or handwriting)

Wed
Oct 18 **examine for today:** sites linked to from /artsy.sites482 paying particular attention to type, text, and overall design (in terms of visual language)
come prepared to discuss what you examined and read

Friday
Oct 20 *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
image maps

- working with images that matter
- locating intuitive links on an image
- manipulating images to make them work with image maps

Week 10: *Thinking With Type* cont.

Mon
Oct 23 **read for today:** "Grid" section of *Thinking With Type*
due today: reading response to "Grid" section of *Reading With Type* — utilize some of

what you've read in designing your response

Wed
Oct 25 discussion of *Thinking With Type* continued
assigned today: major site revision project

Friday
Oct 27 *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
kinetic image collages

- mouseover/hover commands
- chopping up large images

Week 11: The Computer/Word Processor

Mon
Oct 30 **due today:** "invent your own typeface" website (mytype/index.html)

Wed
Nov 1 **read for today:** Friedrich's "Machine of the Year" (from 1983) in /computers.482
read for today: two sites linked to from /msword.482
due today: reading response to today's readings *using one of the online word processors* at /online.word.processors.482

Friday
Nov 3 *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
javascript

- email obfuscation
- drag-and-drop interactive image project
- other capacities of javascript

Week 12: PowerPoint

Mon
Nov 6 **read for today:** Tufte's "Powerpoint is Evil"
due today: *short* .ppt reading response to Tufte's article (saved to your flash drive and posted to your main index page)

Wed
Nov 8 **read for today:** additional short texts and blog posts at /powerpoint.482

Friday
Nov 10 **due today by 5:00pm:** major site revision
class does not meet today — Spencer out of town at a conference

Week 13: The Web

Mon
Nov 13 **read for today:** any three articles or links at /facebook
due today: reading response to readings on Facebook (w/ short bib noting readings)
assigned today: final project on UIUC virtual writing communities

Wed **check out and try:** the collaborative drawing tools (/collaborative.drawing.tools.482);
Nov 15 William Saffire's "Blargon" (/blogs.482)

Friday *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
Nov 17 work day

**Week of
Nov 20**

Class Does Not Meet — Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: The Web

Mon **due today:** rough draft of final project
Nov 27 come to class prepared to discuss your research

Wed discussion of wikis, content management software, courseware, and social software
Nov 29

Friday *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
Dec 1

Week 15: Gizmos

Mon **check out for today:** first half of the links at /gizmos.482
Dec 4

Wed **check out for today:** rest of the links at /gizmos.482
Dec 6

Friday *meet in the computer lab today (EB 304)*
Dec 8 project presentations and discussion
due today: final project