

HUMN3093. Topics in the Humanities. Electronic Media

Fall 2019

Prof. Élika Ortega

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N124. Office Building 1.

Office Hours: Monday 11:30am-12:30pm and Wednesday 2:00pm-3:00pm

Course Description:

In our age, we are witnesses of rapid technological developments. Often aimed at optimizing information circulation, enhancing our productivity, or just making life easier, digital technologies are also used to create exciting and unique works of literature. Augmented reality animated poems, literary i-Pad apps, computer generated novels, memes, and social media bots are a few examples of electronic literature or e-lit created and circulating around the world. As a global phenomenon and largely based online, e-lit is a contact zone for various languages, cultures, modes of expression, and literary traditions. Works of e-lit raise important questions like how we read in digital devices and what is literary creativity in the age of the internet. As a radically contemporary aesthetic form, e-lit offers a way to begin understanding the impact of digital technologies in human cultures.

Computing equipment:

As 99% of the readings are digital, you will need to bring a computer to class every time. You'll have to install Flash plugins to work with your browser and enable them for many of the works.

Towards the end of the semester, we will read some works designed for smartphones and iPads. You do not need to purchase devices for this class, but we'll coordinate as a group to take advantage of the resources available collectively.

Install: Sublime Text and Twine

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Learn to analyze and examine works of electronic literature (e-lit)
- Acquire the necessary knowledge and vocabularies to analyze and examine works of e-lit
- Create a couple of electronic literature works
- Understand the impact of digital technologies in culture and literature
- Assess the historical trajectories of technological and cultural developments

Textbooks available online:

- Hayles, Katherine. [Writing Machines](#).
- --- *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*. Available online through the library
- Rettberg, Scott. *Electronic Literature*. Available online through the library
- *Electronic Literature Collection* [Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#)
- Other texts are available online through the Library or via the course website

Other texts (available through the bookstore)

- Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse's *Between Page and Screen*
- Ranjit Bhatnagar's *Encomials. Sonnets from Pentametron*

Assignments

15% Participation and Labs

15% Creative Project 1: Twitter Bot (Due Oct. 11)

20% Creative Project 2: Twine (Due Nov. 8)

20% Scholarly paper (5-7 pages) (Due Nov. 22)

20% Exhibition, curatorial statement, selection of works, layout (Due Dec. 9)

10% Presentation (the opening of your exhibit) (To be scheduled on Dec. 9 and 11)

Schedule (Subject to change)

Week 1. Class introduction. What is electronic literature?

Mon., Aug. 26. What is electronic literature? A conversation.

Wed., Aug. 28. Birdseye view of electronic literature works.

Fri., Aug. 30. Katherine Hayles, Electronic Literature Organization. "[What is E-Lit?](#)"

Week 2. Electronic Literature. A Field in Development.

Mon., Sep. 2. Labor Day. No Class

Wed., Sep. 4. Leonardo Flores. "[Third Generation Electronic Literature](#)"

Fri., Sep. 6. Jessica Pressman. "[The Best Electronic Literature](#)"

Week 3. Electronic Literature and (New) Media

Mon., Sep. 9. Class will meet at the Koenig Alumni Building for a Welcome back to Humanities students.

Lev Manovich. "What is new media?" *The Language of New Media*. Available online through the library.

Wed., Sep. 11. Lisa Gitelman. "[Introduction. Media as Historical Subjects](#)" *Always Already New*

Fri., Sep. 13. Katherine Hayles. "Ch. 2. Material Metaphors, Technotexts, and Media Specific Analysis" In [Writing Machines](#).

Week 4. Combinatory Poetics from Dada to Twitter Bots

Mon., Sep. 16. Scott Rettberg, *Combinatory Poetics*. Available online through the library.

Wed., Sep. 18. Scott Rettberg, *Combinatory Poetics*. Available online through the library.

Works to explore:

- Raymond Quenau's [One Hundred Thousand Billion Poems](#)
- Ulises Carrión's "[Aritmética](#)," and "A Book"
- George Maciunas [12 Piano Compositions for Nam June Paik](#), 1962.
- Christopher Strachey's [Love letters](#),
- Theodore Lutz's [Stochastic Texts](#),
- Nanette Wylde's [Storyland](#),
- Elizabeth Knowles' [A House of Dust](#).

- Nick Montfort's [Taroko Gorge](#).
- Jason Nelson's [This is How You will Die](#).
- Stephanie Strickland's [Sea and Spar Between](#).

Fri., Sep. 20. Lab: How to Make a Dadaist Poem, Cut-Up Technique and Remaking Nick Montfort's Taroko Gorge. Please install [Sublime Text](#) before coming to class.

Week 5. Bots

Mon., Sep. 23. Josh Dzieza. "[The Strange World of Computer-Generated Novels](#)," Samuel Wooley, danah boyd, et al. "[How to Think About Bots](#)," Marc Sollinger "[Robots Become Writers](#)."

Works to explore:

- [Eliza emulator](#)
- Milton Läufer's [Do Bots Worry About Writer's Block](#)
- !Mediengruppe Bitnik, [Random DarkNet Shopper](#)
- Allison Parrish's [I Waded in Clear Water](#)

Wed., Sep. 25. Allison Parrish "[Bots: A Definition and Some Historical Threads](#)," and Leonardo Flores' [Genre: Bot](#). Selection of Twitter Bots [ELC3](#)

Bots done with Tracery and CBDQ: @lotsofeyes (source), @thetinygallery (source), @thinkpiecebot, @What_Hastings, @hashfacade (source), @unicode_garden (source), @FoleyArtists (source), @petitsmotifs, @infinitedeserts, @bot_teleport (source), @autoflaneur (source)

Fri., Sep. 27. Lab: Tracery and CBDQ

Week 6. From Page to Screen

Mon., Sep. 30. Katherine Hayles's "Intermediation," in *Electronic Literature*, and Ranjit Bhatnagar. *Encomials. Sonnets from Pentametron*

Wed., Oct. 2. Jessica Pressman's "[The Aesthetic of Bookishness in Twenty-First Century Literature](#)" and Amaranth Borsuk and Brad Bouse's *Between Page and Screen*

Fri., Oct. 4. Lab: Exploring other works at the intersection of Print-Screen

Week 7. Kinetic Electronic Literature

Mon., Oct. 7. Concrete Poetry. Marjorie Perloff's "[From Avant-Garde to Digital. The Legacy of Brazilian Concrete Poetry](#)"

Wed., Oct. 9. Augusto de Campos' [Clip-poemas](#). Antonio Abernú's [@gua](#) Benjamin Moreno. [Concretoons](#), and b.p. nichos's [First Screening](#)

Fri., Oct. 11. Lab: Glitching an image using your text editor.

Week 8. Flash

Mon., Oct. 14. Anastasia Salter and John Murray's "Animating the Web" In *Flash*. Available online through the library.

Wed., Oct. 16. Noah Wardrip Fruin. [The Dream Life of Letters](#), YHCHI's [Dakota](#), and María Mencía's [Birds Singing other Birds' songs](#)

Fri., Oct. 18. Lab: Workshop. Making a GIF.

Week 9. Branched Narratives

Mon., Oct. 21. Astrid Ensslin and Lyle Skains's "Hypertext: Storyspace to Twine" (forthcoming)

Wed., Oct. 23. Shelley Jackson's Patchwork Girl and [Traversal](#)

Fri., Oct. 25. Lab: Twine 1. Please install [Twine](#) on your computer before class.

Week 10. Branched Narratives

Mon., Oct. 28. Jaishree K. Odin's Hypertext and the Female Imaginary (forthcoming)

Wed., Oct. 30. Zoe Quinn, Patrick Lindsay, and Isaan Schankler's [Depression Quest](#)

Fri., Nov. 1. Lab: Twine 2

Week 11. Electronic Literature and the Environment

Mon., Nov. 4. Eugenio Tiselli's "[Why I stopped creating electronic literature.](#)" "[The Gate](#)," and "[Amazon](#)"

Wed., Nov. 6. Roderick Coover and Scott Rettber. [Toxi•City : A Climate Change Narrative](#), and J.R. Carpenter. [Etheric Ocean](#)

Fri., Nov. 8. Lab: Reading E-Lit Out Loud. Belén Gache's [Radikal Karaoke](#).

Week 12. Electronic Literature and the Border

Mon., Nov. 11. Mark Marino's "[Code as Ritualized Poetry: The Tactics of the Transborder Immigrant Tool](#)" and Electronic Disturbance Theater 2.0/b.a.n.g. lab's *Transborder Immigrant Tool*

Wed., Nov. 13. Eugenio Tiselli's "[El 27th/The 27th](#)," and Rita Raley's "Border Hacks: Electronic Civil Disobedience and the Politics of Immigration" in *Tactical Media*. Available online through the library.

Fri., Nov. 15. Lab: work on projects and consultations with me.

Week 13. Mobile Electronic Literature

Mon., Nov. 18. Anastasia Salter's "[Convergent Devices, Dissonant Genres: Tracking the "Future" of Electronic Literature on the iPad](#)," Jason Edward Lewis and Bruno Nadeau. [Poems for Excitable \[Mobile\] Media](#)

Wed., Nov. 20. Piringner, Jörg. [abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy](#), [Tiny Poems](#), and [Gravity Clock](#).

Fri., Nov. 22. Lab: Lab: Kate Durbin, Amaranth Borsuk, and Ian Hatcher's [Abra](#)

Fall Break (Nov. 25-Nov. 29)

Week 14. Mobile Electronic Literature

Mon., Dec. 2 Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman's [Pry](#)

Wed., Dec. 4 Stephanie Strickland and Ian Hatcher's [Vniverse](#)

Fri., Dec. 6. Lab: Work on projects and consultations with me.

Week 15

Mon., Dec. 9. Exhibit Openings

Wed., Dec. 11. Exhibit Openings