

ENGL 218: REMIX CULTURE AND COMPOSING

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the remix as a transformative compositional practice. Though the concept of remixing is part of a long artistic tradition, the remix raises poignant questions about originality, creativity, and the ethical and legal implications of twenty-first century forms of composition. Students will examine remixing through theoretical, historical, aesthetic, and political lenses in order to cultivate a deep understanding of the rhetorical and affective power of this genre. Students will be learning about remix and its associated practices through the close analysis of print-based scholarly texts as well as multimodal scholarly and creative works. Assigned readings listed throughout the syllabus are often paired with viewings. Students are responsible for viewing materials on their own, unless otherwise indicated (i.e., “view in class”).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students will demonstrate familiarity with a range of critical, creative and intellectual works that examine how various materials and media forms are mash-up or remixed to achieve certain ends.
- Students will be able to read, think, and speak clearly about the meaning of remix, and its connection to larger issues of memory, culture, identity, and aesthetics.
- Students will critically attend to the various ways remix plays a role in shaping their own lives and the worlds around them.
- Students will produce written texts in which they critically engage the central theories and ideas of the course.
- Working in groups, students will create and facilitate in-class remix activities that work to illustrate a key point or theme from the assigned readings.

COURSE MATERIALS

Students will be required to purchase the following text for the course:

Navas, Gallagher, and burrough, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Remix Studies (RCRS)*

NOTE: Additional required course readings (indicated by * in the syllabus) will be housed on Blackboard. Links to required course viewings are listed in the syllabus.

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN/ASSESSMENT

Attendance/Participation: 10%

Students are expected to be on time, and prepared to engage with the course readings, workshops, or other activities we have scheduled on a particular day. Students are required to contribute in-class to discussions. Arriving to class unprepared will result in progressively lowered grades for participation. Students are expected to attend class from the **beginning** of the class to the end throughout the semester. Latenesses will be noted after class time and added to the student's total number of absences at the end of the semester. I reserve the right to count *any* excessive lateness to class as a full absence, even if the student attends part of the class. Please make sure cell phones are turned off and put away at the start of class. Anyone checking email, text-messaging, getting up to leave class, etc. will be marked as absent.

Weekly Reading Questions/Responses: 20%

Students will be expected to turn in at the start of each class discussion questions based on the assigned readings. Students will be expected to come up with two discussion questions per class session (when readings are assigned) and to compose a short response to at least one of the questions they have posed for class discussion. This will help facilitate class discussion and further ensure that students are keeping up with class readings.

Midterm Paper: 20% (3-4 pages)

The midterm paper assignment requires students to summarize key points or ideas from readings assigned during the first half of the semester, putting them into dialogue with other of the assigned readings. This will help ensure that students are able to recognize key themes in the readings and to synthesize, connect, and/or put them into dialogue with other assigned readings, gaining a fuller, more nuanced understanding of course content. A-level papers will demonstrate outstanding writing quality and the student's ability to make compelling, critically-engaged connections between at least six of the assigned readings. B-level papers will demonstrate above-average writing quality and the student's ability to make connections between at least five of the assigned readings. C-level papers will demonstrate average writing quality and the student's ability to make connections between at least four of the assigned readings. D-level papers will demonstrate below average writing quality and/or the inability to make compelling connections between assigned readings. F-level papers will demonstrate failed writing quality and/or the inability to make connections between the assigned readings.

Final Paper: 30% (5-7 pages)

The final paper assignment requires students to summarize key points or ideas from readings assigned during the second part of the semester, putting them into dialogue with other readings assigned in the second portion of the semester. This will help ensure that students are able to recognize key themes in the readings and to synthesize, connect, and/or put them into dialogue with other assigned readings, gaining a fuller, more nuanced understanding of course content. A-level papers will demonstrate outstanding writing quality and the student's ability to make compelling, critically-engaged connections between at least seven of the assigned readings. B-level papers

will demonstrate above-average writing quality and the student's ability to make connections between at least six of the assigned readings. C-level papers will demonstrate average writing quality and the student's ability to make connections between at least five of the assigned readings. D-level papers will demonstrate below average writing quality and/or the inability to make compelling connections between assigned readings. F-level papers will demonstrate failed writing quality and/or the inability to make connections between the assigned readings.

Group Project: 20%

The group project encourages active, hands-on learning, by allowing students the opportunity of working together to come up with ways of applying (i.e., through an in-class activity or discussion) key ideas or principles from our readings. Students will be placed in groups and assigned the readings they will be responsible for at the start of the semester. The goal of this assignment is to develop the students' research skills and ability to develop analytical questions and facilitate discussion.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

90-100% A

80-89% B

70-79% C

60-69% D

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

UMBC is committed to eliminating discriminatory obstacles that may disadvantage students based on disability. If you have a disability and want to request accommodations, contact Student Support Services (SSS) in the Math/Psych Building, Room 213 or Academic IV-B wing Room 345 (or call 410-455-2459 or 410-455-3250). SSS will require you to provide appropriate documentation of disability and complete a Request for Services form available at <http://my.umbc.edu/groups/sss>. If you require accommodations for this class, make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your SSS-approved accommodations.

LATE WORK POLICY

All due dates are firm and all major assignments must be completed to pass the course. I may consider granting extensions in some cases, but you must contact me about the extension request at least one week in advance of the due date. Any/all late work will be docked a letter grade per calendar day that the work is late.

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

“By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal.” To read the full Student Academic Conduct Policy, consult the UMBC Student Handbook, the Faculty Handbook, or the UMBC Policies section of the UMBC Directory" (www.umbc.edu/provost/integrity/faculty.html).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

I. KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS (* indicates pdf housed on Blackboard)

WEEK ONE:

--course introduction/overview

*Bazerman, Charles. “Intertextuality”

*Knoble & Lankshear. “Remix: The Art and Craft of Endless Hybridization”

WEEK TWO

*Bolter & Grusin. “Remediation.”

*Shipka, Jody. “To Gather, Assemble and Display: Composition as [re]Collection.”

*Hofstader, Douglas. “Variations on a Theme as the Crux of Creativity.”

--view Ferguson, Kirby, “Everything is a Remix”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9ryPC8bxqE>

WEEK THREE

“Introduction,” *Routledge Companion to Remix Studies (RCRS)* 1-12

“A Rhetoric of Remix,” *RCRS* 43-53

“Good Artists Copy; Great Artists Steal” *RCRS* 54-67

“An Oral History of Sampling” *RCRS* 83-95

WEEK FOUR

“Can I Borrow Your Proper Name?” *RCRS* 96-103

“Remix Strategies in Social Media” *RCRS* 135-153

“Race and Remix” *RCRS* 179-191

“Appropriation is Activism” *RCRS* 217-224

II. ON REMIX, CREATIVITY, AND THE LAW

WEEK FIVE

“Appropriation is Activism” *RCRS* 217-224

“Copyright and Fair Use in Remix” *RCRS* 270-282

“Peeling the Layers of the Onion” *RCRS* 296-309

--view Lessig, Lawrence. “How Creativity is Being Strangled By the Law”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Q25-S7jzgs&feature=youtu_be_gdata

WEEK SIX

“I thought I Made a Vid, but Then You Told me That I Didn’t” *RCRS* 283-295

“The Panopticon of Ethical Video Remix Practice” *RCRS* 246-257

--view “Tripping the Decades: A CCCC Remix”

<http://remediatethis.com/projects/index.html>

--view *Masterhands: A Video Mash-up Roundtable*

<http://enculturation.net/master-hands-video-mashup-round-table>

--explore the Prelinger Archives

<https://archive.org/details/prelinger>

III. APPLICATIONS AND EXAMPLES: IS EVERYTHING A REMIX?

WEEK SEVEN

“Of Re/appropriations” *RCRS* 425-431

--view *Star Wars Uncut: Director’s Cut*

<https://vimeo.com/34948855>

(see also: <http://www.starwarsuncut.com>)

MID-TERM SUMMARY SYNTHESIS PAPER DUE

WEEK EIGHT

“Aesthetics of Remix” *RCRS* 432-443

*Shipka, Jody. “On Estate Sales, Archives, and the Matter of Making Things.”

<http://ccdigitalpress.org/reconstructingthearchive/shipka.html>

view Campbell, Trisha. “I am Josephine Miles.”

<http://ccdigitalpress.org/reconstructingthearchive/campbell.html>

WEEK NINE

SPRING BREAK

WEEK TEN

IN-CLASS WORKSHOP/PLANNING SESSIONS FOR GROUP PRESENTATION

WEEK ELEVEN

“A Remix Artist and Advocate” *RCRS* 425-431

“Remixing the Remix” *RCRS* 425-431

--explore Komar & Melamid, “The Most/Least Wanted Paintings on the Web”

<http://awp.diaart.org/km/index.html>

WEEK TWELVE

“A Fair(y) Use of Tale” *RCRS* 487-494

“In Two Minds” *RCRS* 509-515

IV: GROUP PRESENTATIONS

WEEK THIRTEEN

In-class presentations for groups 1 and 2

WEEK FOURTEEN

In-class presentations for groups 3 and 4

WEEK FIFTEEN

In-class presentations for groups 4 and 5

**[NOTE: FINAL SUMMARY-SYNTHESIS PAPERS WILL BE DUE DURING
FINALS WEEK, DATE TBA]**