

**[MALS 626:13 :: Composing Identities]**  
**[W, 6:00-9:00 pm, 347 Smith Hall]**

**Instructor:** Dr. Meg McGuire

**Office:** 315 Memorial Hall

**Email:** mmcguire@UDel.edu

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 4:00-5:00 pm, or by appointment.

**[Required Texts]**

- All readings available on Canvas

**[Description]**

Who we are and where we come from impacts all facets of our lives from our families to our professions to our social media presence. This course considers how culture and language shapes our racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, and socioeconomic identities and how we represent them online. We will examine theories from several disciplines regarding ways to critically analyze media and technologies. We will spend the semester considering how we “write” ourselves and our communities and how we are “written” by technologies and media around us. We will investigate the use of visual, audio, and cultural conventions within certain technological communities (Facebook, LinkedIn, Match) in creating individual and group identities. We will also discuss the importance of identification through association (with one another, with media, with brands, etc) and how this necessitates critical awareness of the technologies we use.

**[Outcomes]**

- Identifying issues of race, gender, sexual, and socioeconomic identities in a range of media
- Connecting theories of race, gender, technology, rhetoric
- Writing and producing a variety of printed and multimodal texts focused on representation

**[Course Projects and Grade Breakdown]**

Major assignments will include instructions and explanations of grading expectations for each project.

**Attendance and Participation:** Students will have several opportunities to participate in class to earn points by speaking, writing, sharing ideas, and meaningfully engaging in conversation either in class or via Canvas.

(100 points)

**Weekly Discussion Blog:** Each week, scholars will be responsible for writing an expository blog of at least 300 words about the week’s readings/ viewings/happenings by developing/posing questions and describing/explaining how and why the event impacts the various issues of identity we discuss. Students should have a total of at least 7 entries. The blog entries will be critiqued by both the instructor as well as by classmates.

Please try to post your blog by Tuesday of each week to ensure that your classmates have at least 24 hours to respond by class time. Students should respond to/ exchange ideas with at least one per each week. (200 points)

**\*\*\*** Sometimes, as class activities, you will be asked to produce a range of multimodal texts throughout the semester. These will be posted as part of your Canvas discussion blog.

**Cool Thing:** You will choose a week during the semester to share with us a multimodal scholarly piece you found that you think is cool. Your job is to share it with us and to explain to us what about it is cool to you and why. Your cool thing should be accompanied by a 3-5 page short paper to be submitted via Canvas. (200 points)

**Cultural Practices Analysis:** Students will investigate the online practices of a discourse community (one that they are a part of or a completely separate community – perhaps one you are intrigued by). This will be an 8-10 page, double-spaced paper (not including works cited). (200 points)

**Online Performance:** Each class member will perform an aspect of their identity in an online space. These will be created through multiple new media spaces and approaches. You will also write a 2-4 page reflection on the process. (300 points)

## **[Course Policies]**

### **Attendance:**

This is a graduate course and you are expected to be here.

### **Late Work:**

I do not accept late work. Assignments should be turned in on the date they are due. However, I do realize that life happens and sometimes gets in the way of meeting deadlines. If this does happen, **please let me know as soon as possible** and we can work something out.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Any work that you submit at any stage of the writing process--draft, thesis and outline, bibliography, through final version--must be your own; in addition, any words, ideas, or data that you borrow from other people and include in your work must be properly documented. Failure to do either of these things is plagiarism. The University of Delaware protects the rights of all students by insisting that individual students act with integrity. Accordingly, the University severely penalizes plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a serious phrase that denotes cheating --- using someone else's words or phrases without citing them. This very serious offense has two realms: intentional and unintentional. Intentional plagiarism refers to people who knowingly take ideas from others without acknowledging that work and citing that source. Unintentional plagiarism refers to people who take ideas without knowing that the ideas are stolen. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is wrong and can result in serious punishment. This class will help you all become more conscious of your actions, thus fostering awareness and helping you to avoid acts of intentional and unintentional plagiarism.

## **[Other Information]**

### **University Writing Center**

The Writing Center in 016 Memorial provides free one-on-one instruction to students who have writing assignments in this or any course. You may make an appointment by visiting the Center's Web Site: [www.cas.udel.edu/writing-center](http://www.cas.udel.edu/writing-center). (The telephone number is 831-1168.)

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me in the first or second week of the semester. Any student who may require an accommodation should contact me as soon as you become aware of your circumstances. If you need special assistance and/or classroom accommodations because of a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. To register and request accommodations, you will need to contact the Office of Disability Support Services. Their phone number is 302-831-4643 (TDD: 302-831-4563). More information can be found on their <http://www.udel.edu/DSS>.

### **Title IX Statement**

If, at any time during this course, I happen to be made aware that a student may have been the victim of sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic/dating violence, or stalking), I am obligated by federal law to inform the university's Title IX Coordinator.

The university needs to know information about such incidents to, not only offer resources, but to ensure a safe campus environment. The Title IX Coordinator will decide if the incident should be examined further. If such a situation is disclosed to me in class, in a paper assignment, or in office hours, I promise to protect your privacy. I will not disclose the incident to anyone but the Title IX Coordinator.

### **Course Evaluation**

A final expectation of the course is for you to complete the on-line student evaluation. This survey will be available for you to complete during the last two weeks of the semester. Apart from being an expectation of the course, your evaluation provides valuable information to me and to the Department.