

PAPER #1 - ASSIGNMENT

Media Memoir Essay

For this paper, I want you to reflect upon, describe, and analyze your own life in the universe of media and digital technology. Odds are you are surrounded by and inundated with information that reaches you through active and passive consumption of media and use of information technology. What I am hoping you can do in this paper is come to grips through both reflection and analysis with your own habits, tendencies, likes, and dislikes in the “supersaturated media torrent” that we experience daily (to borrow from one reading).

The Task:

Your goal is to write a cogent essay that incorporates your responses and reactions to several of these questions:

- How and why do you “use” or “consume” mass media? Where?
- What media do you routinely access? Rarely access? Actively avoid? Why?
- What role does digital information technology play in your life at present?
- What kinds of choices are you making, actively or passively, that bear on the information to which you are exposed?
- How have your patterns of technology use and media consumption changed over time? Since coming to Vanderbilt? Why? For the better or worse?
- What are the effects of your choices about media and technology, and the changes you’ve undergone, on your social ties with others?

You should not treat this as a quiz where the idea is to directly answer all these questions one-by-one. Please do not turn in a series of “answers.” The idea is to write a thematic essay that along the way addresses as many of these questions as can coherently be drawn together.

This essay does not require outside research, but it is appropriate to draw upon readings in the course so far. Of course, you should cite these sources appropriately when you refer to or draw upon them (with footnotes, as described in the syllabus). A high-quality essay will find and highlight appropriate intersections between your media/technology behaviors and concepts that arise in course readings. *Do not hesitate to ask me questions of clarification about this or any other aspect of the assignment.*

Some Particulars:

- Length: Approx. 1000 words for the text itself (excluding footnotes or appendices)
- Format: Follow instructions on page 3 of the course syllabus.
- Due: Friday, February 2 at 4:00 pm (submit in BB’s mailbox, 3rd floor of OGSM).
- Grade weight: 15% of course grade.

Unsolicited Advice: Review the section of the course syllabus (p. 4) titled “*Criteria for Evaluating Written Work in this Course.*” It provides a snapshot of my view of what makes a good essay. See also the form I will use to evaluate your paper, a copy of which appears on the back of this page.