

Paper Two: Examining Communities of Writers

Introduction:

For this writing assignment, you will be required to go searching for writing in technological communities. You will consider how certain writing technologies have impacted writing and how communities of writers use spaces (like websites) to convey their ideas about writing and other topics. You might even consider employing some of the genre characteristics of the community in your own essay. This assignment is like a mini action research study; you are required to examine examples of a certain writing community and *draw conclusions* about writing, about technology, about people and their societies, or some combination of these, based on your observations.

Meta-writing:

Meta means *about itself*, or self-reflexive. As such, *meta-writing* is another word for writing about writing. This essay assignment encourages you to take meta-writing one step further; for this essay, you may feel free to experiment with the genre of “essay” and play with things like formatting, fonts, and design – *so long as there is a reason for your doing so*. In a way, this isn’t an “essay” assignment at all, because not all disciplines and not all writing communities write “essays.” Some academic communities write lab reports, others write research publications, and others write articles – in the same way, some writing communities write blogs, some write status updates, and some write reviews of products – you will have to figure out what your community of choice does and follow that style to create your assignment. In short, I’m encouraging you to “think outside the box” for this assignment.

Requirements:

This paper needs to follow these guidelines, but be sure to read the “notes” below for some special requirements for this paper...

1. Paper should be *the equivalent of* 5-6 pages double-spaced TNR 12-pt (hand in your rough draft as a 5-6 page double-spaced paper)
2. Paper should contain an argument of some kind about a writing community and their writing technologies; you need to not only *write about* a community, but *say something about* writing in that community.
3. Paper could echo the genre characteristics of writing in the chosen community.
4. Paper should draw from examples of writing in the discipline and from discussions with people in the discipline

Some notes: If you use writing as a model (which you should), be sure to cite your models in your works cited page (they count as “inspiration,” plus it will be easier for me to then see what you used to create your paper). Also, if you talk to anyone (which I expect you to do) about writing in the community, be sure to mention them as a source (this is good evidence for your paper)! Also, *experiment* with ways to express your argument visually or structurally. Not all communities write in MLA standard format – as a matter of fact, most don’t! Your paper will be graded not only based on your analysis, but also based on your creativity.

Grading Guidelines:

This paper, while not a research paper, will be largely based on the writer’s active investigation of his/her topic and writing community of choice. The papers will all be different, of course, but will be graded based on the writer’s experimentation with the community’s writing, the complexity of the paper’s argument about how a writing community writes, and the paper’s innovative and effective use of meta-writing to communicate a point about the writing of a specific writing community. Organization and communication of main points, evidence, and ideas is important, though each community’s approach to the presentation of these things might be different.

Deadlines:

- Mon 1/31:** Find an example of writing in a writing community of interest to you. Bring this in to class.
Wed 2/2: Those having their papers workshopped on 2/7, be sure to email the class a copy of your paper prior to 8:30 a.m. today! ****we do not meet in class today: be sure to remember to do this!!!**
Mon 2/7: **Rough drafts due to Liz’s inbox by 8:30 a.m.**
Mon 2/14: **Final drafts due to Liz’s inbox by 8:30 a.m.**

Finally, a word to the wise: the best way to gather information for this assignment and to have something to say is going to be to CONDUCT INTERVIEWS and COLLECT SAMPLES.