This course is designed to help you explore the question: How do technologies – especially technologies of vision and data management – influence individual stories and the concept of storytelling?

The terms technics and narrative both have long (perhaps surprisingly) fraught histories that have helped shape the field of literary studies, but we won’t be attempting a comprehensive survey. Instead, we’ll look closely at and around a handful of examples. We’ll think about surveillance tactics, procedural art, and semiotic theory. In addition to reading short stories, news articles, and fragments of media philosophy, we will examine a graphic novel, a card game, and video games as “literary” artifacts. We’ll talk about historical context as well as aesthetic content. We’ll look at ways in which technology, culture, and experience shape possibility. You’ll produce texts that are experimental as well as analytical. And I’ll ask you to bring examples from your everyday life to share with the class. The diversity of this work will—hopefully—aid us in the semester-long project of developing capacious, generous, historically informed definitions of our course’s (deceptively ubiquitous) key terms: narrative and technology.

W Credit.

As a writing intensive class meant to help you work on the mechanics of your writing, this class entails public engagement with the processes of creation and revision. It assumes that making non-essay objects (including image and/or video-based works) can help us learn what language is good at and how it operates. You’ll be expected to share your work and comment on the work of others – both in class and outside class. Workshops and discussions will take up a significant portion of our in-class time. I hope there will be a lot of respectful disagreements and a lot of thoughtful observations about how others have chosen to put things together. We’ll have to see how it goes.
GRADING BREAKDOWN.

Participation, including in-class writing and presentations – 35 points

* PARTICIPATION. In short, participation means sharing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate. Those of you who are quieter will be glad to note that listening and reading are just as important as speaking and writing in relation to this portion of your grade. Everyone should note that—in the context of this course—participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, workshops, game play, and other activities. It includes asking questions. It also includes doing the required reading/viewing/playing/making between classes.

Five weekly assignments – 50 points
Week six final reflections and projects (re-visions) – 15 points

* WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS. You will turn in a three-page document at the end of each week. Every week’s assignment will be slightly different, and I’ll provide detailed instructions as necessary. This will generally look like a creative experiment (usually begun in class, but probably requiring some additional work outside class) and a one-page reflection (single spaced) on whatever we’ve been up to in-and-between classes. Week five a video assignment will take the place of these pages. At end of term, everyone will choose a piece of one of these minor projects to revise, expand, or reimagine—perhaps radically (due week six with an extended reflection).

You should turn in each week’s assignment as a single .pdf file before 11:59PM on Saturday. You’ll need to create a folder on Box and share it with me in order to turn in your work. You may need to become adept at using online file combination software. In terms of visual elements, scans of (neatly) hand drawn work are fine (there are scanners in the library). Photos are also fine, but they must be neatly cropped, and details must be clear. You may need multiple photos to represent an object well. Producing more than three pages or featuring unusual sizes (not 8.5x11) is okay if you strongly believe an assignment will be better for it, but focus on quality over quantity.

Total available points: 100

Both risk taking and proficiency will be taken into account. All six submissions must be completed to pass this class. As long as the original was submitted on time, you may choose to re-submit one project during the term for re-evaluation—you must email me within two days of receiving feedback to request a resubmission; I will give you a new due date. This policy is meant to encourage experimentation.

Final grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92 – 100</td>
<td>All projects exceed expectations. They are carefully edited and take risks that work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92</td>
<td>All projects meet or exceed expectation. They take risks that may not always work out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 – 89</td>
<td>All projects meet basic expectations; some work may fail to take risks or need more careful editing.</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 87</td>
<td>Expectations not met; work is incomplete or careless.</td>
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COURSE TEXTS. Many readings will be made available to you via Box. There are three things you are expected to purchase; I'll expect you to have access to them in/outside class:

* Paperback or ebook is okay (both approx. $7).

*Android: Netrunner* – any “Expansion Pack” you want (approx. $30 – search on Amazon, etc.)
Based on a card game designed by Richard Garfield (Fantasy Flight Games, 2012-present)
* If you imagine wanting to play this game outside class, you can choose to buy the full “Core Set” instead of an “Expansion Pack.” You may choose to split cost with a friend and share—but each pair of students needs to have a full runner deck and a full corporation deck for our in-class tournament day.

A video game with a rich/interesting environment.
* This may be a game of your choice (to match tech you have available), but I'll give suggestions and guidance midterm, after we talk as a group about the related assignments. I ask that it be something new to you, not an old favorite.

There is also one lightly “recommended” text for this class:

*Here* – Richard McGuire (Pantheon Graphic Novels, 2014)

LATE/MISSING WORK. The highest grade you are eligible to receive on any given assignment drops a full letter grade for each day the assignment is late. If you expect to have trouble meeting a deadline, talk to me before the assignment is due. **Deadlines are not negotiable after you have missed them.**

ATTENDANCE. Attendance is mandatory. This policy is not all about you. Because this is a small, discussion-and workshop-based class, your classmates’ experiences are directly impacted by whether or not you show up prepared. Come to class on time, ready to ask questions and take part in conversation. **If you arrive significantly after class has begun or if you arrive without drafting materials on a workshop day or if you’re clearly texting/socializing online during class, you will be counted as absent.**

If you do miss class, you must arrange for the day’s assignments to be submitted on time, either via email or a classmate. **Because this is a condensed summer class, having more than ONE absence is grounds for automatic failure.** That said, I understand that we’re all human beings with lives that go on outside the classroom, and I’m a pretty reasonable person---if you expect to get into trouble with this policy, once again, please talk to me before there’s an issue, not after.

COMMUNICATION: OFFICE HOURS/EMAIL. Office hours provide us with an opportunity to talk one on one. Mine are M/W 11am-12pm. My office---617-A---is located on the sixth floor of the cathedral. You may drop in during this time at any point in the semester to ask questions or to talk about your progress in the course. I enjoy talking about what you think of readings, assignments, and the way class is running, and I am always happy to offer individualized tech support or advice on projects. However, initiating these types of conversations is your responsibility---not mine.

I am also available by appointment, in case my office hours aren’t compatible with your schedule, and I am happy to answer questions via email. You can assume that I will check my email at least once a day on most weekdays, but you should not assume that I will always be able to reply instantly
(especially if your message reaches my inbox at 2AM the night before an assignment is due). As the need arises, I may send important announcements or updates about assignments to your Pitt email account. If you use another account (i.e. gmail), get in the habit of checking your Pitt account too.

**Technology Etiquette.** I expect that you’ll shut off your phone’s ringer and that you won’t text during class—this is part of you having respect for your classmates (which is a thing I care about a lot). When we’re in the lab, I expect that you’ll only be logged onto a computer if our work together necessitates it. When we’re elsewhere, the same goes for your laptop. In my experience, your active, conversational engagement in class is worth a lot more than taking down the perfect set of notes. **You should plan to bring a jump drive to class each day.**

**Academic Integrity.** The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: “plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.” We’ll talk about how to handle other people’s creations responsibly, but it is important to note now that changing a few words or lines in a quotation does not constitute avoiding plagiarism. All instances of plagiarism will result in an automatic 0 on the assignment and a report to the Dean.

**Additional Assistance/Resources**

**The Writing Center.** Located in 317-B Student Center, 4024 O’Hara St., the Writing Center is a resource that allows you to work on your writing with an experienced consultant. Although you should not expect consultants to “correct” your work for you, they can assist you in learning to organize, edit, and revise your essays. They can also provide fresh eyes and invention help. Consultants can work with you on a one-time basis, or they can work with you throughout the term. Their services are free, but you should call ahead (412-624-6556) or make an appointment online at [www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter/](http://www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter/)

I’m committed to accommodating students with disabilities in appropriate ways; please speak with me after class or in office hours. If you are a student with a disability, you may wish to contact **Disability Resources and Services** in 216 William Pitt Union or at 412-648-7890. Providing information from DRS helps me and other instructors know how we can help you.

Pitt also offers free counseling at the **Counseling Center**, located in 334 William Pitt Union (412-648-7930), for students who are experiencing personal or emotional difficulties.
WEEK ONE

EXPECTATIONS – WINDOWS, TECHNICS, AND VISION METAPHORS

SOME RESOURCES FOR THIS WEEK:

EDITIONS-AT-PLAY FROM GOOGLE AND THE PUBLISHER Visual Editions
https://editionsatplay.withgoogle.com/#/

AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD MCGUIRE
http://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/06/12/split-screens-an-interview-with-richard-mcguire/

CHRIS WARE TALKING ABOUT MCGUIRE AND HERE

WIKIPEDIA ON THE HISTORY OF THE GUI
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_graphical_user_interface

PHILOGRAPHICS FROM STUDIOCARRERAS
http://studiocarreras.com/philographics/

MONDAY MAY 16 – INTRODUCTIONS BY WAY OF VARIOUS EXAMPLES AND AN EXPERIMENT

Share in class – Various definitions of narrative, technology, technics, technē.
Screen – Examples of imagined “future screens” in visual media…
Work on – Biographical interfaces: not what is the story of your life, but rather: what kind of story is your life? How do you want people to interact with it? (Describe examples.)

HOMEWORK DUE WED:
Read – Selection from Here by Richard McGuire (four files on Box). Skim, jump around, pretend you have the book. Pick a favorite page. If you have the book, bring to class.
Read – “A Theory of ‘Here’” by Lee Konstantinou
http://theaccountmagazine.com/?article=a-theory-of-here
Take – Two (+) screenshots that show a technological trope impacting a story. Have fun.
Share them via Box before Wed. class
Give each photo a title. Save your files with this titling convention:
FirstInitialLastName-Title.ext (e.g. kbanazek-title.jpg) before uploading.

WEDNESDAY MAY 18 – WINDOWS OVER TIME: METAPHOR AND THE GUI

Examine in class – Some context for Here.
Review – Your samples (screenshots) and the readings.
Future Vision Workshop – Intro to visual composing; drafting theme postcards.

[ First Set of Pages :: A curated and annotated gallery of screen shots
AND/OR two annotated “narrative and technology” theme postcards
AND/OR theory comic on a tech issue that references three other thinkers
AND reflection on the week’s work.]

Due for grading by end-of-day Saturday, May 21 (via private Box folder)
WEEK TWO

GENRE AND RULE SYSTEMS – THE WORLD OF ANDROID: NETRUNNER

SOME RESOURCES FOR THIS WEEK:

EXAMPLE NETRUNNER REVIEWS/INTERVIEWS (GENERAL AND EXPANSION-PACK SPECIFIC)
http://gamedesignreviews.com/scrapbook/netrunner-the-way-to-win-is-not-to-play/
http://www.shutupandsitdown.com/blog/post/review-netrunner-creation-and-control/

HOMEWORK DUE MON:
Read – First ten chapters of Free Fall by William Keith (pgs. 7-159 in the paperback)
Collect as you read – Descriptions of specific technologies in the book; be ready to talk
about two favorite passages in class.
Skim – The sci-fi encyclopedia’s entry on Cyberpunk and follow a few links:
http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/entry/cyberpunk
Then pick a couple terms from the list of themes that feel relevant and read them:
http://www.sf-encyclopedia.com/category/themes/theme

MONDAY MAY 23 – CAN WE CONSIDER GENRE A TECHNOLOGY?
Read/Discuss – Quick intros to Cyberpunk and Genre Theory
Craft and Workshop – Experimental description comics based on moments in Free Fall

HOMEWORK DUE WED:
Read – Instructions for the card game Android: Netrunner
and the one page preface to Worlds of Android
https://images-cdn.fantasyflightgames.com/filer_public/17/cc/17cce60-9029-4aa1-a4cf-60c38b01c006/nad06_first_4_pages.pdf
Watch – The official tutorial video (20 minutes, weird!) while flipping through your cards.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAsIVfZ9p-Y
and/or the more personal intro from Quinn at Shut Up & Sit Down (30 min):
http://www.shutupandsitdown.com/videos/v/susd-play-netrunner/
Create Annotations – For four cards (including one identity card) that you own.
Revise, digitize, and organize – The sketches your group made Monday.

WEDNESDAY MAY 25 – RULES, PLAY THROUGHS, AND FORMING STORYTELLING GROUPS
Discuss – The idea of world building (again) and various rule-based systems (tarot, etc.)
Bring to Class – Your Netrunner decks and the liner notes that came with them.

[ Second Set of Pages :: “Tech glossary” (text or comic form) and reflection ]
Due for grading by end-of-day Saturday, May 28 (via private Box folder)
WEEK THREE

NETRUNNER CONT’D – IMAGES, REFERENCES, AND GAME DESIGN

SOME RESOURCES FOR THIS WEEK:

WATCH PEOPLE PLAY NETRUNNER (MOSTLY THE DIGITAL VERSION) ON TWITCH:
https://www.twitch.tv/directory/game/Android%3A%20Netrunner

FULL CARD DATABASE:
https://netrunnerdb.com

WORLDS OF ANDROID BOOK REVIEW:

ROLE PLAYING GAMES FOR COMPARISON:
https://www.technoirrpg.com/

HOW TO DRAW STEAMPUNK AND CYBERPUNK MACHINES
http://www.crabfu.com/steamtoys/diy_steampunk/
http://www.instructables.com/id/Draw-Cyberpunk/?ALLSTEPS

DIGITAL COMIC CREATION WALK THROUGH (SAMPLE):
https://plasq.com/apps/comiclife/macwin/

MONDAY MAY 30 – NO CLASS (MEMORIAL DAY)

Be Working – On your expansion pack contribution. Art, text, mechanics, identity stories…

HOMEWORK DUE WED:
Read – The rest of Free Fall.
Check Out – Cyberpunk 2077 concept art
https://www.behance.net/gallery/Cyberpunk-2077/6573211
Select – Three passages in the book that enhance/interact with cards from the game; sketch notes on how they work together, why they’re interesting, and how they interact with other stories/facts you know.
Select – A card or two from the database that has a great art. Copy images into a word doc, make notes about what caught your eye/imagi

Bring to Class – Your Netrunner decks and the liner notes that came with them.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 1 – NETRUNNER PLAY THROUGHS AND WORLD BUILDING CONVERSATIONS
Tournament – Play again now that you’ve had a little more time to think about the world!
Sample from – 99 WAYS TO TELL A STORY by Matt Madden
Workshop – Time to collaborate on expansion pack details with group members.

[ Third Set of Pages :: mid-term reflections and draft materials for your personal contribution to expansion packs ]
Due for grading by end-of-day Saturday, June 4 (via private Box folder)
WEEK FOUR

ENVIRONMENTAL MEDIA:
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY, 360-DEGREE VIEWS, AND GAME ENGINES

SOME RESOURCES FOR THIS WEEK:

VIRTUAL GEOGRAPHIC:
http://virtualgeographic.tumblr.com/

HOMEWORK DUE: MON:
** Read – Peter Turchi “In a Wide Landscape of Snows,” on Box
Read – Two short notes from David T. Hanson on his art:
http://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2010/10/25/130812397/100hanson
http://www.davidthanson.net/late-twentieth-century-landscapes.html
Check out – http://extremeicesurvey.org/ and
http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Observing_the_Earth/Timelapse_from_space_reveals_glacier_in_motion

MONDAY JUNE 6 – PHOTOGRAPHY, IN MOTION AND FROM ABOVE
Talk through – Final project requirements.
Check out – NPS use of Instagram https://www.instagram.com/nationalparkservice/?hl=en
Workshop – Stop-motion animations, tiny stories.
Check out – Shoogleit; 360-degree panorama apps; etc.
Bring, if you have it and want to use it – Digital camera (tripod, cable release).

HOMEWORK DUE: WED:
Check Out – Other Places, watch at least three videos; scroll through several pages to see what kinds of games are represented. http://www.otherplaces.co.uk/
Watch – http://www.sketchup.com/learn/videos/58
(Strongly Suggested) Read – An interview with Andy Kelly.
http://videogametourism.at/content/other-places-interview-andy-kelly
(Required) Read – “Making Plans” on Archinect and explore links/examples from the list
http://archinect.com/features/article/77735/making-plans
* Create and Bring Three Hard Copies – A 200-300 word plan-of-action for a final project (diagrams/images encouraged but not required).

WEDNESDAY JUNE 8 – GAME SPACE DESIGN – MAPS AND SCHEMATICS AS MEDIA
Read – The Art of In-Game Photography
http://videogametourism.at/content/art-game-photography
Workshop – Environment design: graph paper game levels.
Workshop – Final project ideas

[ Fourth Set of Pages :: final project proposals, environment maps, and weekly reflection ]

Due for grading by end-of-day Saturday, June 11 (via private Box folder)
**Week Five**

**Environments and Stories Cont’d:**
Experimental Games, Machinima, and Video Art
(+ Hands-on Video Workshop)

**Some Resources for This Week:**

**Adobe Premier Official Tutorials:**
[https://helpx.adobe.com/premiere-pro/tutorials.html](https://helpx.adobe.com/premiere-pro/tutorials.html)

**Lynda Tutorials:**
[https://technology.pitt.edu/service/online-technology-training-lyndapittedu](https://technology.pitt.edu/service/online-technology-training-lyndapittedu)

**Clip Converter (Grab Files from YouTube):**
[http://www.clipconverter.cc/](http://www.clipconverter.cc/)

**OBS – One of Many Screen Recorder Options:**
[https://obsproject.com/](https://obsproject.com/)

**Prelinger Archive (Footage that can be remixed):**
[https://archive.org/details/prelinger](https://archive.org/details/prelinger)

**Editing Rules/Suggestions:**

**Public Domain Sounds and Sound Bible.**

**ccMixter and Free Music Archive:**
[http://www.ccmixter.org](http://www.ccmixter.org)
[http://freemusicarchive.org](http://freemusicarchive.org)

**Homework Due Mon:**
*Spend three hours* – Playing/observing a game. Details on separate game options sheet.
*Read* – Selection from The Machinima Reader, posted on Box.

**Monday June 13 – In-Class Game Play and Discussion – MEET IN CL.435**

**Group Game Play** – Rotating controllers and observers.

**Discussion** – Experience and expertise in game environments.

**Workshop** – Ideas for this week’s project; everyone leaves with a plan for asset collection.

**Homework Due Wed:**
*Check Out* – Collect assets. Video, screen shots, music… Be ready to start editing!
*Check Out* – Making the Firewatch trailer.

[https://blog.camposanto.com/post/132943781329/heres-a-post-that-was-almost-lost-to-the-ages](https://blog.camposanto.com/post/132943781329/heres-a-post-that-was-almost-lost-to-the-ages)

**Wednesday June 15 – Intro to Premier and Basic Video Editing – MEET IN CL.435**

**Workshop** – Video. Be prepared to spend a full three hours working in the lab.

[ Fifth “Pages” :: machinima OR cut-up video using game and CC footage OR in-game photo essay with short reflection ]

Due for grading by end-of-day Saturday, June 18 (via private Box folder)
Week Six
Re-Designing, Expanding, Reflecting, & Wrapping Up

Some Resources for This Week:

25 Design Tips
https://designschool.canva.com/blog/graphic-design-tips-non-designers/
Barabara McNally Design Resource Lists
http://nondesigners.com/minicourse/index.html
Audio resource sheet posted on Box; Photo essay sheet coming soon.

Homework Due Mon:
Be Working on – Your final projects/reflections
Bring to Class – Everything you have done so far for projects; try to complete as much as possible before class. Look at project specific recs in your comments.
Post as a Box note – A link to an example project or design resource that you think your classmates might find useful. Include an annotation that tells people what they are clicking through to (and why it might be useful).

Monday June 20 – Redesign, Revision, and Metaphor
Read – “Design and Redesign” by Fernanda Viégas and Martin Wattenberg
https://medium.com/@hint_fm/design-and-redesign-4ab77206cf9
Explore – Some technical resources and descriptions of book projects
Workshop – Metaphor generation
Workshop – Your final projects

Homework Due Wed:
* Put – One page/piece of work that you’re proud of in the shared folder on Box (by 9am)
  This can be an excerpt from writing, an outline, your machinima video, your netrunner cards, your Photoshop ‘postcards’ from week one---anything you want to share that represents your participation in the class well.
Be Working on – Your final projects/reflections
Bring, if you are moved – A snack or something else to share with your classmates

Wednesday June 22 – Last Questions, Sharing of work
Share – Your favorite works

* Final projects and Reflections due Saturday - June 25th

* If you’d like to turn in a non-digital project, you must make an arrangement with me on or before Wednesday, June 22.