ENG 494: Special Topics

On occasion, Writing Programs offers courses under the course number ENG 494. The following is a description of one such offering, Writing in a Digital Age. Students interested in taking a special topics course from Writing Programs should ask their advisor about what topics are available to them for each semester.

English 494: Writing in a Digital Age focuses on the conventions and interconnectedness—the weaving of text, images, sound, and video—of writing in a digital age. The course is designed to increase students' awareness and understanding of how, perhaps now more so than ever before, writing requires specific attention to context, audience, and meaning-making. Special emphasis will be placed on the theory and practical rhetorical conventions for social and digital media. Our goal throughout the semester will be to critically evaluate the rhetorical, social, cultural, educational, and ethical dimensions of digital texts; to examine issues of technology and literacy; and to interrogate identity (including gender, race, class, and more), and representation in digital spaces.

The topics we cover, the readings we do, and the discussions we have in this course should help us to:

- explore and understand social and digital spaces as rhetorical spaces;

- understand the various cultural dynamics of digital and social writing arenas;

- better understand the multiple and layered elements of digital writing conventions;

- become more sophisticated navigators of digital information; and

- become more effective writers and communicators in a digitally mediated world.