MCS 352: Topics in New Media
Transmedia Culture

I usually answer emails within 24 hours (weekday). If you do not hear from me within two days, you can assume that I did not get your email. Please make sure that you send email to the correct email address (pbooth@depaul.edu). Be forewarned: email accounts with Yahoo tend to get sent to DePaul’s spam filter, and I tend not to get them. You can also Tweet me at @pbooth81.

Course Description:
Transmedia storytelling, or the distribution of narrative content across multiple technologies and media, is rapidly becoming a common trend in contemporary media making. Whether it’s television series sharing content with video games, films’ narratives continued (or begun) in graphic novels, or media systems in which no one medium takes precedence in telling the story, transmediation can take many forms. This class will explore the cultural ramifications of transmedia through an examination of its history, its contemporary usage, and its creation. Students will work together to construct a transmediated narrative, focusing specifically on its use as historical narrative.

Course Goals:
This course has three main goals. The first is to gain a better understanding of key concepts in transmediation theories. The second is to gain the ability to analyze the production, distribution, and consumption of transmedia in today’s media-rich environment. The third is to artfully create transmedia products.

Course Objectives:
At the end of this course, students will be able to:
1) Identify the key elements of transmedia
2) Critique different styles of transmedia
3) Synthesize readings, lessons, and discussions in a transmedia project
4) Collaborate in groups to create a project

Class Readings
To Buy: (DePaul Loop Barnes and Noble, or online)


Additional readings will be available via D2L, under Course Documents. Readings should be done before class on the day that they are due.

Grading and Assignments:
Your grade is based on 750 points:
- Example of Transmedia: 50 points
- Short Historical Story: 50 points
- Transmedia Presentation and Critique: 100 points
- Story Bible: 100 points
- Transmedia Project: 250 points
  o (Mapping: 50 points)
  o (Pitch: 50 points)
- Transmedia Report: 100 points
- Participation: 100 points

Example of Transmedia: Due 17 September, 50 points
For this short assignment, I want you to pick a fairy tale (or myth) and describe in about 500 words how you would turn it into a transmediated narrative. You should use the DFNS textbook or the Phillips reading to help guide your transformation. You do not actually have to write the transmedia story. In your paper you should include a definition of transmedia.

Short Historical Story: Due 01 Oct, 50 points
On 19 Sept, we will meet at and explore the Chicago History Museum to find historical objects. For this assignment, you will write a 1000-1500 word fictional story based on the historical object you found in the museum. You should ideally find an object that “speaks” to you. Your story can either be about the object, about the people that used the object, about the way the object was used – anything works in this context. However, you should not just describe the object. The point of this assignment is to get you thinking about your object in a fictional sense, and although you can use your story in your final project, you do not have to – so have fun and enjoy writing some fiction. The story should use some aspect of historical research to base your discussion in (slight) fact.

Transmedia Presentation and Critique: Due 26 Sept through 10 Oct, 100 points
For this assignment, you will choose an already existent transmedia story (from a list provided by your instructor) and research its history, contextual background, and larger structure (you should therefore pick a story that you are already reasonably familiar with). You should prepare a presentation to the class that (1) outlines the significance of the transmedia text; and (2) offers a meaningful thesis that other students can apply to their own project. The date of your presentation will depend on which text you pick (different texts are assigned to different days). Anytime up to one week after your presentation, you should turn in a paper that builds on the research for your presentation.

Requirements:
- Presentation: 10 minutes; extemporaneous, good use of PPT; turn in notes
- Paper: 1500 words; 3-4 references; good writing (see grading guide, below)

Story Bible: Due 24 Oct, 100 points
For this assignment, you should meet with your group to write a Story Bible that will guide the writing of your transmedia narrative. The shape of your group’s Bible may be different for each group, but there are some standards that you should follow, including enumerating and describing the world of the narrative, the characters, and the intertextual connections between elements. The Bible could integrate elements from each of your group member’s short stories, so it might be useful to share them.

Transmedia Project: 200 points total
You will work in teams of 3-4 for this project. Your team will design a transmedia narrative for another team in the class to experience. The transmedia narrative you design should include an artifact from a museum. Your narrative should integrate at least 4 different technologies. Your narrative should use elements from the story bible, but can build off of them and develop them further.
We will be working on this project in class as well as out of class. There are multiple deadlines for this project:

1. 08 October: Get into Groups
2. 24 October: Write Story Bible (see separate assignment)
3. 05/07 November: Map of transmedia narrative due during class meeting (50 points)
4. 14 November: Draft (11:50 PM)
5. 19 November: Pitch idea to class (50 points)
6. 19 November: Final Copy to Prof. Booth (100 points)
7. 21 November: Teamwork reports (see separate assignment) – to D2L

In addition, there are three “check-in” dates. On these dates, your team should have completed at least one of your media elements. You should be prepared to present this media element, receive class critiques, and offer critiques of your own.

Class Meetings:
Your group will sign up for one 15 minute meeting with me to discuss the progress of your transmedia narrative. You should have enough of the narrative constructed that we have something to discuss. Your group should look at this meeting as a formal practice of your Pitch. You should also turn in your map of the transmedia narrative at this meeting.

Transmedia Report: Due 21 Nov, 2:45 pm (finals), 100 points
For Finals, you will be expected to read through another teams’ narrative and write a report/critique of it. This 1200-1500 word essay should:

1. Report on the experience of experiencing the other team’s narrative. What worked? What didn’t? How was it different from yours? How does it fit into the readings we did for class?
2. Report on the experience of writing your narrative. What worked? What didn’t? What was it like having it be played? How does it fit into the readings we did for class?
3. Compare and contrast your narrative with the other group’s narrative. This should not be a “we did this so much better” contrast, but a comparison about the content and organization of the two narratives.

Teamwork: 50 points
You will receive a grade for your work within your group. This is based on the report by your teammates provided, as well as your own self-reflection. This is different from your “participation” grade, which measures your work in class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Unit 1: Definitions

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<tr>
<th>Class 01</th>
<th>THURSDAY 12 SEPT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Introduction; Definitions</td>
<td>Jenkins: “Transmedia Storytelling 101”</td>
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<td>Readings due today</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class 02</th>
<th>TUESDAY 17 SEPT</th>
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</table>
| Topic: An Overview of Transmedia | DFNS: Chapter 1
Phillips: Ch 5 |
| Readings due today | |
### Assignment due today

**Example of Transmedia**

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### Class 03

**THURSDAY 19 SEPT**

**Topic:** Museum Visit – Meet at the Chicago History Museum (1601 North Clark Street)

**Readings due today:** Rowe, Wertsch, and Kosyaeva: “Linking Little Narratives”

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### Unit 2: Types of Transmedia

#### Class 04

**TUESDAY 24 SEPT**

**Topic:** Narrative: Structuralism

**Readings due today:**
- DFNS: Chapter 3
- Cobley (read pp. 4-12 only)
- Phillips: Ch 6

**Assignment due today:** Presentations

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#### Class 05

**THURSDAY 26 SEPT**

**Topic:** Narrative: History and Seriality

**Readings due today:**
- DFNS: Chapter 5
- Krzywinska: “Arachne Challenges Minerva”
- Phillips: Ch 7-8

**Assignment due today:** Presentations

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#### Class 06

**TUESDAY 01 OCT**

**Topic:** Branding: Characters

**Readings due today:**
- Jenkins: “How Transmedia Storytelling…”
- Phillips: Ch 9

**Assignment due today:**
- Presentations
- Short Historical Story

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#### Class 07

**THURSDAY 03 OCT**

**Topic:** Branding: Worlds

**Readings due today:**
- Marshall: Intertextual Commodity
- Phillips: Ch 10

**Assignment due today:** Presentations

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#### Class 08

**TUESDAY 08 OCT**

**Topic:** Games: Play

**Readings due today:**
- Abba: “Hybrid Stories”
- Phillips: Ch 11-13

**Assignment due today:**
- Presentations
- Project Update: Get into groups
Class 09
THURSDAY 10 OCT
Topic: Games: Narrative
Readings due today
DFNS: Chapter 6
Phillips: Ch 14–16
Assignment due today
Presentations

Class 10
TUESDAY 15 OCT
Topic: History of Transmedia
Readings due today
Johnson: “History of Transmedia”
Phillips: Ch 23

Unit 3: Building a Transmedia World

Class 11
THURSDAY 17 OCT
Topic: Story Bible
Readings due today
DFNS: Chapter 10
Assignment due today
Critique of Transmedia Text

Class 12
TUESDAY 22 OCT
Topic: Worldbuilding and the Mothership, (Mapping)
Readings due today
DFNS: Chapter 2
Jenkins: “Searching for the Origami Unicorn”

Class 13
THURSDAY 24 OCT
Topic: NO CLASS
Readings due today
Hayes
Assignment due today
Story Bible

Class 14
TUESDAY 29 OCT
Topic: Fans and Engagement
Readings due today
DFNS: Chapter 8
Bourdieu: “Following the Pattern”

Unit 4: Creating Transmedia

Class 15
THURSDAY 31 OCT
Topic: Media Specificity
Readings due today
DFNS: Chapter 7
Mittell: “Transmedia Storytelling”
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Bibliography


