

Fair Warning

Hello and welcome to the online, Summer version of Digital Storytelling (CPSC 106). If you are receiving this email, it means you are currently enrolled to take this course in Summer 2015

Please read this in its entirety!

I wanted to take a moment to quickly orientate you all in regards to how this course will be run over the Summer (Summer Session I and II, 2 different Sections).

Let's start by saying this course will probably be unlike most courses you have taken thus far in your school career, and that is not simply because it will be held entirely online—for it is quite likely in this day and age some of you have taken an online course before. What is different about ds106 (the nickname for the course) is that you will not only be asked, but required, to narrate your process of learning over the course of the semester. You will be required to setup and manage your own domain and web hosting space (details forthcoming); you will be expected to create a series of online identities across several web services (including YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, SoundCloud, Google Apps, etc.); and regularly update your own web space where you will be installing, designing, and customizing your own site. More specifically, you will be asked to use these spaces to create digital narratives both individually and collaboratively over the course of the semester—so please be prepared to work together.

Also, it is very important to keep in mind that a lion's share of the course work, and by extension your grade, will be focused around the regular updating of your own site as well as commenting on those of your classmates. We can not stress

strongly enough how essential both posting and commenting are to your success is this course. If you foresee any issue with either of these activities—particularly with doing them openly online—we recommend you reconsider taking this course.

Another issue that comes up again and again with this course is the time commitment. We will be creating a variety of narratives across a wide range of media, experimenting with everything from digital photography to digital audio to web video. These forms are often quite complicated and time consuming, and while the students who have taken this class in previous semesters enjoyed the process tremendously, they almost all noted it demands a significant amount of time. If you are taking a large number of credits or some particularly difficult classes in other disciplines this Fall (or trying to hold-down a full-time job, etc.), you may want to reconsider taking this course. What's more, if you took this class as a 100-level filler and expect to get by with minimal work or engagement, you will quickly realize that it's far more than that—and the dangerous part of the course is you will greatly enjoy the work. Don't be seduced! At any rate, consider this fair warning. And please try not to make me remind you that you were warned before the class even began.

The main site for the course is located at <http://.ds106.us>. Please go there and take a look around to get a sense of the chaos, If you have any questions let us know.

Something to keep in mind about that course site is that it will not only include the posts of students from UMW, but also from others beyond the boundaries of our school. ds106 may be taken by more people from outside UMW than the number enrolled in the class at UMW—and they will be taking it for free. Why free? Free because they are not getting credit for the class like you are from UMW. Your work as a class will happen alongside numerous people with a wide experience and interests—many of whom have no association with UMW

whatsoever. This serves as a microcosm of the web, we will not be working within a siloed learning management system for this class, rather we will be doing our business out on the open web. If this is concern, then you have yet another reason to reconsider taking the course.

This course is designed to get you to both think about and interact within the digital landscapes and networks that everywhere surround us. Narratives and storytelling provide the frame we need for exploring and experimenting with emerging forms of creative expression in the digital realm as well as means for interrogating the digital environments we are increasingly dependent upon. To this end you will be asked to steward your own website, and one of your first assignments will be to setup your own domain and establish your own web host—and by extension your own digital identity.

While this should be self-evident, turns out it needs repeating. If you don't have access to a solid, reliable computer and a fast internet connection for the five-week duration of the class you should not be taking ds106. Period. A computer and consistent, fast internet service are absolutely necessary.

Shortly we will be sending out another email with instructions for getting your own web host, domain, and installing a couple of open source applications. We will also be expecting you all to get Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube (or Vimeo) accounts as soon as possible.

Finally, if you have significant issues with any of the above listed points—which we're sure some of you do— feel free to reach out to jenniferpolack@gmail.com.