Semester Overview

Looking back on the work I completed this semester, and the readings we discussed it class, it seems the best place to begin is with “Pencils to Pixels.” The Barron piece does well in establishing the connection between rhetoric and composition and technology. The mere fact that most of what composition instructors cling to was once questioned, because of its status as a new technology sets the framework for the entire course. Many readings urge composition instructors and scholars to include more technology in their classroom, and that the assignments in the curriculum should reflect both the changes in technology as they demand that students develop other literacies, and give students an opportunity to compose with technology. The readings that I found most helpful as an instructor addressed the ways in which composition classes must move away from the essay, and give suggestions for assignments that do so. I found these readings the most helpful because like a lot of instructors I see the value, and necessity for composition classes to include assignments that help develop the multiliteracies Selber mentions in his book *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age.* However, it’s difficult to implement assignments that develop those multiliteracies, and other skills that are beneficial to students when the semester never seems long enough to do everything we, as instructors, feel the need to do. I continually return to Selber book

Selber’s book, and Arroyo’s “Participatory Composition” not for ideas about assignments, but for the concepts and theories that should inform the way I teach assignments. With only fifteen weeks to teach and help students develop so many different skills and literacies I think a course like this is important not because we can trace the inclusion of specific uses of technology, and shifts in the way we think about and use technology. Class discussion, I felt, often times mirrored some of the concerns that scholars address, and work around. Yancey’s 2004 CCCC address speaks to the resistance, and hesitance of instructors to move away from alphabetic text assignments. It was common that we, as a class, brought up the difficulties of teaching an assignment like the video essay, or the value in doing so. Within our own class we encountered some that would question why we teach a video assignment, or more importantly why do we as a field incorporate an assignment such as that when other fields still rely heavily on the essay. It’s clear that the service course label is difficult to shake, and might be so ingrained in our own experiences or pedagogy that moving away from what we know has value to other disciplines proves incredibly difficult. I don’t have an answer for many of these difficult questions, but I hope that the work in this portfolio falls in line with many of the scholars that urge the field to incorporate assignments that reflect the current direction and uses of writing as influenced, and/or dictated by technological advancements.
 The work in this portfolio, I believe, support the continued pursuit of a curriculum in composition courses that embrace the shifts in technology, but do more than simply transfer previous pedagogical practices and approaches to the learning objectives of assignments that incorporate technology, such as the video essay, or digital multimodal assignments, etc. The coursework and assigned reading of this course should more than adequately prepare the students to critically engage with the theory behind specific assignments, while providing the necessary framework to develop our own pedagogies for implementing assignments.