

# Reading and Writing in the Digital Age

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Recent media innovations have profoundly reshaped the place and practice of reading and writing in society. Whether we think of the malleability of digital text production, the speed of written exchanges in an era of handheld devices, the arrival of new methods of machine reading and textual data processing, or the spread of e-readers, touch screens, and hybrid forms of online publication: the dominance of personal and mobile computing today not simply calls for new modes of reading and writing, it changes the very concept of what we understand as text in the first place. This seminar is designed to examine the aesthetic, cultural, cognitive, and scholarly transformations associated with electronic formats of reading and writing. In the first half of the semester, we will map the landscapes of contemporary reading and writing, studying a number of recent (and not so recent) theoretical perspectives by authors such as Benjamin, Dehaene, Drucker, Fitzpatrick, Gitelman, Goldsmith, Kittler, McGann, Mendelsund, Piper, and Schnapp. The second half of the semester will be largely project-driven. Students will explore and present literary and poetic works in various languages that engage electronic forms of production and dissemination; they will analyze, curate, reframe, annotate, and visualize critical and creative texts with the help of a variety digital tools; they will collaborate on online writing projects and investigate new platforms of scholarly communication; they will design hypothetical research projects on the media history of writing; and last but not least, they will probe how today's digital environments affect a reader's and writer's dimension of aesthetic experience. All readings, discussions, and writing projects will be in English. Students may utilize their expertise in other languages to present work that may not be accessible to some of their peers.

**Class Time:** Wednesday 4:10 – 6:30 pm

**Instructor:** Lutz Koepnick

**Course Number:** German 392

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