

## Perseverative Design: On Disability and Multimodal Pedagogy

Professor Melanie Yergeau

Thursday, April 5th, 12:00-1:30pm

Modern Languages 453; lunch provided

In this workshop, we will think about the ways in which accessibility can serve as a guiding process in the design of our class discussions, assignments, and curricula. We will pay particular attention to multimodal composing, and the ways in which composing in digital or multi-sensory forms might enhance or limit broader student participation. In many ways, the interdisciplinary field of disability studies will serve as a guiding frame for our discussions. For example, how might we think about closed captioning — both as a text and as a composing practice — in classroom contexts? In what ways might trigger warnings, or other affective forms of descriptive writing, provide broader opportunities for discussion and analysis across discipline? How might a turn to accessibility foster campus interest in social justice and community involvement?



## Disability Studies Initiative Reading Group

Professor Melanie Yergeau

Friday, April 6th, 12:00-1:30pm

Education 437; refreshments provided

In this reading group, we will read and discuss the introduction from Yergeau's latest book, *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness* with the author. Join us for a rich discussion about disability rhetoric and disability studies. The reading is available here: [https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-0-8223-7020-8\\_601.pdf](https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-0-8223-7020-8_601.pdf)

### Book Description:

In *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness* Melanie Yergeau defines neurodivergence as an identity—neuroqueerness—rather than an impairment. Using a queer theory framework, Yergeau notes the stereotypes that deny autistic people their humanity and the chance to define themselves while also challenging cognitive studies scholarship and its reification of the neurological passivity of autistics. She also critiques early intensive behavioral interventions—which have much in common with gay conversion therapy—and questions the ableist privileging of intentionality and diplomacy in rhetorical traditions. Using storying as her method, she presents an alternative view of autistic rhetoricity by foregrounding the cunning rhetorical abilities of autistics and by framing autism as a narrative condition wherein autistics are the best-equipped people to define their experience. Contending that autism represents a

queer way of being that simultaneously embraces and rejects the rhetorical, Yergeau shows how autistic people queer the lines of rhetoric, humanity, and agency. In so doing, she demonstrates how an autistic rhetoric requires the reconceptualization of rhetoric's very essence.



#### About Dr. Yergeau:

Melanie Yergeau is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Michigan. Her book, *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness*, was published by Duke University Press in 2017. Her work can also be found in the *Journal of Social Philosophy*, *College English*, *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *Computers and Composition*, and *Kairos*. Active in the neurodiversity movement, for many years she served on the boards of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) as well as the Autism National Committee (AutCom). Learn more at <http://kuiama.net>.

To request disability access for these events, such as an ASL interpreter, please contact the DRC at 520-621-3268, or visit the website: <https://drc.arizona.edu>. The presenter also welcomes input on how she can make her workshop accessible

to you and can be contacted at [myergeau@umich.edu](mailto:myergeau@umich.edu).

If you have any questions about either event, please contact the organizers: Sue Kroeger ([suek@email.arizona.edu](mailto:suek@email.arizona.edu)) and Dev Bose ([bose@email.arizona.edu](mailto:bose@email.arizona.edu)).

**Seating capacity is limited at both events, especially for the sake of accessibility. RSVP to one or both by April 2 by accessing the links below:**

- [RSVP for Workshop: goo.gl/YPTvEr](https://goo.gl/YPTvEr)
- [RSVP for Reading Group: goo.gl/ss95bj](https://goo.gl/ss95bj)

Both events are sponsored by the Writing Program Difference and Inequality Committee AND

