

### Connecting to the GEDI Community:

One of the first tasks of an aspiring GEDI knight is to set up a blog. You have some options here. Consider the following and then act accordingly.

- 1) Get a student account through Reclaim Hosting (<https://reclaimhosting.com/>). Reclaim is a full-service web host geared specifically for academic communities. All of my websites are there, including the main course website. A student / individual plan costs \$30 / year (<https://reclaimhosting.com/shared-hosting/>)  
This is a great option for grad students and future faculty because you get complete control over your digital portfolio. You also get free ID protection and great support from real people. You may also have as many sites (and sub-domains) as you want.  
Reclaim also offers over 100 applications in addition to WordPress. So if you're interested in Omeka, Drupal, Pressbooks, Scalar – whatever, this is the hosting service for you!  
If you just want WordPress you will need to whizz through (ignore) lots of the bells and whistles of your control panel (C panel). From the C panel you want to "install Wordpress" and then choose a URL for your blog. Once you get your blog set up you can work on it without using the C panel.
- 2) Create a self-hosted blog (website) on WordPress.com: <https://wordpress.com/start/plans>. The basic plan is FREE. You will have a WordPress.com subdomain, access to community forums, and the choice of many free themes / templates. The site is yours "forever." For \$48/year you get your own domain name and access to email and live chat support.
- 3) Create a blog (website) on VT's WordPress installation. It is free, but you will not "own" the URL for your site and you will have to use the WordPress.com community forums for "help." Follow the directions here: <http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/>. This link can help you customize your blog and familiarize yourself with VT's wordpress site, but the information is dated and may not be super helpful:  
<https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/support/documentation/>

- ⇒ **As soon as you have a blog, please submit the URL using the form on the [website](#) (“GEDI Network” on the main menu)**
- ⇒ **We will add it to the mother blog for the course (Do this no later than 5pm Friday, January 25.)**
- ⇒ Minor things that will make a major difference:
  1. Choose a user name on WordPress that is close to your real name, i.e. A. Nelson **not** HappyHokie99
  2. Do not delete “The Journey Begins” post (but do feel free to modify it so that you introduce yourself.)
  3. On the dashboard, choose “settings” and “discussion”. You may keep the boxes checked that ask for a user to provide an email (this will not display when the comment is published) but **please, please, please make sure these two boxes are NOT checked: 1) “Users must be registered and logged in to comment” (under “other comment settings”); and 2) “a comment is held for moderation” (under “email me whenever”)** You will probably want to adjust these settings at the end of the semester.)
  4. Check the main course website to confirm that your blog has been syndicated. Your blog’s title will appear on the “contributors” page. It may take up to 24 hours for this to happen, so please be patient. After you submit your first post it will show up in the “current posts” section of the site.
  5. If you have trouble syndicating your blog, please double check the steps above. If you deleted “the Journey Begins” post, create a new one.
  6. If you are still having trouble, please contact Arash or Sara.

## **Blogging Basics**

You are required to post at least five times over the course of the semester, and you are required to comment on another person’s blog at least three times per week (27 times over the course of the semester). There are nine opportunities to blog (so you may skip four), but you must still comment every week. You may, of course post and comment more frequently.

There is no assigned length or format for your blogging. You may engage or connect to the seminar topic and readings for the week in whatever way works best for you. You may use and include texts, images, video and audio files in your posts. Hyperlinking in the blog format simplifies the “citation” process, so take

advantage of that to incorporate a range of materials and perspectives into your posts.

The main goal here is to engage the course material thoughtfully and substantively, and to develop your understanding of contemporary pedagogy, particularly as it relates to your experiences and goals as a teacher.

### **Commenting Basics**

Reading and responding to your classmates' blog posts gives you the opportunity to ask questions about a particular topic, elaborate on a point made in the blog post, relate the material in your own post (or another student's) to the post you're commenting on, and generally reflect on how the post helps you understand the material. Responding to comments on your own posts is a terrific idea.

Professionalism and the Principles of Community will guide our engagement with each other in the web-based components of the course as well as in our class meetings.

### **Hybrid Course Basics**

Your individual blogs are syndicated to the main course blog, aka "The Mother Blog" (<https://amynelson.net/gedis19/>) This means that your weekly post will be "fed" to this site, which will serve as the gateway to our course. We will talk about our work on the blog during our F2F sessions. We will also foreground the posts the class finds most compelling as "hot topics" on the website. Twitter (especially the hashtag #gedivt) provides us with another medium through which we can build and sustain the course network.

### **One Week in the Life of the GEDI network**

In order for this to work, we will need to stay on the following schedule:

Sundays before midnight — individual blog posts due.

Monday morning — GEDI Masters will put the posts in a weekly category

Monday afternoon-Wednesday — read and comment on at least three blog posts; respond to comments on your post.

Wednesday 6 pm — comments on individual blog posts due.

Wednesdays — 6-9pm F2F meeting with the whole community.

Thursday — “Hot Topics” tagged on main website. Start thinking about next topic.

Anytime 24/7: Check out the Twitter feed. Feed the hashtag #gedivt. Feel the force.

### Your Audience

Is the class (and me and the seminar facilitators). But it also includes EVERYONE. All the time (because it's on the World Wide Web). So, put your best, most accomplished, mature and professional foot forward. Don't put anything on line that you wouldn't want your grandmother or Stephen Colbert to read. And if you do make a mistake, or realize something is not quite right with what you posted, please fix it. One of the many beauties of the blog is that it's easy to touch-up and re-edit a post.

### Evaluation

Individual blog posts and comments are not graded, but will be considered holistically as evidence of your general commitment to the course and its content.