

# SEAN ZDENEK

University of Delaware

Department of English

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Updated: Fall 2021

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

<b>Director of Graduate Studies</b> Department of English, University of Delaware	Jun 2020-
<b>Associate Professor of Professional and Technical Writing</b> Department of English, University of Delaware	2017-
<b>Director of Graduate Studies</b> Technical Communication & Rhetoric, Department of English, Texas Tech University	2014-15
<b>Associate Director of Graduate Studies</b> Technical Communication & Rhetoric, Department of English, Texas Tech University	2013-14
<b>Associate Professor of Technical Communication and Rhetoric</b> Department of English, Texas Tech University	2009-17
<b>Assistant Professor of Technical Communication &amp; Rhetoric</b> Department of English, Texas Tech University. 2003–2009. Tenured: 2009	2003-09
<b>Assistant Professor of Electronic Media</b> Department of Communication. The University of Texas, San Antonio	2001-03

## EDUCATION

<b>PhD, Rhetoric</b> <i>Carnegie Mellon University</i> Department of English Dissertation: Passing for Human: Rhetoric, Software Agency, and Communicatively Competent Machines	2001
<b>MA, Rhetoric and Teaching Writing</b> <i>California State University, Stanislaus</i> Department of English Thesis: The Costs of Being Certain: Rhetoric in Software Agent Design	1999
<b>BA, English</b> <i>University of California, Berkeley</i> Department of English Summa Cum Laude (major) Magna Cum Laude (general scholarship) Honors Thesis Phi Beta Kappa	1994

## PUBLICATIONS

### BOOK

2015. *Reading Sounds: Closed-Captioned Media and Popular Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.  
**Supplemental website:** <http://ReadingSounds.net>.

**Winner:** 2017 Best Book in Technical or Scientific Communication, Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). National Council of Teachers of English.

### EDITED JOURNAL ISSUE

2018. Reimagining Disability and Accessibility in Technical and Professional Communication. Guest editor.  
*Communication Design Quarterly* 6(4).

### JOURNAL ARTICLES

2020. Transforming Access and Inclusion in Composition Studies and Technical Communication. *College English* 82(5), 536-44.

2018. Guest Editor's Introduction: Reimagining Disability and Accessibility in Technical and Professional Communication. *Communication Design Quarterly* 6(4), 4-11.

2018. Designing Captions: Disruptive Experiments with Typography, Color, Icons, and Effects. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* 23(1). <http://technorhetoric.net/23.1/topoi/zdenek/index.html>

2011. Which Sounds Are Significant? Towards a Rhetoric of Closed Captioning. *Disability Studies Quarterly* 31(3). <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1667/1604>

2009. Accessible Podcasting: College Students on the Margins in the New Media Classroom. *Computers & Composition Online*. [http://cconlinejournal.org/zdenek\\_Word\\_version\\_COnline.pdf](http://cconlinejournal.org/zdenek_Word_version_COnline.pdf)

2009. Charting a Course Between Methodological Formalism and Eclecticism: Pedagogical Tensions in Three Rhetorical Analysis Textbooks. *The Review of Communication* 9(2), 188-211.

2007. "Just Roll Your Mouse Over Me": Designing Virtual Women for Customer Service on the Web. *Technical Communication Quarterly* 16(4), 397-430.

2004. Demonstrating a Web Design Technique in a Distance Learning Environment. *Communication Teacher* 18(1), 33-35.

Reprinted in Lucas, S. E., ed. *Selections from the Communication Teacher, 2002-2005*. Instructor supplement to *The Art of Public Speaking*. 9th Ed. McGraw-Hill, 2007.

2003. Artificial Intelligence as a Discursive Practice: The Case of Embodied Software Agent Systems. *AI & Society* 17(3/4), 340-363.

2001. Passing Loebner's Turing Test: A Case of Conflicting Discourse Functions. *Minds & Machines: Journal for Artificial Intelligence, Philosophy, and Cognitive Science* 11(1), 53-76.

Reprinted in J. Moor, ed. *The Turing Test: The Elusive Standard of Artificial Intelligence* (pp. 121-144). Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003.

1999. Rising Up from the MUD: Inscribing Gender in Software Design. *Discourse & Society* 10(3), 379-409.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

2021. Second author with Bose, Dev, Prairie Markussen, and Angelia Giannone. Sound and Access: Attuned to Disability in the Writing Classroom. In K. D. Stedman, C. S. Danforth, and M. J. Faris (eds) *Tuning into Soundwriting*. enculturation/Intermezzo Series. <http://intermezzo.enculturation.net/14-stedman-et-al/bose.html>

2011. Personal Reflections on the Educational Potential and Future of Closed Captioning on the Web. In J. Aitken, J. Pedego Fairley, and J. K. Carlson (eds) *Communication Technology for Students in Special Education or Gifted Programs* (pp. 221-229). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

2008. Muted Voices: Cochlear Implants, News Discourse, and the Public Fascination with Curing Deafness. In B. Johnstone & C. Eisenhart (eds) *Rhetoric in Detail: Discourse Analytic Approaches to Rhetorical Talk and Text* (pp. 147-171). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

2008. First author with Barbara Johnstone. Studying Style and Legitimation: Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. In B. Johnstone & C. Eisenhart (eds) *Rhetoric in Detail: Discourse Analytic Approach to Rhetorical Talk and Text* (pp. 25-31). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

2002. Scripting Sylvie: Language, Gender, and Humanness in Public Discourse About Software Agents. In S. Benor, M. Rose, D. Sharma, J. Sweetland, Q. Zhang (eds) *Gendered Practices in Language* (pp. 255-273). Stanford, CA: CSLI Press.

## SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTBOOK

2020. *The Writer's Help Guide to Professional Writing*. A supplemental guide to *Writer's Help 3.0* by S. Bernhardt and N. Sommers. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's. Approximately 17k words. <https://tinyurl.com/guide-to-prof-writing>

## INTERVIEWS

2019. Interviewed by Danforth, Courtney (2019). *KairosCast*. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* 23(2). <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/23.2/interviews/kcast/index.html>

2017. Interviewed by Zobel, Greg. Captioning Hypnotoad—A Quest That Helped Define a Field: An Interview with Sean Zdenek. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy* 22(1), 2017. <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/22.1/interviews/zobel/index.html>

2016. Interviewed by Linder, Katie (March 10). *Research in Action Podcast*. Oregon State University. Podcast. <https://tinyurl.com/research-in-action-podcast>

## MAGAZINE/BLOG/OTHER

2016. Crippling Closed Captioning: Experiments with Type, Icons, and Dynamic Effects. *Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative*. Blog Carnival 9. <https://tinyurl.com/drc-carnival-2016>

2014. More Than Mere Transcription: Closed Captioning as an Artful Practice. *User Experience Magazine* 14.1. Print and online. <http://uxpamagazine.org/more-than-mere-transcription/>

2007. Frozen Ecstasy: Visualizing Hearing in Marketing Materials for Cochlear Implants. *Proceedings of the 25th ACM International Conference on Design of Communication (SIGDOC '07)*. El Paso, TX, 22-24 October. 241-248.

## BOOK REVIEWS

2006. Review of R. Wodak & P. Chilton (eds) *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis*. *Language in Society* 35(4), 613-616.

2000. Review of J. J. O'Donnell, *Avatars of the Word: From Papyrus to Cyberspace. Computers and Society* 30(1), 29-31.

1998. Review of A. G. Gross & W. M. Keith (eds) *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science. Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 12(4), 495-499.

## TEACHING

### UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Advanced Composition (senior level)  
Business Writing (junior level, non-majors)  
Capstone: Professional Issues in Technical Communication  
Developing Instructional Materials  
Freshman Composition  
Information Design  
Professional Presentation  
Professional Report Writing  
Rhetorical criticism  
Style in Technical Writing  
Technical Writing (senior level, STEM majors)  
Writers Workshop (pre-freshman level)  
Special topics courses  
    Getting Things Done: Writing & Designing for the User Experience (UD, 2018, 2020)  
    Web Access for All (UD, 2018)  
    Rhetorical Criticism (TTU, 2006 – proposed & approved as new course in 2007)  
    Gender, Communication & Technology (UTSA, 2003)  
    The Cyberpunk Movement (CMU, 2000)

### GRADUATE COURSES

Document Design  
Foundations of Technical Communication  
Introduction to Graduate Studies in English  
Rhetorical Criticism  
Seminar in Disability Studies (“Designing Inclusive Futures” 2020)  
Writing for Publication (service course with STEM focus)  
Special topics courses  
    Accessible Rhetoric: Web Accessibility & Disability Studies (TTU, 2007-2017)  
    Artificial Intelligence, Gender, and Discourse Studies (TTU, 2003)  
    Digital Rhetorics: Composing and Inclusive Design (UD, 2019)  
    Sonic Literacies: Rhetorics of Sound (TTU, 2011)

### INDEPENDENT STUDIES (TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY)

Rhetoric and Music. Maria Kingsbury. PhD student. Summer 2014.  
Web Accessibility for Web Developers. Greg Gamel. MATC student. Fall 2012.  
On Kenneth Burke. Jeannie Bennett. PhD student. Fall 2011.  
The Rhetoric of Assistive Technology. Christopher Broyles. PhD student. Summer 2011.

### PHD DISSERTATION COMMITTEES

#### CHAIR – PHD DISSERTATION COMMITTEES (TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY)

Danielle Saad, PhD 2016.  
The other Muslimah: Online counter narratives of Muslim women in alternate web spaces.

Steve Morrison, PhD 2016.

The wise and the wicked: Narrative foundations of political identity in partisan media.

Kevin Van Winkle, PhD 2016.

Advancing a critical framework for the identification and analysis of visual euphemism in technical communication visuals

Melissa Helquist, PhD 2015.

Eye, ear, hand: Multimodal literacy practices of blind adults.

**Winner:** 2014-15 TTU TCR Dissertation Award. TCR Alumni award committee.

Ashlynn Reynolds-Dyk, PhD 2015.

Is this normal? Why are you staring? Real freak shows run over at the intersection: A multimodal approach to rhetorical analysis of disability and reality TV.

Diane Allen, PhD 2011.

Now I can hear the fish swim: The rhetorical construction of cochlear implant technology.

Glenn Dayley, PhD 2011.

American dreams: Ideograph and metaphor on the campaign trail.

Todd Rasberry, PhD 2011.

No magic, just rhetoric: Understanding major gift fundraising as a rhetorical genre.

Emil Towner, PhD 2010.

Placing (and shaping) genocide on the public record: A rhetorical analysis of apologetic exchanges in Rwanda's gacaca trials.

#### MEMBER – PHD DISSERTATION COMMITTEES (TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY)

Maria Kingsbury, PhD 2018

Tim Elliott, PhD 2018

Susan Rauch, PhD 2016

Letitia Harding, PhD 2013

Alec Hosterman, PhD 2013

Debra Burleson, PhD 2012

Deborah Fontaine, PhD 2012

Cam Stone, PhD 2012 (Mass Comm)

Lora Arduser, PhD 2011

Christiana Christofides, PhD 2011

Jen Osborne, PhD 2011

Chris Ryan, PhD 2011

Gregory Zobel, PhD 2011

Cynthia McPherson, PhD 2010

Scott Mogull, PhD 2010

Ritu Raju, PhD 2010

Ryan Hoover, PhD 2009

Nicole St. Germaine-Madison, PhD 2007

Dave Yeats, PhD 2006

#### MEMBER – PHD DISSERTATION COMMITTEES (UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE)

Carolyne King, PhD 2019

Janel Atlas, PhD 2020

## OUTSIDE MEMBER – PHD DISSERTATION COMMITTEES

Chad Iwertz, PhD 2019, Ohio State University

## HONORS AND AWARDS

Winner: 2017 Best Book in Technical or Scientific Communication, Conference on College Composition and Communication. National Council of Teachers of English.

Humanities Center Faculty Fellow. Texas Tech University. 2016. *Funded project* (\$5,000 course release): Blending Form and Content: Experiments with Animated Closed Captioning.

Nominated for The Chancellor's Council Distinguished Teaching Award. Texas Tech University, 2011.

Giant Eagle Dissertation Fellowship. Awarded annually to one Ph.D. student in Rhetoric at Carnegie Mellon University, 2000-1.

Phi Kappa Phi, Carnegie Mellon chapter, 2000.

National Science Foundation Travel Grants, 1998-9.

Summa Cum Laude in English. Magna Cum Laude in General Scholarship. University of California, Berkeley, 1994.

Phi Beta Kappa, University of California, Berkeley chapter, 1994.

H. Hill Scholarship. Department of English. University of California, Berkeley, 1994.

Wheeler Scholarship. University of California, Berkeley, 1993.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

### UNIVERSITY SERVICE

#### UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

Director of Graduate Studies, Department of English, 2020-present

Member, Graduate Studies Committee, Department of English, 2018-20

Member, Faculty Senate, College of Arts & Sciences, 2018-20

Member, Promotion & Tenure Sub-Committee, College of Arts & Sciences, 2018-20

Member, UD Web Accessibility Faculty Sub-Committee, 2018

Member, Learning Community to test Ally (accessibility checker for Canvas), 2018

Member, Mary Curtis Straughn Excellence in Higher Ed Disability Advocacy Award Committee, 2017

#### TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Member, Faculty Development Leave Committee (university-wide), 2016-17

Member, Graduate Studies Committee, 2011-15

Member, MATC Portfolio Committee, 2009-10, 2013-14, 2016

Member, Faculty Recruitment Committee, 2007-9, 2016-17

Member, TCR Recruitment Committee, 2011-12

Member, Faculty Awards Committee, 2006-7

Member, Faculty Incentive Grant Review Panel (TLTC), 2005-6

Member, Faculty Merit Committee, 2004-6

Member, MATC Qualifying Exam Committee, F2003, F2004

Member, Technology Committee, 2004-6

## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, SAN ANTONIO

Chair, Departmental Faculty Advisory Committee, 2002-3  
Member, Academic Policy & Curriculum Committee, 2002-3  
Member, Recruitment and Admissions Sub-Committee, 2002  
Reviewer, Web for Faculty Demo System, 2002  
Member, Honors & Scholarship Committee, 2001-2  
Member, Two hiring committees. Intercultural communication, 2001-2

## NATIONAL SERVICE

Member. Editorial Board. *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, and Pedagogy*. 2020-present.

Member. Editorial Board. *Communication Design Quarterly*. 2018-present.

Member. 2018 CCCC Technical and Scientific Communication Awards Selection Committee.

Member. Panel of Experts/Stakeholders working in consultation with the CCCC Committee for Best Practices in Online Writing Instruction (OWI). 2011-12.

Area Chair. Rhetoric and Technical Communication. Southwest Texas Popular Culture and American Culture Association. 2012-2013.

Member. Program Committee. *SIGDOC* 2007, 2009.

## ACCESSIBILITY CONSULTING

Accessibility Editor. *Journal for Undergraduate Multimedia Project (JUMP+)*. 2019-2021.

Accessibility Editor. *Connexions in International Professional Communication & Design* Interactive eBook Series. 2019-20.

Accessibility Chair. Special Interest Group on Design of Communication (SIGDOC). 2019-2020.

Consultant. "The Natural Word." Anthony Cheung. Music composer. 2019. Honorarium: \$1000.  
<https://acheungmusic.com/filter/12-musicians/The-Natural-Word-2019>

## INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Senior Technical Writer and Web Designer. Software Agents Group. Robotics Institute. Carnegie Mellon University, 1999 (Feb-Dec).

Content Developer and Web Designer. Ph.D. in Rhetoric website. Carnegie Mellon University, 1999.

## AD HOC REVIEWER

Canadian Journal of Disability Studies, CHI 2006 & 2008, College English, Composition Forum, Convergence, IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication, Journal of Business and Technical Communication, Kairos, Rhetoric Review, SIGDOC, Technical Communication, Technical Communication Quarterly, Written Communication.

## PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

### INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

*Invited lecture and captioning workshop.* "Access Remade: Designing, Disrupting, and Transforming Inclusive Media." Conversations in Digital Accessibilities. Emory University. Center for Digital Scholarship. Atlanta, GA. 27-28 February 2020.

*75-minute workshop.* Creating More Inclusive Public Websites for our Programs and Institutions. Co-led with Mary DeNora and Sushil Oswal. Council for Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication (CPTSC). West Chester, PA. 10 October 2019.

*2-hour workshop.* Designing and Delivering Accessible Presentations. Co-led with Sushil Oswal. Special Interest Group on Design of Communication (SIGDOC). Portland, OR. 4 October 2019.

*Keynote.* Composing Digital Access: Editing Image Descriptions, Designing Captions, and Visualizing Reading Speed. 2018 CCCC Summer Conference. Virginia Commonwealth University. Richmond, VA. 25 May 2018.

*Invited panelist.* Power and Access. Third Annual Lewis College of Human Sciences Roundtable. Illinois Institute of Technology. Chicago. 12 October 2017.

*Keynote.* Caption Studies: Seven Arguments for How Captions Make Meaning. Caption Studies Conference. Online. 1 August 2016. <http://captionstudies.wou.edu/conference-schedule/>

*Webinar panelist.* Moving Beyond Transcription in Closed Captioning. Webinar: Bringing Digital and Accessibility Together: What We Can Learn From Other Sectors. Hosted by Mphasis. 20-minute talk. 19 May 2016.

*Featured webinar speaker.* The Future of Closed Captioning in Higher Education. Webinar hosted by 3Play Media. 12 May 2016. 200+ attendees. 45-minute talk followed by audience questions. <http://www.3playmedia.com/resources/webinars/future-cc-05-12-2016/>

*Invited seminar participant.* Access/ibility in Digital Publishing. 2015 Summer Seminar. West Virginia University. Morgantown, WV. 7-10 July 2015.

*Invited lecture.* Reading Sounds: Accessing Popular Culture Through the Lens of Closed-Captioned Media. Arts Lecture Series. Indiana University South Bend. 26 March 2014.

*Invited lecture and captioning workshop.* Which Sounds Are Significant? Towards a Rhetoric of Closed Captioning. The Ohio State University. 20 February 2012. Sponsored by OSU's Literacy Studies Program, The Digital Media Studies Program, The Digital Union, and The Disability Studies Program.

### DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY PRESENTATIONS

*Fellowship research presentation.* Designing Captions: Disruptive Experiments with Typography, Color, Icons, Loops, and Effects. The Humanities Center at Texas Tech University. 20 February 2017.

*May Seminar research presentation.* Topic varies depending on my research interests. Department of English. Texas Tech University. 2005-2015.

*Colloquium presentation.* Bearing Witness to a Miracle: Cochlear Implants, News Discourse, and the Public Fascination with Curing Deafness. Fall Colloquium. Department of English. Texas Tech University. 30 November 2005.



*Colloquium presentation.* Virtual Faces, Interfaceless Interfaces, and the Rhetoric of Designing Digital Beauties. Fall Colloquium. Department of English. Texas Tech University. 3 November 2004.

#### ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (SINCE 2010)

Research Methods for Caption Studies: Visualization Techniques, Big Data Methods, and Rhetorical Approaches. Broadcast Education Association (BEA) conference. Las Vegas, Nevada. 10 April 2018.

Engaging Disability and Accessibility in Class Assignments: Integrating Disability Studies in the Fabric of Composition and Technical Communication Curricula. Participant. Pre-Conference half-day workshop. Conference on College Composition and Communication. Portland, Oregon. 15 March 2017.

Humanizing Closed Captioning: How captions transform the meaning and experience of the text. Conference on College Composition and Communication. Tampa, Florida. 18-21 March 2015. Sponsored panel of the CCCC's Disability Rhetoric Standing Group.

Humanizing Closed Captioning and Assistive Technology. Machine Rhetorics Supersession. 16<sup>th</sup> Biennial Rhetoric Society of America Conference. San Antonio, Texas. 22-26 May 2014.

Visualizing Non-Speech Sounds in Closed Captioning. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Rhetoric and Technical Communication Area. Albuquerque, NM. 13-17 February 2013.

Sonic Allusions, Captioned Silences, and Dramatic Irony in Closed Captioning. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Rhetoric and Technical Communication Area. Albuquerque, NM. 8-11 February 2012.

The Anatomy of a Sound Description: A Study of Non-Speech Information (NSI) in Closed Captioned Films. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Technical Communication Area. San Antonio, TX. 20-23 April 2011.

An Ethic of Ability: Hearing Culture and Technical Communication. Annual Meeting of the SW/TX Popular Culture and American Culture Associations. Technical Communication Area. Albuquerque, NM. 10-13 February 2010.