

## **“We’re Out of Control!” INTD 105, TTh 3:25 – 4:40, Bailey 10C**

Dr. Gregg Hartvigsen, Office in Bailey 4

Office hours = MWF 1:30 – 2:30, TTh 2:15- 3:15, and by appointment

- Required Texts:
1. Kevin Kelly. 1994. Out of Control.
  2. Strunk and White’s Elements of Style.

**Goal #1 Content (fun).** I think this stuff is fun (and do some of this as my research). I really hope you learn something about the interface between technology and biology. The course description best sums this up:

Machines are becoming more life-like while life is becoming increasingly engineered. In the future life and machine will join together. We will explore this transition in biology, machines, and in human social and economic systems. Our journey will lead us through complexity theory, robotics, art, virtual reality, neural networks, artificial intelligence, artificial evolution, genetic engineering, and the restoration of natural ecosystems. Our exploration also will involve adventures on the web and require us to make predictions as broad as the future of human civilization and the likely persistence of life on Earth.

**Goal #2 Writing (skill building).** I like writing. It’s fun and you can really only enjoy it as you get better at it. It’s like doing a sport – it’s not that much fun usually until you get better. If you’re really good it seems to be a lot more fun. My job is to try to help you get better but that will happen only if you want to get better. Those who want to get better will get better grades. Those jumping through this hoop will do OK, at best. Your attitude toward this course is your choice. I don’t know who you were (you don’t know who I was!). You are a new person. Who will you be?

One thing I’ve learned is that any idea might be really great but they’re nothing until put in writing. If someone else takes your idea and writes it up, well, that’s lousy, but most likely they’ll be the ones who get the credit. In your life you should freely spawn ideas and write up the really important ones for posterity.

All INTD 105 courses share the following “learning outcomes”:

1. The ability to read significant texts carefully and critically, recognizing and responding to argumentative positions.
2. The ability to write sustained, coherent and persuasive arguments on significant issues that arise from the content at hand.
3. The ability to write clearly, following the conventions of Standard English.

There will be six writing assignments. One will be a full revision of the first paper. Another will be a final presentation (another type of writing assignment) given by groups using PowerPoint. There also will be various in-class writing exercises. Papers are to be three pages in length, double-spaced, and printed using a computer (preferably using a word-processing program like Word). You are expected to adhere to college’s Writing Guidelines (see <http://writingguide.geneseo.edu/>). The breaking of rules by the author of your text is not an excuse for you to do so.

You are expected to participate in class and get graded on it. That’s the experience. Don’t miss out.

## Grading

Paper #1 and re-write (#2)	10%
Papers #3, #4, #5	60%
Presentation (draft + final version)	20%
Contributions to discussions	10%

Your papers will be evaluated based on the attached rubric. Note that you have to hand in a draft (six sample slides) of your final presentation in addition to the final version (check dates!). I will give you feedback on these to ensure that you are on the right track. Do not use animations or gross colors – white text on a dark blue background works best.

Detailed schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
T, 8/27	Introduction		
Th, 8/29	Library visit		
T, 9/3	Tackling this book	Chapters 1-2 (C1 & C2)	
Th, 9/5	Good vs. bad writing	Strunk & White	
T, 9/10	Machines with attitudes	C3	
Th, 9/12	Assembling complexity	C4	Paper #1
T, 9/17	Coevolution	C5	
Th, 9/19	Natural flux	C6	
T, 9/24	Emergence of control	C7	
Th, 9/26	Closed systems	C8	Paper #2 (rewrite of #1)
T, 10/1	Pop goes the biosphere	C9	
Th, 10/3	Industrial ecology	C10	
T, 10/8	Network economics	C11	
Th, 10/10	E-money	C12	Paper #3
T, 10/15, no class	Fall break		
Th, 10/17	God games	C13	
T, 10/22	In the library of form	C14	
Th, 10/24	Artificial evolution	C15	
T, 10/29	The future of control	C16	
Th, 10/31	An open universe	C17	Paper #4
T, 11/5	The structure of organized change	C18	
Th, 11/7	Intro to PowerPoint		
T, 11/12	Postdarwinism	C19	
Th, 11/13	The butterfly sleeps	C20	Paper #5
T, 11/19	Rising flow	C21	
Th, 11/21	Prediction machinery	C22	PowerPoint slide sample
T, 11/26	Wholes, holes, and spaces	C23	
Th, 11/28, no class	Thanksgiving break		
T, 12/3	Discussion of presentations		
Th, 12/5	The nine laws of God	C24	Final presentation
Th, 12/12	Final Symposium (3:30 – 6:30)		