*Multimodal Composition: a Critical Sourcebook* ed. Claire Lutkewitte

1. “An introduction to Multimodal Composition Theory and Practice”

2. “NCTE Position Statement on Multimodal Literacies”

3. “Contending with Terms: ‘Multimodal’ and ‘Multimedia’ in the Academic and Public Spheres” (Lauer)

4. “Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key” (Yancey)

Questions:

1. What is the definition of “traditional composition” as talked about in Lutkewitte’s introduction (pages 5-7, also seen on page 12)? What’s the definition of “multimodal composition,” how does multimodality differ between analogue and digital spaces?
2. Anna Gere’s call for teacher-scholars to delve into “extracurricular” texts with composition students seems to relate to this multimodal pedagogical concept insofar as we’re trying to academically engage students on a level that they participate in outside of the classroom. Multimodality has also been defined as a means to make meaning and understanding. Is multimodality another pedagogical approach to democratizing the classroom, how or how not?

Reading response:

In *Multimodal Composition,* the act of composing in a multimodal way is often discussed as an action that our students engage in frequently, digitally, and outside of the classroom. To me this means that the majority of our students’ compositional experience is defined as extracurricular, digital, informally social, and financially dependent (i.e. the digital divide). To me this idea seems to make the assumption that only digital composition is multimodal and that if our students’ can’t afford digital technology they are then entering FYC at a compositional/ communicative deficit. I’m sure that I am approaching this notion with an incredibly reductionist perspective, but I am, nevertheless concerned about how to bridge the digital divide in a heavily multimodal (read: digitally multimodal) classroom. In other words, our students’ experiences with composing in a multimodal manner is dependent on their family’s socioeconomic status (can they afford smart phones, a family computer, and Internet provider?), which then affects the rate at which they spend time composing (I recognize this is an assumption I’m making), therefore, they risk being alienated in digital classrooms and spaces. So how do we create an inclusive, yet, digital space for a multimodal classroom? As instructors we have a responsibility to our students insofar as, a responsibility to make sure we’re creating a classroom space that is as level of a playing field as we can; thus, I am concerned that this pedagogical tool can (and I’m sure has) isolated students that fall on the disadvantaged side of the digital divide. I realize that multimodality has it’s affordances (that I, for one, support and attempt to utilize in my own classrooms) but I’m concerned that I may be isolating student-learners by assuming that there is a collective understanding of digital technologies as well as the communicative and diverse affordances digital multimodality has to offer.