ENGL 946/HIST 946/MODL946: Interdisciplinary Reading Seminar in Digital Humanities

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University of Nebraska
Fall 2014

Thursday 2:00-3:50 638 Oldfather Hall

Office Hours:
Mondays and Wednesdays 1-3
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Description:

Digital Humanities is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scholarly activity that attempts to bring digital technology into useful dialogue with the humanities disciplines (philosophy, history, religion, law, ancient and modern languages, literature, and art). Digital humanities as a practice centers on the investigation, analysis, synthesis, and presentation of knowledge using computational media. It studies how digital media affect the disciplines, as well as how knowledge is constructed, maintained, processed, understood, and communicated. Digital humanists create archival collections, databases, and digitized objects. They use computational methods to analyze humanities materials in digital form and address scholarly questions about these sources. They also often present their scholarship only in digital formats, making it accessible electronically and, more important, able to be transmuted, multiplied, revised, and reconstituted. Audiences and users, these scholars believe, may do different operations on the same materials resulting in multivalent outcomes. Digital humanities scholars raise methodological questions, examine narrative theories, undertake computational programming, conduct collaborative projects, and create digital media productions. Digital humanities teaching often proceeds through praxis, in which students immerse themselves in a disciplinary-based research question and produce a tool, model, project, narrative, or representation. This graduate readings course surveys the work of digital humanities scholarship, as well as the various theoretical and methodological reflections that have arisen in the field over the last few decades. We will also consider the questions raised by technology broadly within historical, cultural, and philosophical contexts. Students will read leading critical works in the history of computing, media studies, science and technology studies, and digital humanities, as well as examine some of the specific artifacts of digital humanities work past and present. Throughout we will explore some of the newest voices in these ongoing discussions and examine the works of leading digital humanities scholars.

Assignments:

Participation: This course is primarily focused on reading, reflection, and discussion. Students can expect to spend most of their time in this course engaged in the close study of scholarly books, articles, and digital

productions related to a broad range of topics in the digital humanities. Academic freedom of expression is essential to reasoned discourse, learning, and scholarship. Students will be expected at all times to engage in analysis and discussion in an atmosphere of cordiality, respect, integrity, and dignity. Students will be expected to consider complex issues and controversial topics with respect for views that may differ from their own. Participation will be graded on the basis of the number and quality of in class contributions, engagements through discussion threads, and other expected commentary, as well as attendance. Quality of contributions to in class discussions will be evaluated for the sophistication of analysis and evidence of close readings. The highest standards of scholarly debate, respectful discourse, and community will be held in the seminar.

Posts: Students will complete four discussion posts in the course on a set of weekly readings and write four responses to other posts. Posts are meant for students to try out ideas, master the readings and materials, and to demonstrate critical engagement with the major methods and works in the field. These regular, brief writings are an essential aspect of the practice of scholarly engagement. Posts should be 500-1,000 words, responses should be under 500 words.

Essays: There are two individual 3,000 word essays for this course, which ask you to synthesize and critique readings in an informed manner. The specific topics which are of your choosing will likely arise from class discussions, but should focus on critical and theoretical engagement with the main lines of discussion and debate within the field.

First Essay Assignment: Select one of the weekly readings in the course and using both the required and the recommended readings synthesize the main contributions they are making and undertake a critical analysis of the main issues at stake.

Second Essay Assignment: Select three or four digital humanities scholars or working groups (list will be provided) and follow them for three weeks on Twitter (or other social media) or subscribe to their blogs. At least one of the scholars must be working outside the U.S., and publishing in a language other than English. Students should consider selecting a scholar or working group in one of the ADHO identified areas by the Multi-Lingualism and Multi-Culturalism Committee (Russia, Africa, Japan, Brazil . . .) Engage each of these scholars in respectful scholarly discourse through these channels on topics relevant to the course for three weeks. Research the full body of their scholarship both print and digital. Write a comparative analysis of their current research programs.

Grades will be calculated using the following weight:

Posts:	20 %
Essay 1:	20 %
Essay 2:	20 %
Participation:	30 %

Grading Scale

A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	94-96	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63

Late assignments will be marked down one half-letter grade per day that they are overdue. No assignments

will be accepted more than one week late without permission from the instructor. Assignments will not be accepted in email format or as attachments, only as hard copy handed in at class session.

Students should be familiar with and consult the following important resources in the Office of Student Affairs at the University of Nebraska, describing the rights and responsibilities of both students and faculty in the classroom:

1. The Student Code of Conduct-- http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/
2. The Student in the Academic Community--Classroom Rights and Responsibilities http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/community/two.shtml

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Course Readings:

Adams, Henry. The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918)

Ayers, Edward L. "The Pasts and Futures of Digital History," Virginia Center for Digital History, (http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/PastsFutures.html)

--------. "Does Digital Scholarship Have a Future?" EDUCAUSE review, August 2013.

Borgman, Christine. "The Digital Future is Now: A Call to Action for the Humanities," Digital Humanities Quarterly (2009).

Bush, Vannevar. "As We May Think," Atlantic Monthly (July 1945).

Cottom, Tressie McMillan. "'Who the Fuck Do You Think You Are?' Academic Engagement, Microcelebrity and Digital Sociology from the Far Left of the Matrix of Domination," (2012)

Cecire, Natalia. "When Digital Humanities Was in Vogue," Journal of Digital Humanities, 2011

Ethington, Philip J. "Los Angeles and the Problem of Urban Historical Knowledege," American Historical Review (2000). <http://cwis.usc.edu/dept/LAS/history/historylab/LAPUHK/>

Gibson, William. Neuromancer. New York: Penguin, 1984.

Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," Socialist Review (1985).

Koh, Adeline and Roopika Risam, #DHPoco: Postcolonial Digital Humanities, Comics.

Latour, Bruno. <u>An Inquiry in the Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns</u>. Harvard
    University Press, 2014.

Lanier, Jaron. "Digital Maoism: The Hazards of the New Online Collectivism," <u>Edge</u> (May 2006).

--------. <u>You are Not a Gadget: a manifesto.</u> New York: Vintage, 2010.

Licklider, J.C.R. "Man-Computer Symbiosis," <u>IRE Transactions on Human Factors in Electronics</u> (March
    1960).

Lunenfeld et al. "The Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0" (UCLA, 2009).

Mahoney, Timothy R. "Gilded Age Plains City: Spatial Narratives," Center for Digital Research in the
    Humanities (2009).
    (http://gildedage.unl.edu/narrative/topics.php?q=theory)

Manovich, Lev. <u>Software Takes Command.</u> New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

Michel, Jean-Baptiste et al. "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," <u>Science</u>
    Vol. 331 (14 January 2011).

McCarty, Willard. "Humanities Computing," <u>Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science</u> (2003).

McLuhan, Marshall. <u>Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man</u>. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1964.

Moretti, Franco. <u>Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History.</u> Verso, 2007.

Murray, Janet. <u>Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interaction Design as a Cultural Practice</u>. Cambridge:
    MIT Press, 2011.

Ramsay, Stephen. An Algorithmic Criticism," <u>Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism.</u>
    University of Illinois Press, 2011.

Staley, David. "Historical Visualizations," in <u>Journal of the Association for History and Computing</u> Vol.
    3 No. 3 (November 2000)

Thomas, William G. III, and Edward L. Ayers, "The Differences Slavery Made: Two Communities in the
    American Civil War," American Historical Review, December 2003.
    (http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/AHR/)

Turing, A. M. "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," <u>Mind</u> 49 (1950).

Turkle, Sherry. "Constructions and Reconstructions of the Self in Virtual Reality," <u>Mind, Culture, and</u>
    <u>Activity</u> Vol. 1, No. 3 (Summer 1994).

White, Richard. "What is Spatial History?" (working paper, Spatial History Project, 2010)
    (http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29)

Unsworth, John. "What is Humanities Computing and What is Not?" (2002)

Zittrain, Jonathan. <u>The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It.</u> New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Course Schedule:

August 28, 2014
Week 1:   Introduction--What is Digital Humanities

Readings: John Unsworth, "What is Humanities Computing and What is Not?" (2002)
               Willard McCarty, "Humanities Computing" (2003)
               Lunenfeld et al., "The Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0" (2009)

        additional sources:
        Schreibman, Susan, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth, <u>A Companion to Digital Humanities.</u>
               (Blackwell Publishing, 2004). Selections online.
        Gold, Matthew, ed. <u>Debates in the Digital Humanities</u> (University of Minnesota Press, 2012).
               Selections online.

September 4, 2014
Week 2:   Early Visions
Readings: Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think," <u>Atlantic Monthly</u> (1945)
               J.C.R. Licklider, "Man-Computer Symbiosis," (1960)
               Sherry Turkle, "Constructions and Reconstructions of the Self in Virtual Reality," (1994)
               Tim Berners-Lee, <u>Weaving the Web</u>, (1999)

        additional sources:
        Tim Wu, <u>The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires</u> (New York: Knopf, 2010)
        Martin Davis, <u>The University Computer: The Road from Leibniz to Turing</u> (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000)
        Ian F. McNeely, and Lisa Wolverton, <u>Reinventing Knowledge: From Alexandria to the Internet</u> (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008)

September 11, 2014
Week 3:   Philosophies
Readings: Henry Adams, "The Dynamo and the Virgin" in <u>The Education of Henry Adams</u> (1918)
               Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" (1950)
               Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," <u>Socialist Review</u> (1985)

        additional sources:
        Brian Cantwell Smith, "Age of Significance," (2010)

Andrew Feenberg, <u>Questioning Technology</u> (Routledge, 1999)

September 18, 2014 Reckoning with the Past Initiative, Department of History, on Race and Racism

Week 4:   Media
Readings: Marshall McLuhan, <u>Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man</u> (MIT, 1964)

Reckoning with the Past Reading: Tressie McMillan Cottom, "'Who the Fuck Do You Think You Are?'
Academic Engagement, Microcelebrity and Digital Sociology from the Far Left of the Matrix of
Domination," 2012.

        additional sources:
        Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, <u>Remediation: Understanding New Media</u> (MIT, 1999)
        Lisa Gitelman, <u>Always Already New: Media History, and the Data of Culture</u> (MIT, 2006)
        Elizabeth Eisenstein, <u>The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe</u> (Cambridge University
                Press, 1983)
         Alan Liu, <u>The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information</u> (University of
                Chicago Press, 2004)

September 25, 2014
Week 5:   Data
Readings: Michel et al. "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books" (2011)
                Franco Moretti, <u>Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History</u> (Verso,
                        2007)

        additional sources:
        John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid, <u>The Social Life of Information</u> (Boston: Harvard
                Business School Press, 2000)
        James Gleick, <u>The Information: A History, a Theory, a Flood</u> (Pantheon, 2011)
        Matthew Jockers, <u>Macroanalysis</u> (University of Illinois Press, 2013)
        Jerome McGann, <u>Radiant Textuality: Literature after the World Wide Web</u> (Palgrave
                2002)
        Stephen Ramsay, "An Algorithmic Criticism," <u>Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism</u>
                (University of Illinois Press, 2011)

October 2, 2014
Week 6:   Space
Readings: Richard White, "What is Spatial History?" (2010)
                Philip Ethington, "Los Angeles and the Problem of Urban Historical Knowledge" (2000)
                David Staley, "Historical Visualizations" (2000)
                Timothy R. Mahoney, "Gilded Age Plains City" (2009)

        additional sources:
        Bodenhamer et al., <u>The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship</u>
                (Indiana University Press, 2010)
        Anne K. Knowles, ed. <u>Past Time Past Place: GIS for History</u> (ESRI, 2002)
        Anne K. Knowles, ed. <u>Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS are Changing Historical</u>

Scholarship (ESRI, 2008)

October 9, 2014 (First Essay Due)
Week 7:   Design
Readings: Janet Murray, Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interaction Design as a Cultural
                      Practice (MIT, 2011)

        additional sources:
        Matthew Kirschenbaum, Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination (MIT, 2008)
        Victoria Vesna, ed. Database Aesthetics (University of Minnesota Press, 2007)
        David Staley, Computers, Visualization and History: How New Technology Will Transform Our
              Understanding of the Past (Sharpe, 2002)
        Johanna Drucker, SpecLab: Digital Aesthetics and Projects in Speculative Computing
                (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009)

October 16, 2014
Week 8:   Form
Readings: Thomas/Ayers, "The Differences Slavery Made," American Historical Review (2003)
                      http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/AHR/
                Bruno Latour, An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns
                      (2014)
                      http://www.modesofexistence.org

        additional sources:
        Janet Murray, Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace (MIT, 2000)
        Espen Aarseth, Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature (Johns Hopkins, 1997)
        Alan Liu, "When Was Linearity: The Meaning of Graphics in the Digital Age,"
                digitalhistory.unl.edu (2008)
        Richard White, "Railroaded" (2011)
                      http://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/viz.php?id=347

October 23, 2014
Week 9:   Software
Readings: Lev Manovich, Software Takes Command (Bloomsbury, 2013)

        additional sources:
        Bruno Latour, Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory
                (Oxford University Press, 2005)
        N. Katherine Hayles, How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and
                Informatics (University of Chicago Press, 1999)

October 30, 2014
Week 10:   Scholarly Practice
Readings: Christine Borgman, "The Digital Future is Now: A Call to Action for the Humanities,"
                      Digital Humanities Quarterly (2009)
                Edward L. Ayers, "Does Digital Scholarship Have a Future?" EDUCAUSE Review,

(August 2013)

additional sources:
Abby Smith, "New Model Scholarship: How Will it Survive?" CLIR (2003)
Martha Brogan, "A Kaleidoscope of Digital American Literature," CLIR (2005)
Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (Stanford University Press, 1990)
William H. Sewell, Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation (University of
        Chicago Press, 2005)

November 6, 2014
Week 11:   Identities
Readings: Natalia Cecire, "When Digital Humanities Was in Vogue," Journal of Digital
                Humanities, 2011
                Adeline Koh and Roopika Risam, #DHPoco: Postcolonial Digital Humanities, Comics
                Jaron Lanier, You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto (Vintage, 2010) Part I: What is a
                Person?

        additional sources:
        Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle
                Passage," GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies (2014)
        Natalia Cecire, "Introduction: Theory and the Virtues of Digital Humanities," Journal of Digital
                Humanities, 2011
        Sherry Turkle, Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet (Touchstone, 1995)

November 13, 2014
Week 12:   Dystopia
Readings: William Gibson, Neuromancer, (Penguin, 1984)
                Jaron Lanier, "Digital Maoism: The Hazards of the New Online Collectivism," Edge
                (May 2006).

        additional sources:
        Evgeny Morozov, The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom (Public Affairs, 2011)
        Nicholas Carr, The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains (W. W. Norton, 2008)
        Douglas Rushkoff, Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now (Current, 2013)

November 20, 2014
Week 13:   Processes
Readings: Jonathan Zittrain, The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It (Yale, 2008)

        additional sources:
        Lawrence Lessig, Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace, version 2.0 (Basic Books,
                2006)
        Clay Shirkey, Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations (Penguin,
                2009)
        Henry Jenkins, Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide (NYU, 2008)
        Yochai Benkler, The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and
                Freedom (Yale, 2007)

November 21, 2014
Week 14:   Directions
Readings: reports on social media readings
                Jaron Lanier, <u>Who Owns the Future</u> (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), "The Fate of
                        Books" pp. 352-360.

        additional sources:
        Frontline, "digital_nation: life on the virtual frontier" (WGBH, 2010)
                @ http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/

Week 15:   December 4, 2014 Social Event--dinner at 2819 Van Dorn St.

Week 16:   Final Essay Due