

**ACS 6820  
Spring 2014  
Introduction to Digital Humanities**

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### **Course Goals**

This course provides introduction to the issues and methods of asking humanities questions in the age of computers. In addition to considering vital questions in the practice of using computerized methods in the humanities (for research, understanding, and dissemination), we will learn some basic digital humanities (DH) skills, play with various digital humanities tools, and work on a digital humanities project. The course will be blended, with some meetings held in one of BGSU's new active learning classrooms, but considerable online work and interaction.

Rather than being an endpoint, this course is designed to provide a basis for further learning, exploration, and participation in DH as well as to encourage you to incorporate DH methodologies into your own further research. Because of this, while you will be evaluated according to BGSU's standard grading system, the emphasis will be on providing a platform for further growth rather than the final grade as an endpoint to learning.

### **Participation**

#### Meetings

Unless you are instructed otherwise in class, we will meet Olscamp 201 Wednesdays, 6-9PM. However, as this is a blended class, many weeks we will not meet physically, but rather have online discussions and activities through our course website. Please see the schedule for more details.

Goal: The learning experience involves not only the flow of information from teacher to student but also the exchange of ideas between teachers and students and among the students themselves. Each of us brings a unique background and viewpoint to class, and only by engaging in conversation will you be able to benefit from others in the class the way they may benefit from your presence and participation. Discussion not only requires the articulation of ideas, but also taking into account others' viewpoints. You will be required to discuss both in class and online.

Requirements: You must come to class prepared to discuss intelligently the relevant sources assigned for the class, and you must take part in class discussion and online discussion (on our class blog at [www. http://intro-dh-2014.andyschocket.net](http://intro-dh-2014.andyschocket.net)) on a regular basis in a civil way. Woody Allen once wrote that "eighty percent of success is showing up." Although the percentage is different for success in this class, attendance is mandatory. Each student will lead discussion once, generally in pairs, as there are more students than there are course days.

Evaluation: Class participation will count for 20% of your grade. You will be evaluated as much on the quality of your participation—the relevance of your comments, your ability to engage other students, your exhibiting a grasp of the material, and the cogency of your remarks—as the quantity of your participation.

## **Digital Humanities Project Evaluation**

Goal: To become a critical consumer of the digital humanities, as well as get a sense of how your work will be evaluated.

Requirements: You will select and study in detail a major DH project. You will compose a 1,000-1,500 word evaluation of this project, considering its virtues and drawbacks, placing it in disciplinary and/or DH context as appropriate, and justifying the criteria you have used to evaluate the project. This will be posted electronically by the date indicated on the course schedule, and include not only your prose, but also screenshots, snippets of code, or whatever other evidence would be appropriate to help readers follow along.

Evaluation: Your evaluation will be evaluated on its articulation of clear and transferable criteria, use of specific evidence, its consideration of the project's place in the field, its nuance, and its quality of writing. The project evaluation will constitute 10% of your overall grade.

## **Skill Proficiency**

Goal: A significant portion of this class is to gain minimum proficiency in a variety of digital humanities methodologies: html/css, installing and managing a content management system (e.g. Wordpress or Omeka), coding (python), topic modeling, mapping, and social networks.

Requirements: You will submit evidence of having completed the necessary exercises as listed on the course website for each of the aforementioned areas by date and time listed on the course schedule. The evidence will vary depending upon the exercise: it may be notification of a badge earned, a screenshot, code, a link to a working website, etc.

Evaluation: Each of these will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Your overall skill proficiency will constitute 30% of your overall grade.

*Important Note: you must work on at least one of the two major deliverables of the semester (the prototype or the proposal) with at least one other student in the class, and/or, with the instructor's permission, one or more collaborators outside of class. For any collaborative project, each collaborator will include a narrative of her or his contribution to the project.*

## **DH Project Prototype**

Goal: Over the course of the semester, you will build at least a prototype, model, or initial installment of a DH project.

Requirements: This project will 1) be related to an academic humanistic question(s) in a demonstrable way, 2) involve extensive use of at least one of skill and preferably several of the skills we have worked on over the course of the semester. As we'll see from our exploration of DH projects, this leaves considerable latitude: you might work on an online exhibit, a tool, a collaborative online writing project, an interactive map... the possibilities are endless. On the last day of class, you will present your project to the class.

Evaluation: You will be evaluated according to the criteria that we as a class develop in our session on evaluating digital humanities tools and sites.

### **Start-up Proposal**

Goal: We have too little time in the course of the semester to complete a major project. However, we do have time to conceive of a major project in detail, which will give you a sense of having to think through disciplinary issues, DH issues, what a project would look like, how it would fit in the intellectual terrain, how it would work, how it would be evaluated, etc. By writing a full DH project proposal, you will demonstrate your understanding of the intellectual, technological, and logistical issues involved in the practice of DH.

Requirement: You will write a draft submission for an NEH Office of Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant. It will contain all the necessary elements of a grant application, with the exception that the budget will be assumed to be a rough budget, and there will be no letters of commitment and support. The final version is to be completed and converted to .pdf, and is due no later than May 7 at 8:00 PM, that is, the end of the final exam period designated for this class, in the Assignments area of the class canvas site. This may be for a more mature development of the project that you worked on over the course of the semester, but it does not have to be.

Evaluation: Your proposal will be evaluated according to how well and how clearly it achieves the above objectives. Your project will constitute 20% of your total grade.

### **Course Schedule**

Below is the schedule for class meetings. The full bibliographical information, links, etc. for the readings and assignments is in our group Zotero library (Intro to DH, BGSU Spring 2014). The only reading not available online, for free, is Jockers, Matthew Lee. *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*. Topics in the Digital Humanities. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013. There is a copy in Jerome on closed reserve; there are also copies through OhioLink, but only a few. Please plan ahead accordingly.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Live/online</b>
1/15/14	What is DH?	Debates in the Digital Hum., Intro, Part I	Live
1/22/14	HTML/CSS	Web Fundamentals: Codecademy.com	Online
1/29/14	Old questions, new methods	Macroanalysis	Live
2/5/14	Making sources available/New deliveries	Install and Evaluation: CMS (Omeka vs. Wordpress vs. Drupal)	Live
2/12/14			Online
2/19/14	Theoretical questions	Debates in DH, part 2, other readings as selected by class	Online
2/26/14	Project Management 1	devdh.org	Online
3/5/14	Coding	Python: The Programming Historian 2	Live
3/12/14	Spring break		
3/19/14	Evaluation: Site or tool		Live

3/26/14	Text Analysis, Topic Modeling	Intro to Latent Dirichlet Allocation; The LDA Buffet is Now Open; Topic Modeling By Hand; Very Basic Strategies for Interpreting Results from the Topic Modeling Tool; roll your own	Online
4/2/14	Project Management 2		Online
4/9/14	Mapping	What is the Spatial Turn (and associate pages about disciplines); lessons in Geospatial Historian; roll your own	Online
4/16/14	Social Networks	Using Metadata to Find Paul Revere, Demystifying Networks, Parts I & II; An Interactive Introduction to Network Analysis and Representation; Getting Started with Gephi ; roll your own	Online
4/23/14	Accessibility	Debates in DH, part 3, other readings as selected by class	Online
4/30/14	Student Presentations; Project and proposal draft		Live
5/7/14	DH proposal and project		

## Grades

### Evaluations weighting

Participation	20%
Skill proficiency	30%
DH project evaluation	10%
DH project	20%
Start-up Proposal	20%
TOTAL	100%

### Grading scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	<60

## Passing

You must earn a passing grade in every portion of this course—participation, skills proficiency, project evaluation, DH project, Start-up proposal—to earn a passing grade for the course. Fail any of those categories, and you will not receive a passing grade for the course.

## Miscellany

Late papers policy: You will be penalized one letter grade for each day an assignment is due. The clock starts at the beginning of class on the day the paper is due, meaning that if the paper is not handed in at the beginning of that class, it will be considered late.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is bad on many levels. First of all, you're stealing from someone else by taking her or his hard work and passing it off as your own. You're cheapening your degree, and worse yet, those of your peers by getting something (a passing grade) for nothing. You're cheating yourself the opportunity to learn and to develop your thinking and writing skills,

presumably the reason you came to BGSU. You are also stealing from your classmates—and, indeed, yourself—by taking up a good deal of your instructor’s time on detecting and dealing with plagiarism rather than evaluating other assignments and preparing for class. Last of all, you’re insulting your instructors by assuming that we can’t tell. You may get away with it this time, but sooner or later, you’ll get caught (and you won’t be the first or even the second graduate student who has been so insolent in one of my classes). Cheating or plagiarism of any form is a serious offense, will not be tolerated, may result in a failing grade for the entire course and/or disciplinary action, and indeed, only my lawyer’s vehement objections prevent me from inflicting 18<sup>th</sup>-century-style corporal punishment (think pressing or keelhauling) on academic honesty offenders. See the BGSU graduate catalog for further information.

Emergencies: John Milton praised the ability “to temper Justice with Mercy.” Should there be some dire and urgent reason that you are unable to attend class or turn in an assignment on time (family or medical emergency, for example, not “But Netflix just acquired streaming rights to the second season of *F Troop!*”), contact me as soon as possible so that we may make alternate arrangements for the satisfactory and timely completion of the requirements of the assignment(s). Note that you will still be held responsible for any material read, due, or discussed in class.

Special Needs: If you need special course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or have emergency medical information to share with me, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. I will make strong efforts to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to learn, to participate, and to be evaluated fairly.

Office Hours: Should you have any questions, comments, difficulties, or desire to discuss matters historical or otherwise, please do not hesitate to come to my office hours, make an appointment to see me, or email me.