Digital Humanities: Public History, Archives, and Scholarly Communication

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Course Description

“With the migration of cultural materials into networked environments, questions regarding the production, availability, validity, and stewardship of these materials present new challenges and opportunities for humanists” (Burdick 4). It is these new challenges and opportunities that ENGL615 seeks to investigate. Co-taught by a Special Collections Librarian and a faculty member in the English department, this course provides broad training and professional development in curating, archiving, exhibiting, critiquing, and publishing materials across a range of media. The course interrogates the practices associated with the digital humanities as it also probes the intersections of library science and English studies. The course is meant to help graduate students in English broaden their career options, as they consider what is at stake in processes of information creation. This course takes the view that digital humanities is a set of skills and ways of thinking that can prepare you for a range of career opportunities within and beyond the university. The course covers the histories, methodologies, tools, and debates of digital humanities. While no technical background is required as a prerequisite for the course, this course is as technologically intensive as it is writing and reading intensive. That is, the use of technology will be a key aspect of your learning experience in this course. This is apt given that our focus will be on how writers and readers are increasingly reliant on digital tools, and the media we use to share and create information is changing. You can expect this course to equip you with practical tools for theorizing and participating in these processes of information creation, management, and design.
Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- define the Digital Humanities in relation to 21st century literary scholarship;
- contribute to the conversation regarding key debates in the Digital Humanities;
- utilize editorial skills in creating and curating digital archives, public history exhibitions, and digital commons journal publications;
- participate in meta-literacy practices that reflect upon the composing and design process;
- critically analyze changing scholarly publication practices and public intellectualism;
- create documents and databases that can be shared with the public, as examples of public history.

Course Textbooks

   ebook: http://library.calstate.edu/humboldt/books/record?id=844841

   http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates

Major Assignments

WordPress Blog / Portfolio (ongoing, weekly assignment): Using WordPress, Weebly, Wix, Typepad or another website/blog application, you’ll create an online portfolio that showcases the archival, curatorial, editorial, and technological experience you have gained at HSU. This documentation may be useful to you when applying for employment or volunteer positions in the future. Your blog can be designed however you wish, but it must include responses (400-1000 words each) to the prompts listed in the schedule below. Ensure that your blog is rhetorically effective and demonstrates best practices for writing on the web. Your site should be tailored for both future members of ENGL625 and your potential future employers and/or collaborators--a professional audience that you identify during class workshops as part of our discussions about how digital humanities fits into your career goals. We will spend time discussing issues in web writing, web design, and web platform-building, so that you can make your online presence more effective for your intended audiences. Your grade will be determined based on the effort you put forward in completing weekly blog posts and in developing additional content that supports your professional profile.

Invent a Journal (due in week 7): For this assignment, you will work in small groups of 2 or 3 to collaboratively invent a journal that can be indexed in digital commons. Your journal must have a clear orientation, must meet an exigency or serve a need in English studies, library science, or digital humanities. You’ll build an online presence for your new journal and you’ll develop
sample titles and abstracts or summaries for the content that your journal might include. While your journal will not be made public, you will have the opportunity to create a working demo site on BePress. This assignment affords you the opportunity to apply what you learn about the changing landscape of scholarly and literary publishing, as you also gain first-hand experience with aspects of the editorial and production process for an online journal.

Public History Project Proposal (due in week 11): This exercise will explore ways to engage the public with projects and programs outside of academia. The goal is to understand how to present a collection, history or program so that it will resonate in the community. For this assignment, select a particular collection within the Humboldt State University Special Collections. Research the collection using resources from the Humboldt Room, the University Library, and the web. Then write a proposal for a public digital exhibit that answers the following questions: Who in the general public would be interested in this collection? What organizations or government agencies should know about this collection? How will your public digital exhibit be designed? What tools will you use to design it? How could your project be expanded with a budget and extra funding? Your proposal should provide a detailed description of your project, the exigencies it addresses, and its importance. Also come up with a marketing and publicity plan that incorporates multiple media, including social media, virtual tours, presentations, etc.

Digital Curation Project (due during the final exam period): This final project will synthesize the skills and theories you learned this semester. You will develop a part of the project that you propose in the Public History Project described above by digitizing, curating, and exhibiting an archive of your choice, using primary source material from the Humboldt State University Library Special Collections. Use Omeka.net or another digital humanities platform to organize, digitize, describe and provide access to unique material from the Library. You will research the topic, design a website, and create a database for digitized objects. This project will remain available online and is a way to showcase your research. In addition to the webpage, you will write a short paper that outlines the impact, outcomes, and potential additional audiences for this project. Now that you have created the project, how will you share it with relevant communities? Is there a plan to continue the project?
Week 1: Introduction to Digital Humanities, Tour of the Library, Building a Blog
1. **Lead Instructor:** Marino and Adsit
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Briefly describe your experience with the Humboldt Library, as an academic resource, prior to your internship, and then how you perceive its resources now.

Week 2: Purposes and Histories of Digital Humanities
1. **Lead Instructor:** Adsit
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** What are your professional goals after you graduate? What do you hope to learn from this course?
3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Lisa Spiro, “Getting Started in the Digital Humanities”
   - Part 1 of *Debates in the Digital Humanities*
   - NYTimes "Humanities 2.0" series

Week 3: What Do We Mean by Humanities? / Intersections of Library Science and English Studies
1. **Lead Instructor:** Marino and Adsit
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** How would you describe the disciplines of English studies and Library Science to someone who was unfamiliar with them? What beliefs, values, practices, or conventions characterize each discipline? What purposes do these disciplines serve? How do they compare? Also consider possible definitions of “humanities” and the humanistic disciplines.
3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Chapter 1 “Humanities to Digital Humanities” in Burdick (pp. 1-27)
   - Drucker, “Humanistic Theory and Digital Scholarship” (in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*)
   - http://whatisdigitalhumanities.com/
   - Introduction / Excerpt from Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetorics 1st Edition by Laurie Gries
   - Chris Alen Sula, *Digital Humanities and Libraries: A Conceptual Model*

Week 4: The Changing Publishing Industry / Introduction to BePress & Digital Commons
1. **Lead Instructor:** Adsit
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** How have your own literacy practices changed over the course of your lifetime? What media, technologies, tools, applications, circulations, networks, etc. have influenced your reading and writing practices?
3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Excerpt from Andrew Piper, *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times.*
Week 5: Scholarly Publishing & Public Intellectualism / HSU Press

1. **Lead Instructor:** Adsit / Guest Speakers from BePress and HSU Press
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Find a scholarly journal that is relevant to a term paper you’ve written, your thesis project, or another research interest. Research the history of this journal. When was it established? What mission and vision does it have? What exigencies was it established to meet? What changes is it seeking to enact, and what interventions does it prioritize? What means does it use to achieve its aims and goals? How has its form or mode changed in its history? What web presence does it have? Connect the journal’s history with the concepts from today’s readings and explorations.
3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Chapter 3 “The Social Life of the Digital Humanities” in Burdick (pp. 73-99)
   - Beautiful Trouble
   - Jim Kalmback and Lydia Welker, Looking Back, Looking Forward: Twenty Years of Kairos
   - Hybrid Pedagogy

Week 6: “Inventing a Journal” Working Session

1. **Lead Instructor:** Adsit
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Report on your progress with the journal assignment. What challenges is your group facing? What possibilities are you most excited about? How are you able to put into practice what you’ve learned about the changing realities of scholarly publishing practices?
3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Kathleen Fitzpatrick, “Beyond Metrics: Community Authorization and Open Peer Review” (in Debates in the Digital Humanities)
Week 7: Key Debates in DH / Methodologies & Tools Associated with DH
1. **Lead Instructor:** Marino
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Select a tool from the DiRT Directory (http://dirtdirectory.org/) and present to the class. Describe how you could see its application for a personal, professional or campus project. Make note of any words or acronyms we should clarify in class.
3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Chapter 2 “Emerging Methods and Genres” in Burdick (pp. 27-73)
   - Jamie “Skye” Bianco, *This Digital Humanities Which Is Not One* (in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*)
   - Alexis Lothian and Amanda Phillips, “Can Digital Humanities Mean Transformative Critique?”

Week 8: Tools and Technology: Scanning, Preservation Concerns
1. **Lead Instructor:** Marino
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Is there ever a situation that access to an archival object or document is not appropriate? Consider the differences in digitization for preservation vs. digitization for access.
3. **Readings and Resources:** UCLA Library Special Collections Digital Project Toolkit http://library.ucla.edu/special-collections/programs-projects/digital-projects-special-collections

Week 9: Omeka, Digital Exhibit Design, and Metadata
1. **Lead Instructor:** Marino / Guest Speaker: Cataloging and Metadata Librarian
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Find a digital humanities project that interests you (one of the suggested projects or another that you find on your own). Critique the project following using a rubric distributed in class. Present the project to the class (pecha kucha).
3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Metadata for Digital Collections (Chapter 1 and 9)
   - [Digital Thoreau](http://miriamposner.com/blog/up-and-running-with-omeka-net/)

Week 10: CSS / HTML / GIS
1. **Lead Instructor:** Marino
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Look at the code of a website you visit frequently. Download and use JS Bin to alter the webpage. Save your work and present your “new” page to the class. Report on experience using Omeka and determine opportunities and challenges for your final project. Can you use html to fix some of these obstacles?
3. Readings and Resources:
   - JS Bin: https://jsbin.com/?html,output
   - Alexander R. Galloway, What is New Media? Ten Years After "The Language of New Media" (Criticism)
   - Stephen Ramsay, Programming with Humanists: Reflections on Raising an Army of Hacker-Scholars in the Digital Humanities

Week 11 History of the Book, Rare Books, Archival Theory and Ethics
1. Lead Instructor: Marino and Adsit
2. WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment: How does digitizing an object change how it is used in research? What’s the relationship between archive theory and the actual practice of archiving?
3. Readings and Resources:
   - Excerpt from The Ethical Archivist
   - Excerpt from Derrida, Archive Fever
   - Excerpt from Susan Howe, Spontaneous Particulars: The Telepathy of Archives
   - Excerpt from Diana Taylor, The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas
   - Dickinson Electronic Archives

Week 12: Ethics and Copyright, Creative Commons, and Intellectual Property
1. Lead Instructor: Marino
2. In-Class Assignment: Complete the copyright quiz and be prepared to defend your decisions in class. Wordpress Prompt: Consider your final project. Which Creative Commons license will you apply to your final project? Why? Does your project fall under fair use, public domain, or another copyright law?
3. Readings and Resources:
   - Excerpt from The Illustrated Guide to Copyright
   - Estee N. Beck, et al., Writing in an Age of Surveillance, Privacy & Net Neutrality
   - Chapter One “Copyright Law of the United States”, Circular 92
   - Creative Commons: https://creativecommons.org/

Week 13: Critiquing DH
1. Lead Instructor: Marino and Adsit
2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** How does digitizing an object change how it is used in research? What’s the relationship between archive theory and the actual practice of archiving?

3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Jeff Rice, “Occupying the DH” (College English)
   - Part 3 of *Debates in the Digital Humanities*

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**Week 14: Presenting Final Projects / Alt-Ac Careers and Continuing Your Professional Development**

1. **Lead Instructor:** Marino and Adsit

2. **WordPress Prompt / In-Class Assignment:** Have your career goals changed based on your experience with this course? If so, how? Write a description of the skills you gained in this course that you would use for your resume. What did you learn from this course? What surprised you from your course experience? How was the course experience different from what you expected? What did you learn in your course that you can now apply elsewhere (in other classes)?

3. **Readings and Resources:**
   - Julia Flanders, “Time, Labor, and ‘Alternate Careers’ in Digital Humanities Knowledge Work” (in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*)
Instructor Bios

Carly Marino is the Special Collections Librarian at Humboldt State University. Her research focuses on incorporating primary sources in information literacy instruction, assessing student learning in digital humanities projects, designing internship programs, ephemeral collections, and digitizing audiovisual material. She holds a Masters of Library and Information Science from San Jose State University and a Masters of Arts in Cinema and Television Critical Studies from the University of Southern California. She is a certified archivist and has presented her research at national conferences. Prior to Humboldt State, Carly worked at the Academy of Motion Pictures Margaret Herrick Library, the Clarke Historical Museum, and the Humboldt County Public Library. She serves on both the Clarke Museum and Eureka Theater board of directors.

Janelle Adsit is an Assistant Professor of Writing Practices at Humboldt State University where she teaches environmental writing, fiction, creative nonfiction, and literary publishing. Her works include the poetry collection Unremitting Entrance and a chapbook titled Press Yourself Against a Mirror. Her poetry, reviews, and essays have appeared in literary journals such as Cultural Society, Mid-American Review, ForeWord, Colorado Review, and Requited. She has also published several articles on the teaching of creative writing, including a chapter in Creative Writing in the Digital Age (Bloomsbury, 2014). Janelle’s research focuses on histories of creative writing pedagogy and labor practices in higher education writing instruction. Secondary research interests include ecopoetics and environmental writing practices, literary art and activism, digital creative writing pedagogy, and the relationship between aesthetics and rhetoric. Janelle also serves as the reviews editor for the Journal of Creative Writing Studies and maintains an online creative writing pedagogy bibliography as a resource for the field. She holds a PhD in English from SUNY Albany.