AL285: Introduction to Digital Humanities
Fall 2015 | T/TH 10:20-11:40am | Linton 120
Syllabus available on Trello: https://trello.com/b/juUdkmGK/al285-syllabus

Instructor Information
Kristen Mapes
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Office hours: MW 10:00-11:30am

Contacting the Instructor
The best way to get in touch with me is via the AL285 Slack network. I am also available via email and Twitter, but I will be checking Slack regularly. You are welcome to set up an appointment to meet with me during the week or to drop in during office hours.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives
The goals of this course are to:

- explore a broad spectrum of perspectives on the digital humanities engage with a variety of digital humanities tools in order to choose the most appropriate technology to facilitate different work in different situations
- develop familiarity with a range of digital humanities projects, as well as the ability to evaluate the tools and methods involved in creating those projects
- become more thoughtful, critical, and reflective users of digital tools, technologies, and spaces by understanding that all technologies are complex, socially situated, and political tools through which humans make meaning

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

- identify resources for digital humanities community and assistance at MSU and beyond
- critically discuss digital humanities projects in light of current methods and theoretical approaches to the field
- explain how digital humanities methods and practices are applied in different disciplines
- plan, develop, and evaluate a digital humanities research project

Required Materials
Assignments

‘How did they make that?’ project review 5%
Project critique 5%
GIS Mini-Report 5%
Disciplinary Presentation 10%
Twitter Storify Digest 5%
Exam 20%
Final Project 35%
Attendance and Participation 15%

Grading Scale
This course uses MSU’s 4.0 grading scale. Credit will not be awarded for a score below 1.0 (59% or below).

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Extra Credit
Opportunities to earn extra credit will be offered throughout the semester. These may include additional tutorials, workshop attendance, use of the Library’s DH Office Hours, etc. The amount of extra credit available for each opportunity will be provided in Trello.

Embedded Librarian
Throughout the course, Thomas Padilla, Digital Scholarship Librarian at MSU (http://staff.lib.msu.edu/tpadilla), will be available for assistance. He will attend a number of course sessions and be a fantastic resource as you work on your final projects. Feel free to ask him questions on Slack, via email (tpadilla@msu.edu), and at the Library’s Digital Humanities Office Hours on Thursdays, 12:00-1:30pm.
Course Policies

Course Technologies

You will need to have access to certain digital technologies in order to complete your work. In some instances, these technologies may be new to you. You are responsible for making time to ramp up, troubleshoot, and learn. This activity will require your patience, can-do attitude, and sense of adventure.

- Access to https://googleapps.msu.edu for access course materials and complete your course work.
- Your @msu.edu e-mail account. Check this email often (several times every day).
- A Trello account. Sign up using your @msu.edu email account at trello.com/kristen204/recommend. Only your classmates, our embedded librarian, and I will be able to see the project boards you create (unless you choose to make yours public). See trello.com/guide for an introduction to using this project management tool.
- A Slack account. Sign up using your @msu.edu email account at al285.slack.com. Only your fellow classmates, our embedded librarian, and I will be able to see this channel, so it is relatively private. See slack.com/getting-started for tips and tutorials about how to use Slack effectively for team communication.
- A Storify account. If you already have an account, you are welcome to use it. Otherwise, set up an account with whichever email and username you prefer. You are welcome to use an alias to increase your privacy, just let me know what the alias is so I can match you to the account.

If you are going to use a laptop or any other technology during class, make sure that it is not a distraction to yourself or others. Do not take phone calls, update your status, or text during class unless you have made arrangements with me ahead of time (due to some sort of emergency or care issue). Avoid using technology as a barrier to actively engaging during class. Instead, let it either augment our discussions or turn it off.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for this class. You are allowed two unexcused absences; further absences will result in the deduction of a third of a point from your final grade. If you miss a class, I do not need to know the reason why unless it is because of a death in the family or a religious holiday.

Lateness disrupts the entire class, especially in a small discussion course like ours. If you are more than 10 minutes late, I will mark it as half an absence.
Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due. Any assignment turned in on the same day as the deadline but after the beginning of class will lose points. Assignments turned in later than the due date will not be accepted.

Ethics and Academic Integrity

The work you submit must be produced originally for this class. An additional expectation is that you will follow this basic ethical obligation: You should credit others’ contributions to your work. You should not claim, as your own, work (or writing) that is not your own. To do so is considered plagiarism. It is perfectly appropriate for you to borrow graphics, to quote passages, and to use ideas from others. However, whenever you do that, follow appropriate conventions for citing and using your sources. Procedures for responding to cases of academic honesty and possible repercussions are outlined in Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide. They can also be found on the web at: http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html

Special Needs and Accommodations

To receive accommodation for any disability, students must first register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities. The RCPD will request appropriate documentation and make a determination regarding the nature of the accommodation to which a student is entitled. The RCPD will then give the student a “visa” that specifies the kind of accommodation that may be provided. It is then the responsibility of the student seeking accommodation to present the visa to his/her instructor.

That said, we all learn in different ways and process information differently. Please talk to me as soon as possible about your individual learning needs and the ways in which we can accommodate you. Even if you do not have a documented disability, remember that there are support services available to you at MSU such as the Writing Center (http://writing.msu.edu) and the Learning Resources Center (http://lrc.msu.edu).
Assignments

‘How Did They Make That’ Project Review (5%)

Digital Humanities projects come in many forms, rely on a wide array of data types, and involve any manner of technologies. Becoming accustomed to navigating a project site and exploring how each project approached its data, process, and presentation is a crucial skill for this class.

Select two of the projects that Posner presented and explore the project goals, what type of data it used, how that data was found and/or transformed, what technologies were used, and why. Include your own analysis of how successful you think the project was in achieving its aims, and why or why not. This is a short report, so be concise and clear.

You have two choices for approaching the short report:
1) Write ½ page about each project
2) Write 1 page comparing the two projects

See the Trello card for the list of project options
(https://trello.com/c/l4o14LPQ/40-how-did-they-make-that-project-review)

Digital Humanities Project Critique (5%)

Digital Humanities projects come in many forms, rely on a wide array of data types, and involve any manner of technologies. Becoming accustomed to navigating a project site and exploring how each project approached its data, process, and presentation is a crucial skill for this class.

Select any DH project you wish (except those that we have already analyzed in class). Explore the project goals, what type of data it used, how that data was found and/or transformed, what technologies were used, and why. Include your own analysis of how successful you think the project was in achieving its aims, and why or why not.

This is a short, 1 page, report, so be concise and clear. At the top of your paper, be sure to include the project title, primary authors/contributors, and the URL.

GIS Mini-Report and Presentation (5%)

Abstract Machines: Humanities GIS, Charles B. Travis, 2015:
Choose 1 of the middle 4 chapters, read & write ½ page summary & critique of it. Prepare to present your thoughts in a 1 minute flash presentation.
Disciplinary Presentation (15%)

Present digital humanities approaches within a particular discipline. Each student will present on a different discipline and should include examples of several project examples in the presentation.

Plan a 5 minute presentation, which should address the following points:

- How has DH impacted this discipline?
- What methods does DH in this discipline use?
- What are some of the well known DH projects in the discipline?

The research done for this assignment will familiarize you with concrete examples and a range of approaches to DH from the traditional disciplines. Presentation experience will provide students with confidence in discussing DH trends.

See the Trello card for the assignment for discipline options and for research resources ([https://trello.com/c/uS48XvGg/13-disciplinary-presentation](https://trello.com/c/uS48XvGg/13-disciplinary-presentation)).

Twitter Storify Digest (5%)

Monitor digital humanities twitter discussion for the week period (Mon, Oct 5 - Sun, Oct 11) prior to the assignment's due date.

Each student will create a digest that covers trending topics/ideas in the field, highlights new tools, explains an issue in greater depth, etc. all based on discussion during the previous week. Post the digest to your own Storify account and share the link to the digest in Slack.

See the Trello assignment card for places to find and follow the conversation ([https://trello.com/c/CPXVKgRe/18-twitter-storify-digest](https://trello.com/c/CPXVKgRe/18-twitter-storify-digest)).

Final Project (35%)

Students will work in groups (size determined by topics and interests) to examine a research question using digital humanities methods. Each group will be tasked with dividing duties according to each group member’s strengths, selecting appropriate data and tools to conduct the research, and determining the deliverable type (e.g. multimedia website, map, network, etc).

During the semester, the following assignments will be due before the submission of the project on the final day of class.

- Project Proposal - Single page description of the research question being posed, ideas for where data to analyze will come from, proposed methods for analysis, and proposed final deliverable
- Project Update and Timeframe - 1 to 1 ½ page revised proposal and plan for completion of the project; specify the role of each group member will fulfill
- Project Presentation - 10-12 minute presentation of the final project, including methodology, during the final class day

Attendance and Participation (15%)
Active participation in the course is required. See the attendance policy for information about absences and how they affect your grade. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings due that day and/or having explored the tools we will be learning. Plan on expressing your ideas, frustrations, questions, and confusions. This is a small, discussion based class, so we have the opportunity to delve deeply into issues. Participation also extends to the online portal to the course, the AL285 Slack network. You periodically will be required to post something in Slack before class about the readings and assignments. Doing so on time will count toward your overall participation grade. Slack is a fantastic resource for airing questions and comments and sharing ideas and resources that don’t come up in class. Contributing to the conversation in Slack will help improve your participation grade.
Schedule

See Trello as reading assignments for the following classes are finalized.

September 3 (Thurs) - Introduction

Introductions and syllabus review. Brief tutorial on using the class technologies of Trello and Slack. Using Voyant (http://voyant-tools.org) in research, writing, and classwork.

September 8 (Tues) - History of Digital Humanities

Discussion of the histories of digital humanities as well as critiques of it.

Readings due:

- Across two (imperial) cultures Roopika Risam, 2015, http://roopikarisam.com/uncategorized/across-two-imperial-cultures-2 [this paper was given as a conference keynote talk, and the video is online - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttjEGiuR9ec&list=PLwjDEegcNesDy-AjuTv_qYnsiZEgTtBv&index=11]

Project Review: Around DH in 80 Days, arounddh.org

September 10 (Thurs) - What is Data? [Class held in MSU Main Library - Meet by the Reference Desk]

Assignment due: ‘How did they make that?’ Project Review

This class session will take place in the MSU Main Library (meet on the ground floor by the Reference Desk). Digital Scholarship Librarians Thomas Padilla and Bobby Smiley, and Digital Library Programmer, Devin Higgins, will introduce themselves and the DH resources at the Library. They will then lead a workshop on retrieving data, cleaning it using OpenRefine (http://openrefine.org), and visualizing it using RAW (http://app.raw.densitydesign.org).
Readings due:


**September 15 (Tues) - Project Management Introduction**

**Assignment due:** DH Project Critique

Readings

- Project management one-pager, Tito Sierra, 2011 http://www.slideshare.net/ksierra/the-projectonepager
- ‘It’s a team if you use ‘reply all’”: An exploration of research teams in digital humanities environments, Lynne Siemens, Literary & Linguistic Computing, 2009, https://lynnesiemens.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/siemens_its_a_team.pdf
- Look around at devdh.org. Bookmark it.

**September 17 (Thurs) - Digital Identity and Engagement**

There are a lot of perspectives from academics, media, and elsewhere about what a person’s - especially a young person’s - digital identity is or should be. This class session looks at the "digital natives" concept as well as an opposing model, "visitor and resident." We will map our own online identities and explore variations, especially how they may influence group project dynamics and class communication. The role of digital identity and online communication in the Digital Humanities community will also be discussed.

Readings due:
September 22 (Tues) - Mapping Introduction

Readings due:

Projects to Review:

Tool Tutorials to Review:
- Palladio Tutorial: http://miriamposner.com/blog/getting-started-with-palladio/

September 24 (Thurs) - Mapping Lab

**Assignment due:** GIS Mini Report

Readings due:
*Abstract Machines: Humanities GIS*, Charles B. Travis, 2015, 1 chapter (see assignment)

Project Review:

Tool tutorials due:
● Cartodb, Online mapping for beginners - http://academy.cartodb.com/courses/01-beginners-course.html

September 29 (Tues) - Disciplinary Presentations

Assignment due: Disciplinary Presentations

Readings due: None

October 1 (Thurs) - Finding and Getting Data [Class held in MSU Archives, Carson Hall, 888 Wilson Road - meet in the lobby]

Class will be held entirely in the MSU Archives (Conrad Hall, 888 Wilson Road). We will meet in the entrance and then have a tour of some of the collections, especially some of those that have been digitized (and now available in places like the "On the Banks of the Red Cedar" site). Archivist Megan Malone will also show us the Archives’ process for digitization.

Then, Thomas Padilla will finish up the class by leading us through a couple of tools for collecting and using data from the web.

In advance of class, please post 2 observations or questions about the reading/projects in the General channel of Slack. Consider this a means of conversing before class. I will respond to your questions and comments, and I encourage you to also react and respond to your fellow classmates' thoughts. Post your comments, etc no later than Wednesday evening at 8pm.

Readings due:

Projects to Review:
● On the Banks of the Red Cedar, http://onthebanks.msu.edu
  ○ Around DH Summary: http://www.arounddh.org/jekyll/update/2014/09/04/day75
  ○ Around DH Summary: http://www.arounddh.org/jekyll/update/2014/08/27/day67
● Kerala State Central Library Rare Books Online, http://statelibrary.kerala.gov.in/rarebooks
  ○ Around DH Summary: http://www.arounddh.org/jekyll/update/2014/08/30/day70
• Trove, http://trove.nla.gov.au  
  ○ Around DH Summary: http://www.arounddh.org/jekyll/update/2014/06/27/day6  

Tools to use:  
• Import.io, https://import.io  
• Down them All (Firefox extension), https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/downthemall

October 6 (Tues) - Metadata, Access, and Preservation

Readings due:
• Classification and Its Structures, C.M. Sperberg-McQueen, The Companion to Digital Humanities, 2004, http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405103213/9781405103213.xml&chunk.id=ss1-3-2&toc.depth=1&toc.id=ss1-3-2&brand=default  

October 8 (Thurs) - Metadata [Class held in MSU Main Library - Meet by the Reference Desk]

Readings due:
• MS FND IN A LBRY: or, The day civilization collapsed, Hal Draper, The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction 21, 1961, p. 76-81, http://folk.uio.no/knuthe/msfndinalbry.html  
• Video preservation for the millennia, Linda Tadic, AMIA Tech Review 4, 2012 [file uploaded to Slack]  

October 13 (Tues) - Network Analysis Introduction

**Assignment due:** Twitter Storify digest

Readings due:

Projects to review:
● Quantifying Kissinger, Micki Kauffman, http://blog.quantifyingkissinger.com

Tools to learn:
● Palladio - palladio.designhumanities.org

October 15 (Thurs) - Network Analysis Lab [Guest speaker: Thomas Padilla]

Readings due:
● Social network analysis and ancient history, Diane Cline, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA3wNmJ5ps

Tools to learn:
● Gephi - http://gephi.github.io

Tutorials for Gephi:

October 20 (Tues) - Project Management and Grants [Class held at MATRIX, 4th floor Natural Sciences building]

Class will take place at one of the longest running Digital Humanities Centers in the country, MATRIX. We will meet in the conference room, on the 4th floor of the Natural Sciences building. [The easiest way to find the room is to take the elevator that's by the vending machines to the 4th floor.] The Director of MATRIX, Dean Rehberger, will talk with us about the role of grants in digital humanities, project management, and the relationship between the two.

Readings due:

- Best practice principles of designing your first project, Jennifer Guiliano an Simon Appleford, devdh, 2013, [http://devdh.org/lectures/design/bestpractice](http://devdh.org/lectures/design/bestpractice) [listen the podcast as well as looking at the slides]
- Explore the National Endowment for the Humanities Office of Digital Humanities featured projects page ([http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh/featured-project](http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh/featured-project)).
- Interview with project director Ryan Cordell ([http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh/featured-project/odh-project-director-qa-ryan-cordell](http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh/featured-project/odh-project-director-qa-ryan-cordell)) [this project should be familiar]


See any projects that are familiar?

- NC State's 'acoustic modeling' grant should be familiar if we think back to the Disciplinary Presentations.
- USC's grant will support Scalar, a platform you've heard about from Miriam Posner's videos early in the class.
- Emory's Slave Voyages project provides more functionality and research on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Database, which we encountered in part when looking at AfricaMap, a while ago.

As you have and continue to encounter DH projects, keep an eye out for the NEH funding symbol. In class on Tuesday we will learn about how digital humanities researchers and centers approach getting grants. We will also think about how the priorities of grant-giving organizations shapes the projects and research we see. In preparation for that discussion, please look over the Updated Guidelines for Digital Humanities Start Up Grants ([http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh/grant-news/updated-guidelines-digital-humanities-start-grants](http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh/grant-news/updated-guidelines-digital-humanities-start-grants)).
October 22 (Thurs) - Work on Projects

October 27 (Tues) - Text Analysis Introduction

Readings due:
- Seven ways humanists are using computers to understand texts, Ted Underwood, 4 June 2015, http://tedunderwood.com/2015/06/04/seven-ways-humanists-are-using-computers-to-understand-text

Projects to review:
- Lincoln Logarithms, http://disc.library.emory.edu/lincoln

Tools to use:
- Voyant (http://beta.voyant-tools.org)

October 29 (Thurs) - Text Analysis Lab

Assignment due: Project proposal

Readings due:

Projects to review/explore:
- The Networked Corpus, http://www.networkedcorpus.com
- TJ Mind (Thomas Jefferson’s letters), http://tjmind.org
- InPhO Topic Explorer (includes 3 datasets for exploration - HathiTrust, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, & Associated Press articles), http://inphodata.cogs.indiana.edu

November 3 (Tues) - Image and Video Analysis Introduction

Readings due:
● What can topic models of PMLA teach us about the history of literary scholarship?, Andrew Goldstone and Ted Underwood, *Journal of Digital Humanities* 2.1, 2012, http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/2-1/what-can-topic-models-of-pmla-teach-us-by-ted-underwood-and-andrew-goldstone [be sure to click through to Figure 1, a browsable interactive network of topics]


Short assignment due:

After reading the topic modeling tutorial, watching the video, and reading the article, select one quotation, image, or passage, and write a couple of sentences commenting/reacting to it. Post the passage and your response to the #readings channel in Slack.

**November 5 (Thurs) Image and Video Analysis Lab [Guest speaker: Scott Schopieray]**

Readings due:

● TBA

**November 10 (Tues) - Work on Projects**

**November 12 (Thurs) - User Experience and Accessibility**

**Assignment due:** Project update and timeframe

Readings due:


● UX Apprentice, http://www.uxapprentice.com


**November 17 (Tues) - Digital to Physical**

We will spend the first half of class discussing the maker movement and digital humanities. Then, in the second half of class, we will have some time to work individually or in project groups as well as to discuss with each other how final projects are going.

Readings due:

November 19 (Thurs) - Physical Computing [Class held in LEADR, Old Horticulture 112]

Readings due:
● Prototyping the past, Jentery Sayers, *Visible Language* 49.3, Forthcoming [permission given by Jentery Sayers]

November 24 (Tues) - Work on Projects

December 1 (Tues) - Exam Review

December 3 (Thurs) - Exam

December 8 (Tues) - Work on Projects

December 10 (Thurs) - Work on Projects

Final Exam Week - Project Presentations and Class Wrap Up

**Assignment due:** Final Project [due on Friday, December 18, 10:00am]
Credit and Acknowledgements
The creation of any course syllabus comes from a process of conversation, sharing, and openness among educators. Thanks to the following people and courses who helped shape this syllabus:

- WRA 415: Digital Rhetoric, Fall 2014, Liza Potts, Michigan State University
- AL 285: Introduction to the Digital Humanities, Fall 2013, Rebecca Tegtmeyer, Michigan State University
- AL 285: Introduction to the Digital Humanities, Fall 2009, Danielle Nicole DeVoss, Michigan State University
- Bobby Smiley, Michigan State University
- Thomas Padilla, Michigan State University