**Introduction to the Digital Humanities**

DigHT 215, Fall 2018  
MW 2:00-3:20pm, B181 JFSB  
http://briancroxall.net/f18dh

Dr. Brian Croxall  
briancroxall@byu.edu
801.422.7425  
1163 JFSB  
Office Hours: MW 11:00am-12:30pm

McKinsey Koch, TA  
smallnsimple@sbcglobal.net
1141 JFSB  
Office Hours: F 2:00-3:20pm plus more to come
and by appointment

* I reserve the right to modify this syllabus.

**Course Description**

In many ways, the humanities are already digital: whether you’re working on *The Odyssey* or *Only Revolutions*, most of us do our research, writing, and sometimes reading at a computer. In these situations, the computer replaces the index, the pen, and the printed book. In a sense, then, the computer has simply sped up processes with which humanists were already familiar.

But what might we gain if we begin to use the computer to do something that only it can do? How would it change our understanding of a novel if we laid it out in geographical space? What would it mean to look at every frame of a film at once? What could we discover if we read everything a prolific author wrote, in just two weeks? And what would we learn if we turned the tables and decided to look at digital objects the same way we typically look at novels or films?

In this course, we will consider these questions as we explore the field of digital humanities (DH). Through readings and various projects, we will familiarize ourselves with the concepts, tools, and debates of and within DH.

**Course Goals**

- To strengthen your testimony of the gospel  
- To become familiar and conversant with various concepts and methods in the digital humanities  
- To collaborate in a field that has traditionally privileged individual scholarship  
- To become more skilled writers through an engagement with writing as a public process

**Texts**

The **required** texts for this course are the following:


You are welcome to purchase these books from the BYU Bookstore; I’ve also provided links if you prefer to buy them on Amazon. Please make sure that you buy the editions listed here, so we’ll all be on the same page—literally and metaphorically. You’re welcome to read these texts as ebooks, on whatever device you’d like. Whatever you do, be sure that you have your copy of the text by the assigned dates.

Finally, there are a number of texts that are only available from Course Reserves or online. **You must have a copy of these texts with you on the day we discuss them, whether it is a hard copy or a copy on a portable device, like a laptop or tablet.**
Assignments
Participation: This is an experimental class based on collaborative discourse. Students should come prepared to discuss assigned readings. As such, you must be in regular attendance (see below). More importantly, you need to come to class prepared to engage vigorously with the day’s material and with your peers and me. N.B. I’m not above giving quizzes about the reading.

Blog: Throughout the semester, we will engage with the ideas of the course through public blogging. Blogs only work when sustained by an energetic (and perhaps even chaotic) community. You will both post your own written responses to our class and comment on the posts of your colleagues.

Building Your Own Website: Our first class project will have you creating your own website, where you will blog and—more importantly—begin designing your own digital presence.

Mapping Mrs. Dalloway: Working in assigned groups, you will prepare a map of one character’s movements and character’s relationships in Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf. Your group will present your maps to the class, and you will write a reflection on the assignment when it is completed.

Videogame paper: You will write one longer essay assignment during the semester. But since it will be about videogames, it probably won’t qualify as being “traditional.” I am happy to discuss drafts, outlines, or ideas during my office hours. I am unlikely to respond helpfully to an email message sent the day before the paper is due.

Midterm: You will take a midterm. So it goes.

Many Eyes Make Light Work: Working in assigned groups, you will create a composite image from the summed frames of a film or television episode after the manner of Kevin L. Ferguson. Your group will present your work to the class, and you will write a reflection on the assignment when it is completed.

Erdrich Project: The final weeks of the semester will be spent on a collaborative class project on NOT reading the stories and novels of Louise Erdrich. You will collectively write a report on what you discover in your research.

Final Exam: There will be a final. So it goes.

Grades
Assignments will be worth the following points:

- Participation: 150
- Blog: 200
- Website: 50
- Mapping Mrs. Dalloway: 100
- Midterm: 150
- Videogame paper: 100
- Many Eyes Make Light Work: 100
- Erdrich Project: 100
- Final Exam: 50

Grades will be calculated with this range:
899-875 B+  874-825 B  824-800 B-  etc.
Course Policies

Communication: The best time to get in touch with me is during my office hours. I consider this your time, and I encourage you to make use of it. Please don’t think of meeting with me as something to do only as a last resort but rather as an important and integral part of your learning. During the Fall 2018 semester, my office hours are from 11:00am – 12:30pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. I’m happy to make appointments at other times—just ask.

After office hours, the next best way to get in touch with me is by sending me an email. Remember: an email to your professor shouldn’t read the same as your emails to friends. I will do my best to respond to any email within 48 hours, although I try to take an email hiatus on the weekend. Often I will respond more quickly, but it’s not something you should count on.

Participation and Attendance: Our class relies on your active, collaborative, and engaged participation in activities and discussions. You should come to every class having read, annotated, and thought about the reading carefully and be ready to discuss it with your colleagues. Your thoughts and questions will provide the starting point for many of our discussions. Your active participation will be factored into your final grade for the course. If you’re reluctant to speak up in a group setting, please talk to me in office hours and we’ll figure out a way for you to participate.

Participating in class of course requires that you be present. In short: you may miss three class sessions without penalty. Each additional absence beyond these three will lower your final grade in the course. “Attendance” of course means more than your body being in a seat. You must also be mentally present, which means you must do the following:

1. Be awake and attentive to the conversation of the day;
2. Prepare assigned texts before class begins;
3. Bring your assigned texts to class. If we’re reading online articles, you should either bring a device on which to read them or print them and bring that hard copy.

If you don’t meet these requirements, I will consider you mentally absent, even if you’re present. Please note that I make no distinction between “excused” from “unexcused” absences, so use your absences wisely (or not at all!).

Assignments: Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due at the beginning of class. (Ask me why.) If you will miss class the day an assignment is due it is still your responsibility to turn it in before class. Late work will not be accepted, except at my discretion and with a significant penalty.

Late Instructor: In the unlikely event that I am late to class, you may feel free to leave 15 minutes after its scheduled start. Don’t count on this happening; it never has before.

Final Exam: Our final is scheduled on Monday, 17 December from 2:30-5:30pm. BYU policy forbids me from changing this time. Please add this date on your calendar now, so you don’t miss the exam.
Some Words about Technology

Phones
This should go without saying, but let’s say it anyway: you should put your phone and/or other devices on silent before you enter the classroom. And trust me, you’re not as sneaky texting under the table as you think you are.

Laptops / Classroom Computers
Our classroom is equipped with computers at every seat. We will use these tools, as well as your own computers, regularly. However, computer keyboards present temptations that many students find irresistible. If you choose to exit the class virtually, I will ask you to leave physically as well, and this will count as an absence. If you seem distracted by what’s on your screen, I may ask you to not use a computer, perhaps for the duration of the semester.

I will regularly ask you all to put “lids down.” This means I want everyone—myself included—to put away screens in order to focus our attention on another aspect of class.

Technical Snafus
This course relies heavily on access to computers, specific software, and the Internet. At some point during the semester you WILL have a problem with technology: your laptop will crash, a file will become corrupted, a server somewhere will go down, a piece of software will not act as you expect it to, your printer will run out of ink, you’ll lose a password, or something else will occur. These are facts of twenty-first-century life, not emergencies.

To succeed in college and in your career, you should develop work habits that take such snafus into account. Start assignments early and save often. Always keep a backup copy of your work saved somewhere secure. It is entirely your responsibility to take the proper steps to ensure your work will not be lost irretrievably; if one device or service isn’t working, find another that does. I will not grant you an extension based on problems you may be having with technological devices or the Internet services you happen to use.

This said, I’ll be asking you to do a number of new, exciting, and complicated things. If things don’t work and it’s my fault, I will not hold that against you. What’s more, I’m more than happy to answer questions about assignments during class or my office hours. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness; it’s a sign that you, like me, are learning. And if I seem scary, our TA, McKinsey Koch, is definitely not.

Acknowledgments
Despite what you might think, professors don’t know everything. This course and syllabus are the product of my talking with colleagues and looking at their syllabi. You can read about the first version of this class at http://bit.ly/IntroDH2011. A big revision took place in 2014 and owed debts to Zach Whalen, Chuck Rybak, and Stewart Varner. People who affected my take on the course in 2015 include Ryan Cordell and Miriam Posner. The first iteration of the course at BYU (Fall 2017) was informed particularly by a class taught by Mark Sample, and a different course of his was a good model for the digital culture revisions to this year’s version. In short, as Heraclitus would say, you can’t take this course twice.
**BYU Policies**

**Honor Code**

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and every instructor's expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

**Preventing Sexual Misconduct**

As required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the university prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment—including sexual violence—committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of "Sexual Misconduct" prohibited by the university.

University policy requires any university employee in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report incidents of sexual misconduct that come to their attention through various forms including face-to-face conversation, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. If you encounter Sexual Misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleixcoordinator@byu.edu or 801-422-2130 or Ethics Point at https://titleix.byu.edu/report or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours). Additional information about Title IX and resources available to you can be found at http://titleix.byu.edu.

**Student Disability**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 422-2767. Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

**Mental Health**

Mental health concerns and stressful life events can affect students’ academic performance and quality of life. BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, 1500 WSC, 801-422-3035, caps.byu.edu) provides individual, couples, and group counseling, as well as stress management services. These services are confidential and are provided by the university at no cost for full-time students. For general information please visit https://caps.byu.edu; for more immediate concerns please visit http://help.byu.edu.
This page intentionally left awesome.
Schedule

Complete all assigned reading before coming to class. Please keep in mind that all reading assignments are subject to change. The canonical version of the schedule is on the class website. All page numbers refer to the editions/ISBNs that I have ordered. You will find some readings in the Course Reserves system, indicated by CR.

Digital Humanities = Screwing Around

Sep. 5 W Introductions, Syllabus

Mapping Digital Humanities

-Sep. 24 M Virginia Woolf. Mrs. Dalloway, 3-64
-Sep. 26 W Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, 64-128
-Oct. 1 M Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, 128-end
-Oct. 3 W Dalloway presentations

Reading the Digital

-Oct. 8 M Dalloway presentations
-Oct. 10 W Steven Johnson. “Games.” From Everything Bad is Good for You. 2005. (CR)
Nicholas Thompson and Fred Vogelstein. “Inside the Two Years that Shook Facebook—and the World.” Only sections 1, 2, 5, 7, and 9. Wired. February 2018. (CR)


Oct. 29 M  BYU Copyright Office. “Copyright Tutorial,” “What is Copyright?”, “Fair Use Overview,” “Fair Use Statute,” “Meaning of the Four Fair Use Factors”

Oct. 31 W  Kirby Ferguson et al. “Everything is a Remix.”

Nov. 5 M  Midterm Exam

This is Your Eyes on the Internet

Nov. 7 W  Mark Sample. “Notes towards a Deformed Humanities.” Sample Reality. 2 May 2012.


Nov. 19 M  Lindsay King and Peter Leonard. Robots Reading Vogue.
Lev Manovich et al. Selfie-City.

Nov. 21 W  No class. Be thankful.

Reading Digitally, or, How to (Not) Read Erdrich


Nov. 28 W  Louise Erdrich, The Red Convertible, TBD

Dec. 3 M  Erdrich, Red Convertible, TBD

Dec. 5 W  Erdrich, Red Convertible, TBD

Dec. 10 M  Erdrich Project

Dec. 12 W  Erdrich Project

Dec. 17 M  Final Exam, 2:30-5:30pm