

DH285: Introduction to Digital Humanities

Fall 2022 | Fridays, 10:20am-1:10pm | Berkey Hall 319

Course website: introdh2022.commons.msu.edu

Google Doc syllabus: go.cal.msu.edu/introdhsyllabus

Digital humanities (DH) is the study of culture using digital methods and also the study of digital culture. In digital humanities, we analyze cultural materials and tell stories using digital technologies while maintaining a critical lens.

In this course, students will explore a broad spectrum of perspectives on the digital humanities, analyze digital projects, experiment with practical tools for inquiry, and create a digital humanities research project of their own design. Students will 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.

Instructor Information

[Kristen Mapes](#)

Assistant Director of Digital Humanities, Michigan State University

kmapes@msu.edu

308 Linton Hall ([map](#))

Open Meeting Hours: Thursdays 9:30-11:00am

Location: In person in my office, and on Zoom (link available on D2L and Slack)

And by appointment for virtual or face-to-face meeting: kristenmapes.youcanbook.me

The best way to get in touch with me is via the Intro DH MSU 2022 Slack. I will reply to messages there or through email within 24 hours, although I do not check email on the weekends.

Why would you meet with me and what are these open hours for every Thursday?

I am available to you to talk about whatever you want. These hours are part of my job and are dedicated to you as a student in this class, so don't be shy about using them! We can talk about the content of the class, or about your final project. I can share information about the Digital Humanities Minor, if you're interested. I am also available to just talk through something you are excited about or struggling with outside of the classroom.



Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The goals of this course are to:

- explore a broad spectrum of perspectives on the digital humanities
- expose students to the process and decisions involved in creating digital humanities projects
- 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 data, 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:

- critically discuss and evaluate 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 execute a digital humanities research project

Assignments

Project Critiques	20% total (5 critiques, each worth 4%)
Project Critique Essay	15%
Leading Class Discussion	5%
Participation	20%
Reflection Essay	5%
Final Project	<i>35% total</i>
- Proposal	5%
- Update	5%
- Presentation	5%
- Project	20%



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).

4.0	92-100%
3.5	86-91%
3.0	80-85%
2.5	75-79%
2.0	70-74%
1.5	65-69%
1.0	60-64%

Extra Credit

Opportunities to earn extra credit will be offered throughout the semester. These may include additional tutorials, workshop attendance, attending a digital humanities related lecture, etc. Opportunities will be made visible in the #general channel of Slack and the [Events page of the DH@MSU website](#). A few opportunities will be listed on the [course website](#).

In order to earn extra credit, you must do one of these activities (or another one that you get approval for in advance) and write up 4-5 sentences elaborating on something you learned during the activity. Direct message your write up to me in Slack.

Each extra credit activity you do will add 0.5% to your overall grade for the semester. You may earn up to 3% total in extra credit.

Course Policies

All students are expected to follow our course policies. For any questions or concerns regarding these policies, contact me. I am happy to clarify and/or explain why these policies are in place and how they work.

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.

- [\(MSU\) Google Apps](#) will be used for collaborative work throughout the semester. Note that you may also need access to a non-MSU google account if using Google products that MSU



does not subscribe to (e.g. Google Maps, Youtube). You may use your own Google account or create one specifically for the class.

- A Slack account. A sign up link is available in the course D2L and will be emailed to students individually. You can access the team at <https://introdhmsu2022.slack.com> in a browser or by downloading the app on your computer and/or phone. Only your fellow classmates and I will be able to see this space.
- An [MSU Commons](#) account. As an MSU student, you can create an account using your MSU netid and password.
- A (free) [Flourish](#) account. We will use this platform for the mapping workshop in September.
- A (free) [Onodo](#) account. We will use this platform for the network analysis workshop in September.

There may be additional platforms or software to create accounts for or download during the semester. You will not be asked to sign up for any free trials or paid accounts.

While you participate in class, make sure that your use of technology is not a distraction to yourself or others. Avoid using technology as a barrier to actively engaging during class.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for this in-person, face to face class. There is not an option to attend class remotely.

You are allowed two absences. If you are absent for more than two, you may make up an additional one absence by meeting with me to make up the class session. Further absences will result in the deduction of a 0.5% from your final grade for each missed class. 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 discussion course like ours. If you are more than 15 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 after the deadline will lose 10% of the assignment grade. Assignments turned in very late may not be accepted.

Ethics and Academic Integrity

The field of digital humanities is based on [values of collaboration](#), trust, and properly assigning credit for all work. In order to engage in this work throughout the semester, you will need to conduct yourself based on those values and practice the ethics that we preach in class.



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. In class, we will discuss ways of appropriately citing and crediting others, for example in using [Creative Commons](#) for searching and designating reuse opportunities for our own work.

Procedures for responding to cases of academic honesty and possible repercussions are outlined in Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide: splife.studentlife.msu.edu

Special Needs and Accommodations

We all learn in different ways and process information differently. We also have different situations and things in our lives that can interfere or make some class activities more difficult. *Please talk to me as soon as possible about your individual learning needs and the ways in which I can accommodate and support you.*

We should all remember that there are support services available at MSU, such as the [Writing Center](#) and the [Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative](#).

To receive formal 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 me.



Schedule - Overview

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
September 2	Introduction to Digital Humanities	
<i>First Part - Methods of DH</i>		
During the first part of the semester, we will generally spend 40 minutes discussing the readings, 40 minutes going over the assigned project and project critique, take a 10 minute break, and then have an 80 minute workshop.		
September 9	Text	
September 16	Maps	Project Critique
September 23	Networks	Project Critique
September 30	Images	Project Critique
October 7	3D	Project Critique
October 14	Audio	Project Critique
<i>Second Part - How to Make a Project</i>		
October 21	Project Ideas & Planning	Project Ideas
October 28	Website Creation	Project Critique Essay
November 4	Project Management	Meet with Instructor
November 11	Accessibility	Project Proposal
<i>Third Part - Make Your Project</i>		
November 18	Final Project Work	
Thanksgiving week - no class		
December 2	Final Project Work	Project Update Presentation [Due Mon, Dec 5, end of day]
December 9	Final Project Work	
Finals Week	Presentations	Final Project Presentation [Due Dec 13] Final Project [Due Dec 14] Reflection Essay [Due Dec 16]



Schedule - Detailed

September 2 - Introduction to Digital Humanities

We will begin our first class with introductions, an overview of the syllabus, and tutorials of the technologies you will need for this course. As a class, we will create a set of community agreements and norms for operating throughout the semester.

Reading

- [What are the Humanities?](#), Alan Liu, *4Humanities*, 2014
- [“This is why we fight”: Defining the Values of the Digital Humanities](#), Lisa Spiro, *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matt K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, University of Minnesota Press, 2012

First Part - Methods of DH

During the first part of the semester, we will generally spend 40 minutes discussing the readings, 40 minutes going over the assigned project and project critique, take a 10 minute break, and then have an 80 minute workshop.

September 9 - Text

We will discuss the readings together. Then, we will learn about the [Digital Project Evaluation template](#) that we will use to analyze DH projects throughout the semester. Finally, we will hold a workshop using two text analysis tools.

Readings due

- [Using Google’s N-Gram Viewer for historical textual analysis](#), Todd R., 2016
- [Pitfalls of using Google N-Gram to study language](#), *Wired*, 2015
- Ramsby, Kenton. “Text-Mining Short Fiction by Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright Using Voyant Tools.” *CLA Journal*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2016, pp. 251–258. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/44325917. [[Available through MSU Libraries](#)]

Workshop

We will experiment with [Google N-Grams](#) and [Voyant Tools](#).

We will analyze text from the early years of *The Crisis*. Founded by in 1910, *The Crisis* is the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). W.E.B DuBois was the founding editor, serving from 1910 to 1934, and used the magazine to advocate for social justice and promote Black literature, poetry, and art.

[Zip folder of issues from *The Crisis*](#)



September 16 - Maps

Due: Project Critique

Readings due

- [Gaps in the Map: Why We're Mapping Everything, and Why Not Everything Can, or Should, be Mapped](#), Shannon Mattern, September 18, 2015
- [Mapping inequality: 'Big data' meets social history in the story of redlining](#), Connolly, N. D. B., Winling, L., Nelson, R. K., & Marciano, R. In *The Routledge Companion to Spatial History* (pp. 502-524), 2018
- [All maps are wrong. I cut open a globe to show why](#), Johnny Harris, *Vox*. Dec 2, 2016 [5 min video]

Project Critique Options

- [Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America](#), University of Richmond
- [Mapping the Green Book](#), New York Public Library

Workshop

We will have a workshop on mapping with the tool [Flourish](#). **In advance of class, create a free account.**

Data for the Flourish workshop comes from the [Accused Witches of Scotland project](#). [Download the spreadsheet that we will work with here](#).

September 23 - Networks

Due: Project Critique

Readings due

- [Demystifying Networks, Parts I & II](#), Scott B. Weingart, *Journal of digital humanities* 2011 (1.1)
- Network Analysis for DH101, video series, Miriam Posner, 2016
 - Watch part 1 and the first 10 minutes of part 3. You can watch [part 2](#) if you like, but it isn't necessary. (She speaks at a measured pace, so if you want to watch at 1.25 speed, it may be helpful to adjust the video player settings to do so.)
 - [DH101 Network Analysis 1](#), Miriam Posner, 2016
 - [Network Analysis for DH101, Part 3](#), Miriam Posner, 2016

Project Critique Options

- [The Networked Catalog](#), Matt Miller, *NYPL Labs*, 2014
- [Star Wars social networks: The Force Awakens](#), Evelina Gabasova, 2016



- [Linked Jazz](#), Pratt Institute

Workshop

We will experiment with creating a network and analyzing its meaning using the tool [Onodo](#). In advance of class:

1. Create a free account
2. [Watch this tutorial video](#) from the Digital Humanities Initiative at San Diego State University

September 30 - Images

Due: Project Critique

Readings due

- [Knowledge creation through recommender systems](#), Taylor Arnold, Peter Leonard, Lauren Tilton, *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 32.2, 2017
- Explore this pilot example of an in-development tool (Access & Discovery of Documentary Images (ADDI)) for recommender systems (the content of the project are the same photos from the Photogrammar project that you see below)
 - [Pilot tool to explore](#)
 - [In development project explanation/documentation](#) (for reference)
- Methods of Media Visualization, *Cultural Analytics*, Lev Manovich, MIT Press, 2020, p. 223-244 [[available through MSU Libraries as an ebook](#)]

Project Critique options

- [Robots Reading Vogue, Yale University](#)
- [Photogrammar, Yale University](#)

Workshop

I will demonstrate how Imageplot and ImageJ work as software, and the class will experiment using [ImjTool](#).

[Download this folder of images](#) to use during the workshop.

October 7 - 3D

Due: Project Critique

Class will take place in the Digital Scholarship Lab in the MSU Libraries (Main Library, 2nd Floor West). We will have the chance to experience 3D models in VR and in the 360 room.



Readings due

- [Making the Model: Scholarship and Rhetoric in 3-D Historical Reconstructions](#), Elaine Sullivan, Angel David Nieves, and Lisa M. Snyder, *Making things and drawing boundaries: Experiments in the digital humanities*, Jentery Sayers, ed. 2017
- [Recovering Lost Acoustic Spaces: St. Paul's Cathedral and Paul's Churchyard in 1622](#), J. Wall, 3.3, 2014, *digital studies / le champs numerique*
- ['We give access to a lost world': Assassin's Creed's new life as a virtual museum](#), *The Guardian*, March 27, 2018

Project Critique Options

- [Virtual St Paul's Cathedral Project](#), North Carolina State University
- [Great Fire 1666: The Great Fire of London in Minecraft](#)
- [What the Tulsa Race Massacre Destroyed](#), New York Times

October 14 - Audio

Guest speaker: Michael Laney, MSU Libraries, Vincent Voice Library

Due: Project Critique

Readings due

- [Hearing Change in the Chocolate City: Computational Methods for Listening to Gentrification](#), Alison Martin *digital humanities quarterly* 15.1, 2021
- [Hearing eugenics](#), Jacqueline Wernimont, *Sounding out!*, 2016
- [London under the microscope](#), Duncan Greere, 2021

Project Critique Options

- [Voices of Gay Rodeo](#), University of Idaho
- [Museum of the World](#), British Museum

Second Part - How to Make a Project

October 21 - Project Ideas and Planning

Due: Project Ideas

Readings due

- [Best practice principles of designing your first project](#), Jennifer Guiliano and Simon Appleford, *devdh*, 2013 – you must listen to the 28 min audio (located below the slides) and look through the slides



- [Formulating a project's guiding question](#), *PM4DH: Project Management for the Digital Humanities*, Emory University, Center for Digital Scholarship, 2016
- [Research Questions section](#), from *Choosing and using sources: A guide to academic research*, by Teaching & Learning Team, University Libraries, Ohio State University [p.5-26 in [pdf version](#)]
 - Note – the link above takes you to the introductory page of the Research Questions section – be sure to click on the “Contents” link in the top left to make sure you read all the pages within that section. You are not required to do the activities, but you are expected to read through them.

October 28 - Website Creation

Due: Project Critique Essay

Readings Due

- [Choosing a website platform](#), MSU Digital Fellows Program, Kristen Mapes
- [Kenneth D. Crews and Dwayne K. Buttler, “Fair Use Checklist”](#)
- [Digital Preservation Checklist](#), MSU Libraries, 2019

Workshop

In the second half of class, there will be a workshop on setting up a website with WordPress, using [MSU Commons](#). **In advance of class, register for MSU Commons.** You will not need to setup a new username and password because the platform uses your MSU login information. You will have the option to use the site you create in the workshop for your final project, or you can delete it if you want to host your final project elsewhere.

November 4 - Project Management

Due: Meet with Instructor

Readings Due

- Sections from *PM4DH: Project Management for the Digital Humanities*, Emory University, Center for Digital Scholarship, 2016
 - [Designing a project](#)
 - [Defining a project's scope](#)
 - [Creating a Work Plan](#)
- Sections from *Choosing and using sources: A guide to academic research*, (Available as an open access ebook and as a pdf. Page numbers indicate pages in the [pdf version of the book](#).)
 - Popular, Professional, and Scholarly [p.40-41]
 - [Scholarly articles as sources](#) [p.45-46]
 - [News as a source](#) [p. 47-50]



- [Data as sources](#) [p. 51-58]
- [Fair Use](#) [p.185-194]
- [Making an argument section](#) [p.150-161]
- [Thinking about the roles of sources](#) [p. 195-196]

November 11 - Accessibility

Due: Project Proposal

Readings Due

- [Disability, universal design, and the digital humanities](#), George H. Williams, *Debates in Digital Humanities*, ed. Matt K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, University of Minnesota Press, 2012
- [Accessible data viz is better data viz](#), Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic, *Storytelling with Data blog*, 2018
- [Basic Checklist: Online Content Accessibility](#), MSU IT

Third Part - Make Your Project

November 18 - Final Project Work [location: Digital Scholarship Lab, Main Library]

Thanksgiving week - No class

December 2 - Final Project Work [location: Digital Scholarship Lab, Main Library]

Due Monday, December 5, end of day: Project Update Presentation

Due Thursday, December 8, end of day: Peer Feedback on Project Update Presentation

December 9 - Final Project Work [location: Digital Scholarship Lab, Main Library]

Finals Week - Final Project Presentations

Due: Final project presentation [Tuesday, December 13]

Final Project [due on Wednesday, December 14, end of day]

Reflection Essay [due on Friday, December 16, 5pm]



Assignment Descriptions

Project Critiques (5 critiques, each worth 4%, totalling 20%) - Due 9/16, 9/23, 9/30, 10/7, 10/14

Digital Humanities projects come in many forms, rely on a wide array of data types, and involve any manner of technologies. In these assignments, you will critically examine the goals, methods, and materials behind DH projects. 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.

The [Project Evaluation Template](#) includes descriptions for each of the sections and question prompts. Be as thorough in your responses as you can. We will go over the template and discuss the sections during class.

Choose a project to evaluate from the list below, and fill out the Project Evaluation Template as best you can. Make a copy of the Template, rename it to include your last name, and fill it out, being sure to respond to each section. Don't forget to insert your name, the title of the project, and the project's URL at the top of the document. Submit it as a pdf or Word doc in Slack as a direct message to me by the beginning of class. If you thoroughly complete the template, then you will receive full credit for this assignment. Partially completed critiques will lose points.

- Sept 16
 - [Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America, University of Richmond](#)
 - [Mapping the Green Book, New York Public Library](#)
- Sept 23
 - [The Networked Catalog](#), Matt Miller, *NYPL Labs*, 2014
 - [Star Wars social networks: The Force Awakens](#), Evelina Gabasova, 2016
 - [Linked Jazz](#), Pratt Institute
- Sept 30
 - [Robots Reading Vogue, Yale University](#)
 - [Photogrammar, Yale University](#)
- Oct 7
 - [Voices of Gay Rodeo](#), University of Idaho
 - [Museum of the World](#), British Museum
- Oct 14
 - [Virtual St Paul's Cathedral Project](#), North Carolina State University
 - [Great Fire 1666: The Great Fire of London in Minecraft](#)
 - [What the Tulsa Race Massacre Destroyed](#), New York Times



Project Critique Essay (15%) - 10/28

After using the digital project evaluation template for the past five weeks, you are expected to be familiar with the process of exploring and analyzing digital projects as you encounter them.

For this Project Critique, you will be given three digital projects as options, and you will **analyze ONE project**. Use the [project evaluation template](#) as a guide. You can either structure your essay as a traditional essay, or you can use the evaluation template structure to answer each question in the evaluation individually. The key here is to **be as thorough as possible**, especially in your analysis of the effectiveness, success, and shortcomings of the project AND its underlying materials/data. Regardless of the structure you use, the critique as a whole should be a **minimum of 1000 words** (excluding the prompts etc).

Submit it as a pdf or Word doc in Slack as a direct message to Kristen by the beginning of class on October 28. Don't forget to insert your name, the title of the project, and the project's URL at the top of the document and to rename the file to include your name.

Grading Rubric

A successful essay:

- Addresses all of the prompts/sections of the project evaluation template
- Meets the minimum length requirement of 1000 words
- Is thorough in its investigation of who is behind the project and where it comes from
- Demonstrates an understanding of the underlying materials and/or data behind the project
- Shows a nuanced view of the project's successes and failures

Leading Class Discussion (5%)

During the first two weeks of class, you will sign up (or be assigned) a class session later in the semester during which you will help lead discussion. The discussion portion of each class will be around 40 minutes long. In order to successfully lead class discussion, you will need to:

- Send 3 discussion questions, prompts, and/or activities to me via Slack by 10am the day BEFORE the class you are leading (or earlier). These materials should be created by you individually/on your own.
- Confer with any fellow students who are also leading class that day to come up with a plan. You should share your discussion questions with each other and decide if you want to facilitate an activity or exercise to get discussion rolling, how you want to prompt the class to speak, etc.
- Come to class prepared to speak about the readings, including about specific quotes or sections that you found especially inspiring, challenging, or surprising.

[This guide](#) on how you lead class discussions, from Carleton College, has tips and other helpful insights.



Grading Rubric

A successful class discussion will involve:

- Preparing questions/activities in advance and submitting them on time
- Clearly having a plan for the discussion time
- Patiently encouraging the class to share their thoughts, insights, and perspectives on the assigned readings and materials
- Creatively moving the conversation along, either if it peters out or if it gets too far off track

Participation (20%)

Active participation in the course is required and 20% of your overall grade.

Join class prepared to discuss the readings due that day and having explored the tools we will be learning. Plan on expressing your ideas, frustrations, questions, and confusions using your voice during class whenever possible. This is a discussion-based class, so we have the opportunity to delve deeply into issues.

Many class sessions will include a workshop session or time to work on your own project. Participation in these activities involves having a laptop with you and actively following along and using the learn/work time available.

Participation also extends to the online portal to the course, the Intro DH MSU 2022 Slack network. Slack serves as the central point of non-verbal communication during and outside of class meetings. 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.

When you are unable to speak in class (due to e.g. anxiety, needing more time to collect your thoughts, etc), you are encouraged to engage in discussion via Slack. Doing so will count toward your participation grade but cannot fully replace spoken discussion during class.

Slack is also a space for airing questions and comments and sharing ideas and resources that don't come up in class. It is also a great place to share tangential thoughts and ideas that diverge from the main discussion but that you would like to share. Contributing to the conversation in Slack will help improve your participation grade.

Reflection Essay (5%) - Due 12/16

Turn in the essay to me as a direct message on Slack by 5pm on Friday, December 16. You can turn it in as a pdf, Word doc, or Google Doc link.

In at least 1500 words (3 pages, single spaced) reflect on the experience of this project. What did you learn from the experience of creating a research project from scratch? The essay should be



written as paragraphs in a narrative format, incorporating the questions below (meaning: it should not be a bulleted document going over each question).

The reflection should address all of the following (these are the required questions). Make sure to illustrate claims with specific examples from the project (including from your own experiences with and reactions to this project):

- What aspect of this project did you find most intellectually interesting? Why? How might this choice reflect something about you or what you value?
- Was this type of assignment new to you? How did you feel about needing to make your own choices about finding data and selecting tools?
- Explain what advice you would give someone on at least ONE of the following topics, and explain your reasons using your experience with this project (and your prior knowledge as well, if you want):
 - How to collaborate as an effective team; what to do and what to avoid
 - How to improve your research skills or how to make sure your research is very helpful to the project at hand
 - How to be creative/how to be willing to take creative risks

In addition, optionally, the reflection may address one or more of the following if you find that these questions deepen or enhance your reflection:

- What did you find most challenging about this project? How did you work to address these challenges? What knowledge would you offer someone about this particular kind of challenge?
- What did you find most surprising in the course of completing this project? Why did you find it surprising – were your initial assumptions challenged in some way?
- Analyze your own reaction to something that you found out or experienced in the course of this project – something that excited you, something that you felt very negatively about, etc. How do you think your reaction reveals something about you?
- Did the project change how you think about any particular topic or issue? Why?
- Is there anything else about your experience with the project you want to talk about that you can use to shed light on some topic?

Grading Rubric

The essay:

- Is thoughtful in considering the experience of the final project
- Is specific with examples in answering the prompts
- Presents coherent writing with minimal to no grammatical errors
- Meets the minimum length requirement of 1500 words (going over 1500 words is absolutely fine, anything more than 2500 words is likely to lose coherence and effectiveness)
- Answers the minimum required question prompts



Final Project (35%)

Introduction and Goals

The project is a ubiquitous concept within Digital Humanities. Over the course of the semester, we will explore, evaluate, and create digital humanities projects through critiques and in class activities. Then, **you will create your own digital humanities project that pursues a research question, analyzes data/information, and draws substantive conclusions.** I will grade your project through the lens of the same [Project Evaluation Template](#) that we use to do project critiques.

The goal of the final project is to give you practice conducting (digital) humanities research and developing and managing a project from start to finish. You will be challenged to think critically about your research question, the data you use, how you analyze and present what you learn, and the decisions you make along the way. You will also reflect on your own research process and explain it to your peers, which can guide you when you conduct research and/or manage projects in the future. This experience will help you understand and evaluate research in the world of digital humanities and beyond.

Description

You will conceive of and create your own digital humanities project. You may work individually or in groups as you prefer. The project can be on any topic that you choose, as long as it is driven by a research question. The final deliverable will be in the form of a website*, but its content and structure are up to you. For example, it could be a digital archive or exhibit, a multimedia essay, or an interactive visualization. Regardless of format, **the final project must:**

- be guided by a research question,
- clearly articulate the methods used to research and prepare the project,
- and, use discussion and analysis to make an argument.

*Website platform options:

- WordPress, through [MSU Commons](#) or [Humanities Commons](#)
- [Google Sites, through MSU](#)
- If you want to use a different platform for your project, you must receive permission from me.

Milestones

We will begin to brainstorm topics and develop research questions in the second half of October, and you will meet with me to develop your ideas into a proposal before the proposal document is due in the first half of November. After the Thanksgiving break, you will record a project update presentation to share with the class, and then during Finals week, you will give a final presentation about your project and turn in the project itself. Throughout this time, we will devote several class



sessions to project work, during which time you can get help from myself and your classmates and ensure that your project isn't left until the last minute.

- Oct 21 – Project Ideas Due
- Between Oct 24 – Nov 4 – Meet with Instructor
- Nov 11 – Proposal Due
- Dec 5 – Project Update Presentation Due
- Dec 13 – Presentation
- Dec 14 - Final Project Due (end of day/midnight)

Project Ideas (Due 10/21)

Brainstorm ideas for the final project and start thinking about what research questions are behind your interest in these ideas. You may include up to two ideas, with at least 4-5 sentences explaining the idea and the research interest behind it. Be as specific as you can and feel free to include points of inspiration (projects that you would like to emulate, for example) as you have them. Turn in the ideas as a document (google doc, Word, or pdf) to me via Slack by the beginning of class.

This assignment is not given a letter or numerical grade, but if you do not turn it in you will lose points on your final project grade. This document will guide our meeting prior to your Proposal, so the more you have ideas and questions at this stage, the better off you will be moving forward.

Meet with Instructor (10/24 - 11/4)

After your final project ideas have been submitted, but before the end of the day on Friday, November 4, you need to meet with me for feedback. We will go over your ideas, discuss progress you have made on the project, brainstorm ideas and strategies for troubleshooting, and look toward the project proposal so you can be on track to succeed.

The meeting will be scheduled by signing up for a timeslot in Slack. Available times will be posted by mid-October. We can meet in person or via Zoom depending on your preference.

This assignment is not given a letter or numerical grade, but if you do not meet with me, you will lose points on your final project grade.

Proposal (Due 11/11) (5% of overall class grade)

In at least 1000 words, write a description of the proposed topic, including:

- The topic
- The research question
- How and why you selected this topic and developed the research question
 - How you came to explore this topic (if you chose this topic because it is a hobby that you are passionate about, say so, for example)
 - Were you influenced by other DH projects or methods we explored in class?
 - How has your research question has evolved over time



- What your goals are for the project
- What data and/or materials will you use?
 - If you are working with a dataset/materials that already exists, attach it or link to it in the proposal.
 - If you are going to create a dataset/materials yourself, explain what you need to collect and how you plan to do so.
- How will you analyze the data/materials? What DH method(s) will you employ to help answer your research question?
- How will you present your research? (Will your website showcase an archive of digitized materials? Will you create a video that explains your research results? etc)

At least 3 credible sources (scholarly, or at the approval of an instructor) must be cited to show that background research has been done to frame the project. Each source must include 1-2 sentences explaining how it relates to the project.

Grading Rubric

A successful proposal will

- Be a minimum of 1000 words
- Includes at least 3 sources and explanations of how those sources inform the project. Each source is scholarly in nature
- Address all of the prompts/questions above
- Articulates a research question
- Explains how the research question will be analyzed/explored using relevant data/materials

Project Update Presentation (12/5) (5% of overall class grade)

In a 7 minute presentation, provide an overview of your project for the class, including a status report of how things are going at this point and what you still have to do in order to complete the project. Think of this presentation as a revised version of your project proposal, updated to incorporate the progress you have made since the proposal, and geared to the class as the audience. Use slides to make the information you are presenting clear, and include images and screenshots to help show what you are doing and what you hope to do. Screenshots of spreadsheets and data are especially encouraged. This presentation is supposed to give a status report of your project behind-the-scenes, so share your triumphs and challenges thusfar.

Record the presentation, upload it to [Mediaspace](#), and share the link in Slack in the #assignmentdeposit channel **by the end of the day on Monday, December 5**. The recording can be a) a screenshare video showing picture of you and slides; or, b) a recording of you giving a presentation in a room with slides or a screen behind you. If you have technical issues, be in touch with me as soon as possible.



By the end of the day Thursday, December 8, reply in Slack (using the 'thread' function) to at least 3 of your classmates' presentations with a substantive comment or question about their project.

Grading Rubric

- Uses time appropriately (did not finish too early or over time)
- The presentation provides an informative overview of the research question and aims of the project
- The presentation cohesively articulates the status of the project at this time and explains what remains to be done
- Feedback and response to fellow students is thoughtful, meaningful, and constructive

Presentation (Finals Week) (5% of overall class grade)

You will have 4 minutes to share your final project, excluding time for questions. Show your final product briefly and share conclusions and findings that can be drawn from the project. Finally, discuss the methodology and process that led you to the final product. Screenshots of spreadsheets, behind-the-scenes activities, and of your final project site are strongly encouraged.

Address the following elements of your final project:

- Research question
 - What is your research question?
- Methodology and Materials
 - What materials and/or data is your project based on? Where did they come from?
- Argument and Findings
 - What does your project demonstrate or argue? How does it make that argument?
 - What evidence did you use?
 - What should users/viewers/readers learn from your project?
- Final product(s)
 - Make sure that you take screenshots or otherwise embed this portion into your slides so that you do not lose time because of connectivity or login issues.

Fitting all of this into 4 minutes is a challenge. Practice your presentation at least once before the presentation day.

You must use slides to organize your presentation. Use the [Successful Slides tips](#) page as an aid in developing your slides. You will not be graded separately on your slides, but they are key to ensuring a successful presentation.

Grading Rubric

- Uses time appropriately (did not finish too early or over time)
- Communicates the research question behind the project



- The argument and conclusions of the project are articulated – what did you discover through this research?
- Showcases the final product and shares findings
- Explains the processes that led to the final product
- Communication is clear, engaging, and polished (including, eye contact with audience members, did not speak too fast or too slow)
- Uses slides that enhanced the presentation

Final Project (12/14, end of day/midnight) (20% of overall class grade)

Turn in your final project to me in Slack by sending the project website link.

Methodology

Your final project must convey your methodology: the **process, work, and decisions** that went into the final product.

There is no specific length or format associated with this component. You will be graded based on how thoroughly the following topics are covered in your final project. They do not need to be covered in a standalone section but instead can be integrated into the project in many places, depending on the goals and audience of your project.

Share what choices you made and why in:

- Refining the research question
 - Did you adjust it based on the availability of data, or to scope it appropriately?
- Selecting and finding material/data
 - If you are using a particular dataset because it was already created and available, cite the source and explain why you chose it.
 - If you curated material that was already available, for example, in a digitized library, explain where it came from and why you chose it.
 - If you collected your own data, how did you collect it? Where did it come from?
 - Describe any limitations of your data. Is there information missing?
- Preparing your data for analysis and presentation
 - Did you transform the data in any way?
- Selecting your presentation method (map/network/etc? what tool(s) did you use? why?)
 - If you selected a particular tool because it could handle geocoding data for you (for example), say so. If you chose to do a network graph, explain why you chose that visualization and analysis format.
- If you have chosen to share your data, on your project website or through Github, include your reasoning behind doing so.

Argumentation and Analysis



Your final project will be graded using the [Project Evaluation Template](#). You are also expected to convey the findings of your research and conclusions that can be drawn from those findings in your final project deliverable.

Grading Rubric

- The methodology behind the project is visible and articulated clearly
- The prompts above relating to methodology are addressed somewhere in the final project
- Research findings and conclusions are thoroughly and thoughtfully articulated
- All sections of the [Project Evaluation Template](#) are addressed – for example, you do not need a ‘users’ section of your site, but you do need to have indicated in some way(s) who the intended users of your project are, so when I evaluate your project using the template, I can understand the aims of the project.
- The project presents a clear purpose and is suitable for its audience

Examples from past years:

Note: These projects each have strengths as well as weaknesses. Past iterations of this course have had variations in framing for the final project, and none of these should be considered perfect examples to copy for your project. That said, these examples should offer a sense of the variety of topics and project deliverables that you can pursue for your project.

- [“Eyre” Head: An Interdisciplinary Approach to “Jane Eyre”](#), Karah Smith, 2017
- [Pure Michigan on Instagram](#), Suzanna Smentowski, 2017
- [The Movement of MSU Basketball Players During the Tom Izzo Era](#), Andrew Duris, 2018
- [SCP Wiki](#), Jason Moeller, 2019
- [Feminism in the Music Industry: The Taylor Swift Effect](#), Bonnie Bremer, 2021
- [Products and Producers of the 20th Century](#) (Text Analysis of Ghandi and Hitler), Kristin Mezaache, 2021



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- [DH 101: Introduction to Digital Humanities, Fall 2014](#), Miriam Posner, UCLA
- [LIS 657: Digital Humanities](#), Fall 2013, Chris Alen Sula, Pratt Institute
- [AL 285: Introduction to Digital Humanities](#), Fall 2014, Erin Beard, Michigan State University
- WRA 415: Digital Rhetoric, Fall 2014, Liza Potts, Michigan State University
- [AL 340: Digital Humanities Seminar](#), Spring 2015, Sean Pue, 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

In addition, significant revision of the course took place before the 2016 iteration of the course, prompted by DHM293: Digital Tools for the 21st Century: Sherlock Holmes's London, Fall 2015, Annie Swafford, SUNY New Paltz, <http://hawksites.newpaltz.edu/dhm293/>

For the 2017 version of the course, I thank all those who attended the [Innovations in Digital Pedagogy workshop at the DH2017](#) conference who gave me feedback and inspired me with their exemplary work.

The 2020 course underwent a complete overhaul, shifting from a two meetings per week class to a one meeting per week course. Kate Topham, who co-taught the course with me in 2020, was instrumental in this restructuring and development. Kate continued to provide valuable insight in the preparation for the 2021 course iteration as well.

The 2022 course saw another overhaul, with the addition of workshops and other changes to the syllabus. Thanks to Miriam Posner for continuing to be a guiding light in DH pedagogy, through her shared tutorials and syllabi, in particular:

- [Digital Humanities 201](#), Winter 2021, UCLA
- [Introduction to Digital Humanities](#), Winter 2022, UCLA

