

Introduction to Digital Humanities - Concepts and Methods

Summer Session: July 4 - September 3, 2021
8 week course, 3 hours per session

Course Goals:

The course will include weekly discussions of theoretical readings, critiques of existing projects, and introductions to tools with hands-on exercises. Overall emphasis will focus on understanding core concepts, establishing principles for future work, and learning the ethical dimensions to working with Holocaust-related archives and collections.

Midterm Project:

You will prepare a project proposal/narrative (~1500 words) that will utilize at least one of the technologies discussed to analyze your own topic, data, and materials. You should also demonstrate progress and experimentation with the technology of your choosing, which will look different for each area of research and student; discuss with the instructor on what might be most appropriate for you.

This assignment is designed to prepare you to start thinking about practical application of both research methods and various concepts that we have discussed in class and is intended to build towards your final project. Students might want to work on topics related to their own areas of research but can pivot towards any topic of interest.

The written portion of the submission should include:

- Project Description: A summary of the subject/topic of your project, including a clearly defined research question or justification for exploratory analysis.
- Progress report: Documentation of your technical approach and progress, such as a dated list of activities with reflections at the end of each work session.
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Final Project:

Everyone:

All students in the course will be expected to prepare a **X** minute presentation for the last meeting of class. The presentation will demonstrate the progress or changes you have made since the midterm assignment. The digital portion of your project does not have to be in its most final or complete form, but should be completed to a satisfactory milestone. Presentations should include reflections on what you have learned, how you might take the project further, and can include introductions to other projects of note or inspiration.

Short Essay: (~10)

Write a descriptive, reflective, and explanatory essay that reflects upon your digital experimentation and discusses the critical affordances, benefits, and limits of the approach you have taken. Refer back to the readings, other examples, and your own goals and interests. You should demonstrate research and familiarity with similar projects (thematically and/or technologically). You might also write about how your work compares, the technical choices you made, and what you would do if you had more time, resources, access, etc. Refer back to the readings from class, introduce new writers/critiques/debates. Limited pages may be allocated to documentation and describing your project work.

Long Essay: (~25)

Write a descriptive, reflective, and explanatory essay that reflects upon your digital experimentation and discusses the critical affordances, benefits, and limits of the approach you have taken. Refer back to the readings, other examples, and your own goals and interests. You should demonstrate research and familiarity with similar projects (thematically and/or technologically). You might write about how your work compares, the technical choices you made, and what you would do if you had more time, resources, access etc. Refer back to the readings from class, introduce new writers/critiques/debates, and demonstrate understanding of the historical questions/debates at stake in the core of your project. Some pages may be used to document and describe your project work - aspects might include explanation of decisions, design choices in project aesthetics, acknowledgement of breakthrough moments, etc.

Expectations

Invariably during a course like this, every member of the class will encounter technological difficulties during either class time activities or the course of an assignment. Some of the tools introduced might work better on some computers than others, it is important for the student to be communicative on what is and is not working for them in terms of the technology they have access to, and their fluency and understanding when new tools are introduced. It is to the benefit of the instructor and students that we can adjust and restructure when needed as the course progresses.

Week 1: Introduction

Topics & Questions:

- What is DH? What do you know? What do you think it is?
- How does DH and Holocaust studies work together in unique ways? Are there specific qualities that distinguish Holocaust studies from other disciplines that work with DH?
- Review of syllabus and resources.
- What are students studying/working on? Does anyone already have ideas of what they are interested in working on? What do they have questions about (if any) that might be addressed at a later date?
- Acknowledge how important collaboration is, how those who work on DH come from a variety of backgrounds, fields, and levels of expertise.
- Overview of the technologies that will be covered during the course, begin to think about what interests you and what you might want to further explore. Although cursory, some of the topics that most interest you might not be covered before your first major assignment is due.
- Arolsen Archives: citizen history, see [here](#)

Readings: (Read + discuss during class)

- Miriam Posner, "What's Next: The Radical, Unrealized Potential of Digital Humanities," in Lauren Klein and Matthew Gold, ed., *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (University of Minnesota, 2016).
- Alan Liu, "The State of the Digital Humanities: A Report and a Critique," *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 11.1-2 (2012): 8-41.

Activities:

- Introduce and review some existing projects
- Review course logistics
- End of class - Introduce testimony class project: what kind of questions would you like to query of a testimony? What would you want to probe/quantify/codify? [to add]

Week 2: Ethics, Sources, and Data Structure

Topics & Questions:

- Ethics can mean anything from being aware of the sources of data, the tools that are being used, the funding of institutions etc. Ask the questions of who is making the archive? Who has access to the archive?
- Not only being able to identify and critique ethical questions but to also explore the possibility of *ethics* themselves being at the core of digital projects

Readings:

- Todd Presner, *Ethics of the Algorithm*
- Noah Shenker
 - Selections from *Reframing Holocaust Testimony* - Intro + chapter on the USHMM?
 - [Embodied memory: the institutional mediation of survivor testimony in the United States holocaust memorial museum](#)
- [Parable of the Polygon](#)

Activities:

- Review Citizen Science projects:
- End of class - testimony class project: how is everyone doing with this? Any clarification?

Week 3: Database design/management/visualization

Topics & Questions:

- [Drucker famously reminds us](#) that 'data' are not really things given, but rather things captured, things transformed: that is to say, 'capta'.

Readings:

- [Information is Beautiful](#)
- Rebecca Sutton Koeser, "[What if you could touch data?](#)"
 - Gallery of physicalized data: <http://dataphys.org/list/gallery/>
- Data and SCALE → Paul's article with Eve Duffy?
- Katie Rawson and Trevor Muñoz, "Against Cleaning," *Debates in the Digital Humanities* 2019 (2019).
- Johanna Drucker, "Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2011).
- Hadley Wickham, *Tidy Data* - Sections 2, 3, 5, and Conclusion

Activities:

- Introduction to Tableau
- Review what the class has produced with the one testimony
- Practice some visualization with the class wide codebook

Week 4: Text Analysis & Corpus Linguistics

Topics & Questions:

- Going back to the testimonies we used for the class-wide project, how might this approach change things?
- Brief introduction (video?) from William Mattingly on the more complex level of NLP/NER

Readings:

- Franco Moretti, "[Graphs, Maps, Trees](#)"
 - Lauren F. Klein, "[Distant Reading After Morretti](#)"
- Tobias Blanke, Michael Bryant, Mark Hedges, Understanding memories of the Holocaust—A new approach to neural networks in the digital humanities, Digital Scholarship in the Humanities, Volume 35, Issue 1, April 2020, Pages 17–33, <https://doi.org/10.1093/lc/fqy082>
- Richard Jean So and Edwin Roland. "Race and Distant Reading." PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America 135, no. 1 (2020): 59–73. doi:10.1632/pmla.2020.135.1.59.
- Watch: Gabor Toth [presentation](#)

Activities:

- Tools: Antconc, Abbyy Finereader, Adobe Acrobat OCR, Voyant

Week 5: Mapping

Topics & Questions:

- How can we expand our understanding of geography? Landscapes, soundscapes, time, etc.
- How do maps lie? Deep mapping? Historical GIS, participatory GIS
- When we want to represent things spatially, what else can we think about representing besides definite points?

Readings: (To edit)

- Geographies of the Holocaust, Introduction
 - Anne Kelly Knowles
- Tim Cole & Alberto Giordano
 - [Mapping Mobility in the Budapest Ghetto](#)
- Phenomenology? Space & Place, Yi-Fu
- Explore one or the other: what do you gain from such a layered map like this? Who is this helpful to? What is lacking in this project?
 - Lublin Ghetto:
 - [Project](#)
 - [Documentation](#)
 - [DECIMA](#)
- [Lodz Ghetto at USHMM](#) with MICA students: think about digital-tactile relationships
- Kwan, Mei-Po. "Feminist Visualization: Re-envisioning GIS as a Method in Feminist Geographic Research." Annals of the Association of American Geographers 92, no. 4 (2002).

- Kwan, Mei-Po, and Guoxiang Ding. "Geo-Narrative: Extending Geographic Information Systems for Narrative Analysis in Qualitative and Mixed-Method Research." *The Professional Geographer* 60, no. 4 (September 16, 2008): 443–65.
- Coenen Snyder, Saskia. "An Urban Semiotics of War: Signs and Sounds in Nazi-Occupied Amsterdam." In *Place in Modern Jewish Culture and Society*, edited by Richard I. Cohen, Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190912628.001.0001>.

Activities:

- Geocoding place points, Geocode by Awesome Table
- Georeferencing maps
- Tools: ArcIS, QGIS (download before class)
- [QGIS Tutorial](#)

Week 6: Exhibitions & Storytelling

Topics & Questions:

- Tools: Knight Lab, Omeka
- Guest: Hannah Jacobs, Digital Humanities Specialist at Duke
- Review projects, topics, exercise in project critique
- What does it mean to create a digital companion piece to a physical exhibition? Or to create a storytelling component that is purely digital?
- Who gets access to these sources? Who crafts the stories? Who gets to experience these stories?

Suggested Readings:

- History Unfolded??
- Amelia Wong, "[The whole story, and then some: 'digital storytelling' in evolving museum practice](#)"
- Cooper-Hewitt
 - [Museum as Play](#)
 - [Cooper-Hewitt Labs](#)
- Jessica Abel, [Out on the Wire](#)
- Mukurtu CMS
 - [Project](#)
 - [Documentation](#)

Week 7: Open Lab/3D Modeling(?)

Topics & Questions:

Week 8: Presentations

- Documentation:
 - Review techniques and steps that allow projects to "live on" online or to be archived
 - Review and acknowledge the very reality that projects can become "bad" or "defunct" really easily
- [A Digital Project Handbook](#)