

AL491 - Culture: Digital and Physical

Summer 2016 | Technology, Humanities, and the Arts in London Study Abroad, May 20-June 18
Syllabus available on Trello: <https://trello.com/b/5zqQTwxy/al491-syllabus>

Instructor Information

Kristen Mapes
308A Linton Hall, Michigan State University
kmapes@msu.edu | @kmapesy

Contacting the Instructor

The best way to get in touch with me is via the course Slack network (TechHumArtsLondon.slack.com). I am also available through Twitter, email, and Whatsapp.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The goals of this course are to:

- explore a broad spectrum of cultural institutions to discover the range of approaches to providing access to material, both in physical and digital manifestations
- develop familiarity with a range of digital humanities and cultural heritage 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:

- demonstrate effective communication skills across a variety of media
- analyze how digital representations of artistic and historical artefacts communicate the materiality and significance of objects
- analyze how artistic and historical artefacts shape our understanding of culture and history
- integrate various disciplinary methods and apply them to course concepts



Assignments

Reflection 1 - Information Age Exhibit	8 %
Visitor & Resident Reflection	6 %
Storymap Gigapixel Assignment	10 %
Reflection 2 - Manchester & Liverpool	8 %
Mapping Assignment	15 %
Reflection 3 - Museum of London Exhibit	8 %
Final Project and Reflection	20 %
Attendance and Participation	25 %

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%

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.
- A **Slack** account. Sign up using your @msu.edu email account at [TechHumArtsLondon.slack.com](https://techhumartslondon.slack.com). Only your fellow classmates, Ellen Moll, Max Chappuis (OSA Representative), 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.

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 one unexcused absence; further absences will result in the deduction of a third of a point from your final grade. Lateness disrupts the entire class, especially in a small 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 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.

Assignments

Reaction 1 - Information Age Exhibit

After visiting the museum, go back to the website again, and look deeper. Download an app, watch a video, explore. Your assignment will be to react to the exhibit, both in terms of the content of the history of communication and information technology as well as to the way the cultural objects are communicated to you. Think about how the physical exhibit interplays with the digital/online content, both on the website and through the app. What do you think the museum is trying to achieve? How successful are they? What are the pros and cons of the different in-person versus online (or mixed) experiences? Feel free to focus on one or two objects or to think more broadly - whatever interests you is where you should focus.

Write your reactions and ruminations in a 1-2 page double spaced Google Doc (you're welcome to include pictures/screenshots) and **post to the #culture_readings channel in Slack by midnight on Thursday (May 26th)**. Share the google doc with everyone in the class, giving them "Suggesting" privileges.

By class on Friday, May 27th, you needs to comment on 3 of your peers' papers. A comment can be an overall reaction to their paper, or on a specific point they made. Feel free to comment on each others' comments as well.

Visitor and Resident Reflection

Write up to 1 page, single-spaced, reflecting on your V&R map, on the concept of digital visitors and residents, and how any of this relates to museums, libraries, and archives. Build upon the discussion that we had on Friday in the workshop and share any insights that you have had over the weekend. Turn in the assignment by DM'ing me on Slack or emailing me a Word doc, pdf, or google doc.

Reflection 2 - Manchester and Liverpool

After visiting cultural institutions in Manchester and Liverpool, reflect on what you saw and experienced. Visit the websites of the places you visited a bit more in depth. Do museums and other institutions seem to approach physical and/or digital objects differently? Was Northern England



different than London? If so, how? Did any differences you encountered affect your understanding or experience in the museum (etc) context?

Write your reactions and ruminations in a 1-2 page double spaced Google Doc (you're welcome to include pictures/screenshots) and **post to the #culture_readings channel in Slack by midnight on Thursday (June 17th)**. Share the google doc with everyone in the class, giving them "Suggesting" privileges.

By class on Friday, June 10th, you needs to comment on 3 of your peers' papers. A comment can be an overall reaction to their paper, or on a specific point they made. Feel free to comment on each others' comments as well.

Reflection 3 - Museum of London

After visiting the museum, go back to the website and look deeper. Download an app, watch a video, explore. Your assignment will be to react to the Museum and what you learned of its practices. How does the tradition of maintaining and displaying cultural objects in person fit with the robust digital activities that the Museum takes part in? How does the Museum seek to interact with users? Think back to the Visitor and Resident workshop as you consider how the Museum sees itself and its users online. What do you think the museum is trying to achieve? How successful are they? What are the pros and cons of the different in-person versus online (or mixed) experiences?

Write your reactions and ruminations in a 1-2 page double spaced Google Doc (you're welcome to include pictures/screenshots) and **post to the #culture_readings channel in Slack by midnight on Thursday (June 16th)**. Share the google doc with everyone in the class, giving them "Suggesting" privileges.

By class on Friday, June 17th, you needs to comment on 3 of your peers' papers. A comment can be an overall reaction to their paper, or on a specific point they made. Feel free to comment on each others' comments as well.

Mapping Assignment

Throughout the course, you will need to take notes, photos, and collect any other media and thoughts you like in order to create a story of your time in London.

This story will be told using one of three mapping tools (your choice - let me know if you have another tool that you'd like to use):

- Google Maps (<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/o>)
- Storymap JS (<https://storymap.knightlab.com>)
- Odyssey JS (<http://cartodb.github.io/odyssey.js>)



For each library, archive, or museum that you visit for this class, take a note, a photo, a video, or find an artifact online that you would like to reflect on, and make the place a point/card/etc on your map. Include any media that you'd like to in the card itself. Additionally, you will need to write a short paragraph summarizing something that you learned by visiting that site that contributed to your overall understanding of the course concepts.

You will be graded on the thoughtfulness of your summaries, the impact of the media included, and on the technical success of the map.

You will be expected to be adding content to this map as the program progresses so that you may turn it in on the last day in London without cramming.

If you have technical questions or come across bugs, please don't hesitate to ask for help in Slack, online, or in person!

Storymap Gigapixel Assignment

The goal of this assignment is three-fold: 1) to use an innovative digital medium to close read an image, 2) to use the high resolution images provided by cultural institutions in a new way, and 3) to reflect on the pros and cons of the physical and the digital with regard to cultural objects.

Select a high resolution image of an object from a library, archive, or museum (preferably one that you have visited in London, either for class or otherwise). If you prefer not to select an image of an object, you may use a high resolution image of the space itself or of an exhibit.

After loading the image into StoryMap JS Gigapixel (<https://storymap.knightlab.com/gigapixel>), you will both "close read" the image and reflect on its meaning in relation to the class. This is an opportunity to deeply explore the affordances and downsides of the digital versus the physical. Try to select an object/space that you have seen in person or interacted with physically.

Image Analysis Assignment

Examine images from the Victoria & Albert Museum on the following three platforms:

1. Google Cultural Institute - <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/u/o/collection/victoria-and-albert-museum?projectId=art-project>
2. Europeana - http://www.europeana.eu/portal/collections/art-history?f%5BCOUNTRY%5D%5B%5D=nited+kingdom&f%5BDATA_PROVIDER%5D%5B%5D=Victoria+and+Albert+Museum&f%5BTYPE%5D%5B%5D=IMAGE&view=grid
3. Victoria & Albert Museum Website - <http://www.vam.ac.uk/collections>

Include a screenshot of one image from each platform that you will examine. Discuss the pros and cons of each platform. What metadata is available? How much context is provided about the item?



Is the context about its provenance/history, or about its physical location in the museum, or about the content of the piece (or all of the above)? How are the platforms different? Why do you think one prioritizes certain things and another prioritizes something else?

Provide screenshots to support your points. These can be shots of the zooming capability of the site, for example, of metadata, of contextual information - whatever makes sense to you to include.

For this assignment, I expect you to write at least 500 words.

Final Project

[See the full project description here.](#)

Attendance and Participation

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 AL491 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

(contact hours estimate in parentheses)

May 23 (Mon) - Orientation & group sightseeing tour (2)

May 24 (Tues) - Class Time (3)

- Location & Time: ACCENT Classroom, 9am-12pm
- Introduction to the syllabus and the class. Discussion of the readings. Introduction to Storymaps JS and Google Maps.
- Readings due:
 - 'This is why we fight': Defining values of the digital humanities, Lisa Spiro, *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, 2012, <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/13>
 - Humanities data: A necessary contradiction, Miriam Posner, Blog, 2015, <http://miriamposner.com/blog/humanities-data-a-necessary-contradiction>
 - Tuning out digital buzz, for an intimate communion with art, Holland Cotter, *New York Times*, March 26, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/19/arts/artsspecial/tuning-out-digital-buzz-for-an-intimate-communion-with-art.html>



May 25 (Wed) - History of Information Technology -- NOTE: 2 CLASS MEETINGS (3)

- 1st CLASS MEETING
- Location & Time: Science Museum, 10am-12pm
- We will visit the Information Age Exhibit, and you will be free to explore the exhibit at your own pace.
- In advance of visiting the museum, you need to explore the website:
http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visitmuseum/plan_your_visit/exhibitions/information_age
- Post-Class Assignment: Reflection 1 - Information Age

- 2nd CLASS MEETING
- Location & Time: University College London (Sir David Davies Lecture Theatre, room G08 - Roberts Building, Malet Place) 6pm-7:30pm
- Lecture: Johanna Drucker, "Graphic Provocations: What do digital humanists want from visualization?"

May 26 (Thurs) - Workshop with King's College London Students (3)

- **Assignment due (at midnight):** Reflection 1 - Information Age Exhibit
- Location & Time: King's College London, 2pm-4pm
- Hear from students in the King's College Digital Humanities Programme about their work and get to know them at the pub in a social meetup afterward.
- Assignment due (at midnight): Information Age Reaction

May 27 (Fri) - Visitor and Resident Workshop (3)

- **Assignment due:** Reflection 1 - Information Age Exhibit - peer comments
- Location & Time: ACCENT classroom, 1pm-4pm
- Readings due:
 - Visitors & Residents: A New model for online engagement, David S. White and Alison Le Cornu, First Monday, 16.9 (2011),
<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3171/3049>
 - Visitors & Residents Introduction Video, David White, 2014,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPOG3iThmRI> or at
<http://daveowhite.com/vandr>
 - Truth and Method: A Review of Visitors and Residents, David White, 4/29/16,
<http://daveowhite.com/truth-and-method>
- A guest speaker, David White, Head of Technology Enhanced Learning, at University of the Arts London, will lead a workshop for students of the Visitors & Residents model of digital engagement.

May 31 (Tues) - Class time (3)

- **Assignment due:** Visitor & Resident Reflection



- Location & Time: ACCENT classroom, 9am-12pm
- Discussion of the readings. Reflections on the first week of the program and the course. Introduction to Storymaps JS Gigapixel and finding images online.
- Readings due:
 - Beacons, QR Codes, and 3D Printing: Enter the museum of the 21st century, Andrea Shea, The Artery- WBUR Boston, September 14, 2015, <http://artery.wbur.org/2015/09/14/museums-digital-technology>
 - Museums see different virtues in virtual worlds, Anand Giridharadas, New York Times, August 7, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/08/arts/design/museums-see-different-virtues-in-virtual-worlds.html?_r=0
 - Museums in the digital age, Report, 2013, http://www.arup.com/news/2013_11_november/05_november_museums_in_the_digital_age_future_gazing_report_launches

June 1 (Wed) - NO CLASS

June 2 (Thurs) - June 4 (Sat) -- FIELD TRIP TO NORTHERN ENGLAND: Manchester & Liverpool

For the Day in Liverpool: Thinking about Cultural Institutions Beyond GLAMs - Football and Public Memory

Liverpool is a city with a fascinating and rich history. However, based on continued developments in the Hillsborough Disaster inquiry, we are going to focus on one aspect of the city's recent history. There are 2 Wikipedia articles to read - the Heysel Stadium Disaster predated the Hillsborough Disaster by four years and provided the context with which the Hillsborough Disaster played out in the press and public opinion.

Skim through the Guardian article ('Deadly Mistakes') (it's helpful for images especially). Look at the data journalism exploration from the Guardian (*if you would like to download the data and explore it for your final project, that's an option; let me know*).

Then, explore the Report and archive/disclosed material. Read a document or two and see how it can be explored. As you explore the city of Liverpool, keep an eye out for memorials to the Disaster. What impression do they make? How do they seem to be maintained? (eg are there fresh flowers or other mementos left there today?) Before class on Tuesday, post a comment and react to your peers in the #cultural_readings channel of Slack. Feel free to include an image or video from a memorial if you have any.

- Reading due -
 - Heysel Stadium Disaster, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heysel_Stadium_disaster
 - Hillsborough Disaster, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillsborough_disaster



- Hillsborough Disaster: Deadly Mistakes and Lies That Lasted Decades, *The Guardian*, 26 April 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2016/apr/26/hillsborough-disaster-deadly-mistakes-and-lies-that-lived-decades> [skim through]
- Hillsborough Report; What Data Journalism Can Tell Us About the Files, *The Guardian*, 12 September 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/datablog/2012/sep/12/hillsborough-disaster-crowdsourcing>
- Disclosed Material and Report, Hillsborough Independent Panel, <http://hillsborough.independent.gov.uk/>

June 7 (Tues) - Class Time (3)

- **Assignment due:** Storymap Gigapixel Assignment
- Readings due:
 - Is a museum a database?: Institutional conditions in net utopia, Mike Pepi, e-flux 60, 2014, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/is-a-museum-a-database-institutional-conditions-in-net-utopia/>
 - Where next for open cultural data in museums?, Mia Ridge, Museum-ID, <http://www.museum-id.com/idea-detail.asp?id=387>

June 8 (Wed) - Wellcome Library (3)

- Location & Time: Wellcome Library, 10am-[TBD]
- Meet with Jenn Phillips-Bacher (Web Manager) and other folks from the digital services team to learn about Library perspectives and using collections data to envision new ways of exploring and knowing about information. We will also discuss linked data.
- In advance of the class, read up on the Wellcome Trust and the Wellcome Library. Especially look at the following:
 - <http://wellcomelibrary.org>
 - <https://alpha.wellcomelibrary.org>
 - <https://alpha.wellcomelibrary.org/people/P2175>
 - <https://wellcome-sandbox.herokuapp.com>
- Reading due:
 - A Linked Data Journey: Introduction, Jacob Shelby, 23 September 2015, LITA Blog, <http://litablog.org/2015/09/a-linked-data-journey-introduction>

June 9 (Thurs) - London Metropolitan Archives (3)

- **Assignment due at midnight:** Reflection 2 - Manchester and Liverpool
- Location & Time: London Metropolitan Archives, 10am-1pm
- Conduct class at [London Metropolitan Archives](#) with guest speakers from their staff: Laurence Ward (Team Lead of Digital Services) and Philippa Smith (Head of Collections) to discuss digitization processes as well as the [Great Parchment Book project](#).



- Learn about the LMA's regular process of digitization as well as, and by contrast to, the work needed for the Great Parchment Book project.
- In advance of the visit, explore the LMA's website as well as the project page for the Great Parchment Book:
 - <http://www.greatparchmentbook.org>
 - <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/Pages/default.aspx>
 - <http://collage.cityoflondon.gov.uk/collage/app>
 - <http://search.lma.gov.uk/scripts/mwimain.dll/144/LMA?LOGONFORM>
- Reading due:
 - Cultural heritage destruction: Experiments with parchment and multispectral imaging, Alberto Campagnolo, Alejandro Giacometti, Lindsay MacDonald, Simon Mahoney, Melissa Terras, Adam Gibson, *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, 2nd Edition, Edited by Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth, 2016, p. 121-146 [see Slack for the pdf]

June 10 (Fri) - Field trip to Museum of London Docklands (2)

- **Assignment due:** Reflection 2 - Manchester and Liverpool - comments
- Location & Time: Museum of London Docklands, AM

June 13 (Mon) - Ben Uri Museum (3)

- Location & Time: Ben Uri Museum, 2pm-5pm

Meet with Head of Collections and and IT and Web Developer to discuss digitization processes and how a smaller museum sees its online identity.

- In advance of the visit, explore the museum's website and its collections pages.
 - <http://benuri.org.uk>
 - <http://www.benuricollection.org.uk/browse.php>
- Also explore the Google Cultural Institute, of which the Ben Uri is involved as a member.
 - For institutions in London: <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/u/o/collections?projectId=art-project&q=london>
 - Google Cultural Institute: <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/u/o/project/art-project>

June 14 (Tues) - British Library (3)

- Location & Time: British Library, 2pm-5pm (Meet at the British Library at 1:45pm at the Reception desk.)

Meet with Mia Ridge, Digital Curator in the Collections team, from 2-3pm, and then meet with people from the British Library Labs at 3pm.

- Readings due:



- Crowdsourcing in the digital humanities, Melissa Terras, *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, 2nd Edition, Edited by Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth, 2016, p. 420-438 [see Slack for the pdf]

June 15 (Wed) - Museum of London (3)

- Location & Time: Museum of London, 10am-12pm
- Readings due:
 - Virtual Reality and the Museum of the Future, Wiebe, December 11, 2013, Europeana Blog, <http://blog.europeana.eu/2013/12/virtual-reality-and-the-museum-of-the-future>
 - Virtual Reality Museum Brings Art and Artefacts to the World, Lucy Ingham, October 10, 2014, *Factor*, <http://factor-tech.com/3d-modelling/8661-virtual-reality-museum-brings-art-and-artefacts-to-the-world>
- Think about these issues of Virtual Reality by contrast with the experience of digital collections via Google Cultural Institute (<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/u/o/collection/museum-of-london?projectId=art-project>), apps (<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/museum-london-apps>), and/or digital collections (<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>) and online exhibits (<http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london/permanent-galleries>).
- Also, check this out: <http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/families/fun-home>

June 16 (Thurs) - Black Cultural Archives (3)

- **Assignment due (at midnight):** Reflection 3 - Museum of London
- Location & Time: Black Cultural Archives, 9:30am-12pm
- Plan to conduct class at The Black Cultural Archives with guest speaker from their staff to discuss online engagement.

June 17 (Fri) - Class time (3)

- **Assignments due:**
 - Reflection 3 - Museum of London - comments
 - Mapping Assignment
- Location & Time: TBD

August 1 (Mon) - Final Project Due (by midnight)

