

DH285: Introduction to Digital Humanities

Fall 2021 | Fridays, 10:20am-1:10pm | Berkey Hall 319

Course website: introdh2021.msu.hcommons.org

Google Doc syllabus also via the shortlink go.cal.msu.edu/introdhsyllabus

Instructor Information

Kristen Mapes

Assistant Director of Digital Humanities, Michigan State University

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308 Linton Hall ([map](#))

Office Hours: Mondays 10:00-10:30am | Thursdays 4:00-5:00pm

Location: Zoom (link available on D2L and Slack)

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

Contacting the Instructor

The best way to get in touch with me is via the Intro DH MSU 2021 Slack network. I am also available via email, and you can expect a reply from me within 24 hours (although I do not check email on the weekend). You are welcome to set up an appointment to meet with me during the week or to drop in during office hours.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

The goals of this course are to:

- explore a broad spectrum of perspectives on the digital humanities
- 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

Digital in the Humanities Presentation	9%
Project Critique 1	5%
Tool Presentation	9%
Project Critique 2	5%
Project Critique 3	7%
Exam	15%
Final Project	35%
Participation	15%

Grading Scale

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

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

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 (<https://googleapps.msu.edu>) 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://introdhmsu2021.slack.com> in a browser or by downloading the app on your computer and/or phone. Only your fellow classmates, and the instructor will be able to see this space.
- Zoom, which includes a computer download at the first time of use. We do not plan to hold class over Zoom, but we may need to shift to that mode depending on how the semester plays out. Zoom. (For an assessment of Zoom's privacy strategies, see <https://foundation.mozilla.org/en/privacynotincluded/products/zoom/>)

There may be additional platforms or software to create accounts for or download during the semester. Note that 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 class. 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 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 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 10% of the assignment grade. Assignments turned in later than the due date will lose 10% of the assignment grade per day past the due day.

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

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 their 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 I can accommodate and support you.

Even if you do not have a documented disability, remember that there are support services available to you at MSU such as the Writing Center (writing.msu.edu) and the Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative (nssc.msu.edu).



Assignments

Digital in the Humanities Presentation (9%) - September 17

Digital Humanities work is done in a variety of fields, each of which favor different approaches and methodologies. In preparing for this presentation, students will become familiar with concrete examples of DH work and a range of approaches to DH in an area of the humanities. By sharing their newly gained experience with the class, students will develop comfort in discussing DH trends and learn from each other.

Each student will present on DH approaches within a particular field (see the list of fields on the course website). While more than one student may end up covering a humanities field, each presentation will be given individually. The presentation should **reference at least one scholarly source** (for example, an article in academic journals, materials on Humanities Commons, or an academic book. Scholarly sources do not include things such as the History Channel website, news articles, Wikipedia, etc) and **include an example of a DH project**.

In a 6 minute presentation, address the following questions:

- What methods of DH are used in this area of study? (for example: mapping, text analysis, digital editions, network analysis, digital archiving, etc)
- What are some of the well known DH projects in the discipline? (feel free to mention as many as you like, but spend time discussing one project)
 - Use the [Project Evaluation Template](#) to share information about the project you are highlighting. Be sure to cover the "Project Background and Goals" section of the Template in the presentation.

Tool Presentation (9%) - October 15

Each student will present a digital humanities tool to the class. In preparing for this presentation, students will gain experience in critically analyzing a DH tool by asking questions about its context, audience, and use cases. After these presentations, students will also have a better sense of what options they will have for pursuing the final project.

The tool will come from the list on the course website (or at the approval of the instructor).

In a 6 minute presentation, address the following questions:

- Background and technology:
 - Who made this tool or platform? Who maintains it now? (this could be individual(s), companies, or a combination of the two)
 - Where in the world is the tool based?
 - What background can you find about the tool?
 - How long has it been around? Is it updated regularly?



- Is it open source? ([definition of open source](#))
- Is it freely available? Does it operate on a freemium pay model? Was it funded by government or foundation grants?
- Who is its primary audience? (K-12 students and teachers? Journalists? Data scientists? Humanists? Non-profits?)
- Use cases:
 - What is the tool capable of doing?
 - What is it most commonly used for?
- What are its strengths?
- What are its limitations?

Project Critique 1 (5%) - October 18

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

For this first project critique, everyone will evaluate the same project in class: Navigating the Green Book (<http://publicdomain.nypl.org/greenbook-map/>).

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.

Make a copy of the [Project Evaluation 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. Turn in the Project Critique in Slack by Monday, October 18. If you thoroughly complete the template, then you will receive full credit for this assignment. Partially completed critiques will lose points.

Project Critique 2 (5%) - November 5

For the second project critique, choose one project to evaluate from the list of projects given on the course website. The Project Evaluation Template includes descriptions for each of the sections and question prompts. Be as thorough in your responses as you can. Make a copy of the [Project Evaluation 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. Turn in the Project Critique in Slack by the beginning of class.



Project Critique 3 (7%) - November 12

For the third project critique, choose one project to evaluate from the list of projects given on the course website. Use the [Project Evaluation Template](#) to examine the project. In class, you will share your project evaluation as a presentation with slides (instead of turning in the filled out template document). Turn in your slides via Slack at the beginning of class. You will have 7 minutes to present on the project, and you should cover all of the sections of the Template in that time. You will be graded based on the information provided in the presentation, but any information included in your slides that you don't get to in the presentation will help your grade.

Exam (15%) - Due November 19

The exam will include a project critique and will ask students about their understanding of digital humanities.

Students will be sent a link in Slack to the the take-home exam at 5pm ET on Wednesday, November 17. Make a copy of the exam and fill it out, adding your name to the document, and turn it in to the instructor as a direct message in Slack by 11:00am ET on Friday, November 19.

Final Project (35%) - December 17

Students will conceive of and create your own digital humanities project, working 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, and the final deliverable can be an essay or a website. If it is a website, it can take on many forms (such as 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 methodology used in researching and preparing the project,
- and, use argumentation and analysis to make an argument.

Milestones

In developing the project, there will be several milestones along the way:

- Oct 8 - Project Ideas
- Oct 29 – Proposal
- Between Nov 15- Dec 3 – Check in meeting
- Dec 10 – Draft Presentation
- Week of finals (date TBC) – Presentation
- Dec 17 (10am) – Final Project



Grading Breakdown

The final project as a whole comprises 35% of your overall grade. The project will be graded based on the following breakdowns and criteria:

- Project ideas, check in meeting, and draft presentation (5%)
- Proposal (10%)
- Presentation (10%)
- Methodology of final project deliverable (35%)
- Argumentation and analysis of final project deliverable (30%)
- Self-reflection (10%)

A full description of the final project requirements, components, and grading criteria may be found on the Final Project page on the course website.

Participation (15%)

Active participation in the course is required and 15% of your overall grade. Also see the attendance policy for information about absences and how they affect 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 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 Intro DH MSU 2021 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.



Schedule

Subject to adjustments throughout the semester. See the [course website](#) for updates and further details about each class session.

September 3 - Introduction to Digital Humanities

September 10 - Issues in Digital Humanities

September 17 - Digital in the Humanities Presentations & Final Project Discussion

Assignment due: Digital in the Humanities Presentation

September 24 - The Crisis: Text

October 1 - The Crisis: Images

October 8 - The Crisis: Networks, and Data Cleaning

Assignment due: Final Project Ideas

October 15 - Tool Presentations & Project Critique 1

Assignment due: Tool Presentation

Assignment due Monday, October 18: Project Critique 1 (This assignment will primarily be completed in class on October 15.)

October 22 - Walking Harlem: Creating an Archive and Working with Metadata

October 29 - Walking Harlem: Refining the Archive and Working with Maps

Assignment due: Final Project Proposal

November 5 - Project Critique 2 & Beyond 2D

Assignment due: Project Critique 2

November 12 - Project Critique 3

Assignment due: Project Critique 3



November 15 - December 3 - Final project meeting with instructor (by appt)

November 19 - Exam due & Final Project Work

Assignment due: Exam (due at 11am)

December 3 - Final Project Work

December 10 - Draft Project Presentations

Assignment due: Final project draft presentation

Final Exam Week - Final Project Presentations

Assignments due: Final project presentation

Final Project [due on Friday, December 17, 9:00am]

