

# DHM 280: Introduction to the Digital Humanities

*Understanding the intersections of technological affordance and humanistic inquiry*

## Course Overview

Over the course of the last twenty years humanities scholars and artists have pioneered a wide variety of ways to apply digital technology to humanistic research, teaching, and creativity. These methods, which range from the creation of digital archives to the statistical analysis of literary and historical texts to the composition of interactive stories and poems, show how the unique capabilities of digital technology (sometimes called *affordances*) can intersect with the larger human project of making, sharing, and remembering meaning.

In this class you will survey some of the work done in the digital humanities, experiment with some digital tools, and build a digital project of your own design. Along the way, you'll gain a better understanding of some of the larger implications of digital technology for the humanities and for society!

## Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will:

1. Recognize some of the key methods and tools utilized by digital humanists, and understand how these methods and tools help digital humanists achieve scholarly and creative goals
2. Summarize scholarly work in the digital humanities in a form appropriate for a general reader
3. Apply some of the tools and methods of the digital humanities to a research, creative, or teaching project of their own design, including tools and methods connected to visualization and display of data
4. Compose a multimodal website to house the results of their own digital humanities project
5. Assess the affordances of different digital tools and methods through the process of applying these methods and reflecting on this application

**Writing Emphasis:** This course is designated as a Writing Emphasis (W) course in the WCU

General Education curriculum. As a Writing Emphasis course, this course will focus on writing and thinking conventions relevant to composition for the World Wide Web and Web related platforms. This course meets specific General Education goals that will help students

communicate effectively as well as think critically and analytically. As a Writing Emphasis course, this course has specific student learning outcomes related to writing:

- Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading
- Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea
- Construct and/or analyze arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments

**Interdisciplinary:** This course is designated as an Interdisciplinary (I) course in the WCU General Education Curriculum. As an Interdisciplinary course, this course will engage students in the meta-discipline of the Digital Humanities and encourage them to think critically and constructively about the encounter between Humanities and STEM Disciplines this field enables. In particular, we engage with the disciplines of English Studies, History, Film Studies, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Information Science.

This course meets the following **General Education** goals:

- Goal 1: Communicate Effectively: Students will develop their ability to communicate effectively using digital visualization tools typical of the Digital Humanities and the World Wide Web. Students will **learn to express themselves effectively via web-based multimodal texts and interactive digital experiences that demonstrate their comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading**. They will also learn to revise and improve these texts. This learning will take place primarily in the *Weekly Blog* and *Final Project* assignments.
- Goal 2: Critical and Analytical Thinking: Students will learn to **analyze arguments they encounter in online sources and published Digital Humanities scholarship in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments**. They will also **use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea**. This learning will happen primarily in the *Weekly Blog*, *Digital Humanities Definition*, and *Final Project* assignments.
- Goal 4: students will be able to **demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries**. Students will be engaged in the meta-discipline of Digital Humanities, which synthesizes concerns and research questions from multiple humanities disciplines with tools and methods developed by Computer Science, Statistics, Math and other STEM disciplines. Doing so invites students to think critically about how Humanities Disciplines compare and contrast, and how they relate to the STEM fields. This learning will be reflected in their final project and final reflection.

**Meeting and Assessing Student Learning Outcomes:**

	<b>Student Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Evaluation Activity</b>
Communicate Effectively	Summarize scholarly work in the digital humanities in a form appropriate for a general reader	Weekly blog, Digital Humanities Definition, Final Reflection
	Apply some of the tools and methods of the digital humanities to a research, creative, or teaching project of their own design, including tools and methods connected to visualization and display of data	Final Project
	Compose a multimodal website to house the results of their own digital humanities project	Final Project
	<b>GSLO1.a:</b> learn to express themselves effectively via web-based multimodal texts	Weekly Blog, Final Project
	<b>GSLO1.d:</b> demonstrate their comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading	Digital Humanities Definition, Weekly Blog, Final Project, Final Reflection
Think Critically and Analytically	Recognize some of the key methods and tools utilized by digital humanists, and understand how these	Weekly Blog, Digital Humanities Definition, Final Reflection

	methods and tools help digital humanists achieve scholarly and creative goals	
	Assess the affordances of different digital tools and methods through the process of applying these methods and reflecting on this application	Weekly Blog, Final Reflection
	<b>GSLO2.a:</b> Use relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea	Digital Humanities Definition, Final Project, Final Reflection
	<b>GSLO2.b:</b> Construct and/or analyze arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments	Digital Humanities Definition, Final Project, Final Reflection
Think Across Disciplinary Boundaries	<b>GSLO4:</b> Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to think across and about disciplinary boundaries.	Digital Humanities Definition, Final Project, Final Reflection, Blog

## Course Philosophy

This course stresses experimentation, exploration, and hands-on learning. I will ask you to read and interpret difficult scholarly texts, to try out unfamiliar digital tools, and to independently build a project that speaks to your own interests and goals. I'll spend a few weeks at the very beginning of class orienting you to key ideas and methods, but after that my role will be to support you as you engage in the learning process.

In order for this process to succeed, I need you to do two things:

- 1) *Try*. Even if you aren't sure exactly what the outcome will be, it's important that you try to interact with that unfamiliar tool or read that challenging text. The process of trying is key to learning.

- 2) *Ask Questions*: Sometimes students are afraid to ask questions because they worry it will make them look unprepared or dumb. Nothing could be further from the truth. Asking good questions, especially questions that emerge out of the process of *trying* to accomplish difficult things, is one of the best things students can do to learn!

## Course Readings and Materials

This course has no required textbook. Course readings can be found on the course website: <http://dhm280.afamiglietti.org/> The course website also has a useful list of Digital Humanities projects you may wish to consult as you complete assignments that ask you to survey and consider digital humanities projects.

The course website also serves as a continuously updated version of the course syllabus. If the printed syllabus and website disagree *the website is correct*.

## Office Hours and Instructor Contact Info

The best way to contact me is via email: [afamiglietti@wcupa.edu](mailto:afamiglietti@wcupa.edu)

My office is located on the fifth floor of Main Hall, room 538.

Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30am-9:30am and 3:30pm-4:30pm and Wednesday from 10:00am-12:00pm. No appointment is required for these hours, just drop in!

If you can't meet at the times above, but need to speak with me in person, send me an email to set up an appointment.

## Grading Policy

- Weekly Blog: 25%
- Final Project: 30%
- Final Project Presentation: 5%
- Final Reflection: 20%
- Participation: 20%

## Grading Scale

Grade	Quality Points	Percentage Equivalent	Interpretation
A	4.00	93-100	Excellent
A-	3.67	90-92	
B+	3.33	87-89	
B	3.00	83-86	Superior
B-	2.67	80-82	
C+	2.33	77-79	
C	2.00	73-76	Average
C-	1.67	70-72	

D+	1.33	67-69	
D	1.00	63-66	Below Average
D-	0.67	60-62	
F	0	>60	Failure

## Assignments and Grade Breakdown

Assignment introductions are listed below. For complete assignment descriptions, see the class website.

**Participation (20%):** Participation in class discussions and activities is worth a significant fraction of your grade. In addition to participation in class discussions, class participation will include credit for quizzes and in-class activities. If you complete the learning activities in good faith and show you have been paying attention to class readings and lectures, you should expect to earn full credit for your participation score.

**Weekly Blog (25%):** Every week over the course of the semester you will complete a short (300-600 word) blog post on the class website. This blog post will give an overview of your learning for the week.

**Final Project (30%):** Your final project will produce an example of digital humanities work. This example will engage with the materials available in WCU's Special Collections, and make use of your Digital Humanities methods knowledge. Your example of digital humanities work will be housed on a live, public, multi-media web site that you will design and build. This project will be completed in groups, and will be the focus of the second half of our class. **This assignment is a candidate for inclusion in your University e-portfolio.**

**Final Project Presentation (5%):** During the second to the last week of class, you will give a short (15 minute) presentation explaining your final project in progress. You will also compose a discussion prompt inviting your classmates to give you feedback on your project.

**Final Reflection (20%):** You will write a short (400-800 word) reflective essay about your final project. This reflection will explain what you learned about digital technology, the humanities, and their intersection by completing your final project.

Major Assignments	Course Learning Outcomes
Weekly Blog	1, 2, 5, W1, W2, W3
Digital Humanities Definition	1, 2, 5, W1, W2, W3
Final Project	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 W1, W2, W3
Final Project Presentation	1, 2, 3, 5, W1, W2, W3
Final Reflection	1, 2, 3, 5, W1, W2, W3
Participation	1, 2, 3, 5

## Key Policies

This course stresses experimentation, exploration, and hands-on learning. I will ask you to read and interpret difficult scholarly texts, to try out unfamiliar digital tools, and to independently build a project that speaks to your own interests and goals. I'll spend a few weeks at the very beginning of class orienting you to key ideas and methods, but after that my role will be to support you as you engage in the learning process.

In order for this process to succeed, I need you to do two things:

*Try.* Even if you aren't sure exactly what the outcome will be, it's important that you try to interact with that unfamiliar tool or read that challenging text. The process of trying is key to learning.

*Ask Questions:* Sometimes students are afraid to ask questions because they worry it will make them look unprepared or dumb. Nothing could be further from the truth. Asking good questions, especially questions that emerge out of the process of *trying* to accomplish difficult things, is one of the best things students can do to learn!

**Participation:** Your participation in class is vital to your learning in this course. Your participation grade will be based, in part, on class attendance and participation in class discussion and activities.

You may miss up to *four class meetings* without incurring any additional penalty, besides points missed from your participation score. You do not need to explain your absence, but if you wish to make-up your participation points you should contact me and ask for a make-up assignment.

If you miss more than four class meetings, each additional class meeting missed will result in your class attendance score being reduced by one letter grade (i.e. an A would become a B). No make-up work will be assigned for these absences. After six additional absences (for a total of 10 absences from class) your participation score will become a 0.

**Revisions:** You may submit *one* revision of the final copy of any written assignment for this class, and I will assess this revision and update your score accordingly. In order to submit a revision, you must follow the procedure below:

Send me an email letting me know you'd like to submit a revision for a particular assignment and asking to set up a meeting with me to discuss revisions.

At our meeting, we will work together to come up with a *revision plan* you will use to guide your revisions and establish a due date not more than 2 weeks away when you will submit your revision.

When you submit your revision, you will include a one-paragraph revision reflection explaining what you did to achieve your revision plan

**Late Work:** It's important for you to complete assignments on time, since the class is designed to introduce skills and ideas you will use in later assignments through earlier assignments. That said, I understand that you have busy schedules and may have conflicts that delay you completing your work.

For the learning activities in each class module (discussion boards, flipgrid posts, etc) it's best to try to finish them by the day and time I have assigned them. However, if you complete the learning activities by the end of the week they were assigned, I will still consider them for full credit (I reserve the right to revisit this policy if class discussions become impossible due to late participation). Learning activities submitted after the week they were assigned will not receive credit.

For the writing assignments (short compositions, theory of writing and final composition) I will grant extensions if needed. If you think you need more time to complete one of these assignments, contact me via email *before* the assignment due date and ask for an extension. Usually, I will be willing to grant a reasonable extension (usually around a week) for you to complete your work. In some cases, I may not be able to grant an extension due to the end of the semester or other deadlines beyond my control.

If you do not receive an extension, late work will be penalized at the rate of one grade level for each full day late (in other words, a full 24 hours after the due date, an A goes to a B and so on). I reserve the right to assign a score of 0 to any work not turned in prior to the last day of the final exam period.

**Communication:** You should expect to use your WCU email address to remain in contact with me. My WCU email address: [afamigliet@wcupa.edu](mailto:afamigliet@wcupa.edu) is the best way for you to get in touch with me. You should check your WCU email address *at least* once a day. I will send assignment and class updates to your WCU email address as needed to keep you up to date about our course.

**Classroom Inclusivity:** Our classroom is a space where all students should feel comfortable participating, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Under no circumstances will behavior that threatens or demeans your fellow students be tolerated. Students that engage in such behavior may be removed from the classroom.

**Academic Dishonesty:** The re-use of the work of others without acknowledgement is plagiarism. When students engage in plagiarism, they significantly compromise the learning this class is designed to enable. For this reason, plagiarism, including self-plagiarism (turning in work completed for another class without significant modification) will not be tolerated in this class. Work found to be plagiarized will receive a score of 0 and will be result in Report of Violation of Academic Integrity being filed with the University. I reserve the right to issue a *failing grade in the course* for particularly egregious cases of academic dishonesty.

## Class Calendar

### Week 1: Class Onboarding

**Mon 01/23**

IN CLASS: Icebreakers, intro to me and the class, and syllabus overview, fill out contact form for class blog accounts

### **Wed 01/25**

IN CLASS: Intro to class tech and review of D2L/Syllabus Website Integration. Detailed look at syllabus and assignments. “About Me” blog post.

### **Fri 01/27**

READ: SKIM the [list of DH projects](#). Choose TWO that interest you and answer the questions distributed Wednesday for discussion today.

[\*Blog Post 1 – About your initial impressions of DH – Due Friday at 11:59pm\*](#)

## **Week 2: Intro, what is/are the humanities? How do they connect to digital technology?**

### **Mon 1/30**

READ: “[Introduction](#)” from [Debates in the Digital Humanities](#) 2019 AND *skim* one additional chapter from this book.

IN CLASS: Discuss how DH has changed and evolved over time. Discuss the diversity of work in DH. Discuss the political and social relevance of DH. Brainstorm ideas for final project.

### **Wed 2/1**

READ: “[Digital Humanities: The Expanded Field](#)” AND “[What is Digital Humanities](#)” (refresh page for more definitions)

IN CLASS: Discuss the various definitions of DH. What do you think “DH” is after reading these? What do you want to learn more about? How might DH be relevant to your career goals? To understanding the society we live in?

### **Fri 2/3**

**PROFESSOR F AT CONFERENCE. NO CLASS MEETING.**

ONLINE: Asynchronous discussion (on D2L) about how we define DH. Brainstorm issues that we each might want to examine and learn more about over the course of the semester.

[\*Blog Post 2 – About potential areas of interest for your final project – due at 11:59pm Friday 2/3\*](#)

## **Week 3: Distant Reading 1**

**Mon 2/6**

READ: “[Distant Reading](#)” from Wikipedia AND “[Distant Reading and Recent Intellectual History](#)”

IN CLASS: Discuss Distant Reading. What can it do? Why might it be an interesting and useful tool for scholarship, education, and creativity?

**Wed 2/8**

READ: “[Women better represented in Victorian novels than modern, finds study](#)” and SKIM the underlying paper by Underwood, Bamman, and Lee: “[The Transformation of Gender in English-Language Fiction](#)”

IN CLASS: Discuss this study. What did you learn from the news story? What did you take away from the underlying study? What other kinds of questions might we try to examine using this method?

**Fri 2/10**

READ: “[The Language of the State of the Union](#)” and be sure to try out the interactive graphs! (NOTE: If you hit The Atlantic paywall, try opening the link in a private browser, using a library computer, or on a phone/tablet)

IN CLASS: Discuss: what patterns of language change did we notice and what meaning did the authors give these changes? What are some other patterns we noticed? What other kinds of words or phrases might be interesting to track, in State of the Union addresses?

*[Blog Post 3 – About your impressions of Distant Reading – Due by 11:59pm Friday 2/10](#)*

**Week 4: Distant Reading 2****Mon 2/13**

IN CLASS: Start playing with Distant Reading! Do this by cleaning up some [State of the Union Address Text](#), creating a corpus, and importing it into [Voyant](#).

**Wed 2/15**

IN CLASS: Continue playing with our State of the Union text in Voyant! Look for patterns and ask questions. What words that seemed promising are dead ends? What words show surprising patterns?

**Fri 2/17**

IN CLASS: Discuss our Voyant State of The Union findings, and export some images/draft some text for blog post 4

[Blog Post 4 – About what you found out by distant reading State of the Union messages – due by 11:59pm Friday 2/17](#)

## **Week 5: Visualization 1**

### **Mon 2/20**

READ: “[Mapping the Republic of Letters: Using modern technology to understand a network of eighteenth-century thinkers.](#)”

IN CLASS: Discuss the Republic of Letters and Network/Map Visualization

### **Wed 2/22**

READ: “[Demystifying Networks Parts 1 & 2](#)”

IN CLASS: Discuss the principles of Network Visualization and how students have used this method in the past

### **Fri 2/24**

READ: “[Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the American City](#)”

IN CLASS: Discuss what this map teaches us about history. What patterns does the map let us see, and what do we learn from those patterns? What other kinds of spatial patterns might Historians, English Studies scholars, or other Humanists be interested in?

[Blog Post 5 – About your impressions of DH Visualization- Due by 11:59pm Friday 2/24](#)

## **Week 6: Visualization 2**

### **Mon 2/27**

IN CLASS: We gather data for our very first network graph by sharing some of our favorite movies and bands. Then we use this data to build a network graph (Gephi or Cytoscape, TBA) and explore.

### **Wed 3/1**

IN CLASS: We gather data for our very first map by sharing some regional places that connect to strong emotional memories, then build this map in Google Maps and explore.

### **Fri 3/3**

IN CLASS: Return to our map and network and explore. What further data might make these visualizations more meaningful? What questions might they let us ask? What lessons do they teach? What ideas do they express? Prepare images for export to blogs and draft.

[Blog Post 6 – About what you learned from building graphs and maps – Due by 11:59pm Friday 3/3](#)

## **Week 7: Games and Interactive Stories 1**

### **Mon 3/6**

READ: “[The Maze and The Other in Interactive Fiction](#)“

PLAY: “[10 Lost Boys](#)“

IN CLASS: Discuss the digital game as a kind of humanistic activity. What did “10 Lost Boys” Achieve?

### **Wed 3/8**

READ: “[AI Dungeon and Creativity](#)“

PLAY: [AI Dungeon](#) (the “quick start” option is probably simplest)

IN CLASS: Discuss our experiences with AI dungeon. What do machine authored texts mean for the “humanities?”

### **Fri 3/10**

BEFORE CLASS – PLAY: A game from [the top Twine games on itch.io](#) of your choice

IN CLASS: Discuss the Twine games we played! What does Twine do? What might it allow us to learn, teach, or express?

[Blog Post 7 – About your impressions of DH Games – Due by 11:59pm Friday 3/10](#)

## **Week 8: SPRING BREAK – CLASSES DO NOT MEET**

## **Week 9: Games and Interactive Stories 2**

### **Mon 3/20**

BEFORE CLASS: Download and Install [Twine](#) on your Laptop

IN CLASS: Getting started using twine. Twine concepts like links and Twine code. Getting started on a game about our experience encountering the Digital Humanities.

**Wed 3/22**

IN CLASS: Work together to script and build our games in Twine.

**Fri 3/24**

IN CLASS: Finish and share our games!

[Blog Post 8 – About what you learned from building a Twine game – Due by 11:59pm Friday 3/24](#)

**Week 10 – Machine Learning 1**

**Mon 3/27**

READ: “[Science Fiction Hasn’t Prepared Us To Imagine Machine Learning](#)”

IN CLASS: Discuss machine learning, it’s social impact, and what it might mean for us.

**Wed 3/29**

READ: “[How Kindle Novelists are using ChatGPT](#)”

IN CLASS: Discuss the implications of Machine Learning for “The Humanities”

**Fri 3/31**

READ: TBD – Machine Learning Thing about something that didn’t exist when I made my syllabus

[Blog Post 9 – About your impressions of the encounter between DH and Machine Learning – Due by 11:59pm Friday 3/31 – Do not use ChatGPT to write your blog post, unless you can get it to do something really interesting and funny...](#)

**Week 11: Machine Learning 2**

**Mon 4/3**

IN CLASS: Engage with the OpenAI playground (free account setup required). We’ll try some prompts, tweak some settings, and explore token probabilities.

**Wed 4/5**

IN CLASS: Engage with DALL-E and Stable Diffusion (via google colab/lexica). Explore prompts and modifiers. Take a look at some of the Stable Diffusion training data.

**Fri 4/7**

**PROFESSOR FAMIGLIETTI AT CONFERENCE. NO IN-PERSON MEETING.**

ONLINE ASYNC: Continue what we started playing with earlier in the week. Discuss our encounter with machine learning. Choose some images/text for inclusion in blog posts and draft.

[\*Blog Post 10 – About what you learned from engaging with Generative AI – Due by 11:59pm Friday 4/7\*](#)

**Week 12 – Final Project Prep**

**Mon 4/10**

READ: Re-read your project areas of interest blog. Re-read your own blogs. At least skim your classmates' blogs.

IN CLASS: Discuss final project ideas. What would we like to learn, teach, or express? How will we use the methods and tech we explored in class to do this? How does this fit into the humanities?

**Wed 4/12**

IN CLASS: Final Project Group Matchmaking Exercise

**Fri 4/14**

IN CLASS: Initial Group meetings. Getting Started on final projects

**Week 13 – Final Project Check-In**

**Mon 4/17**

IN CLASS: Groups meet with Professor Famiglietti to discuss final project progress. Only groups meeting today need to come to class. See email for schedule. Other groups can work on their projects at their own pace.

**Wed 4/19**

IN CLASS: Groups meet with Professor Famiglietti to discuss final project progress. Only groups meeting today need to come to class. See email for schedule. Other groups can work on their projects at their own pace.

**Fri 4/21**

IN CLASS: Groups meet with Professor Famiglietti to discuss final project progress. Only groups meeting today need to come to class. See email for schedule. Other groups can work on their projects at their own pace.

## **Week 14 – Final Project Check-In**

### **Mon 4/24**

IN CLASS: Groups meet with Professor Famiglietti to discuss final project progress. Only groups meeting today need to come to class. See email for schedule. Other groups can work on their projects at their own pace.

### **Wed 4/26**

IN CLASS: Groups meet with Professor Famiglietti to discuss final project progress. Only groups meeting today need to come to class. See email for schedule. Other groups can work on their projects at their own pace.

### **Fri 4/28**

IN CLASS: Groups meet with Professor Famiglietti to discuss final project progress. Only groups meeting today need to come to class. See email for schedule. Other groups can work on their projects at their own pace.

## **Week 15 – Final Project In Progress Presentation/Workshop**

### **Mon 5/1**

IN CLASS: Groups present their projects in progress. They explain what's working so far, and what's not working. Classmates and professor provide feedback.

### **Wed 5/3**

IN CLASS: Groups present their projects in progress. They explain what's working so far, and what's not working. Classmates and professor provide feedback.

### **Fri 5/5**

IN CLASS: Groups present their projects in progress. They explain what's working so far, and what's not working. Classmates and professor provide feedback.

*Finals Week Meeting: **Friday 5/12 at 1pm**. Optional but highly recommended. Your last chance to discuss your project with me.*

*Completed Final Project Websites due by 11:59pm **Friday 5/12***

*Completed Digital Humanities Reflections due on D2L by 11:59pm **Friday 5/12***

## University Required Policies

### **Writing Emphasis and General Education Statement**

This course is a writing emphasis course. You are expected to complete significant formal and informal writing during this course. You will be assessed on their writing, and you are expected to demonstrate, and improve, your writing proficiency by the end of the course.

This course fulfills the following goals for the Writing Emphasis component of the West Chester University General Education curriculum

Goal 1: the ability to communicate effectively

Goal 2: Think critically and analytically

As part of this course you will practice

1. Demonstrating comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading
2. Revising and improving writing and/or presentations
3. Using relevant evidence gathered through accepted scholarly methods, and properly acknowledge sources of information, to support an idea
4. Constructing and/or analyzing arguments in terms of their premises, assumptions, contexts, conclusions, and anticipated counter-arguments

### **Course Disciplines**

As an interdisciplinary “I” course, we require you to work across three or more disciplines in order to think about the way that technology interacts with the disciplines of the humanities. The disciplines include:

**Linguistics** is the study of the ways humans use language as a meaning-making activity. Linguists study spoken language (“speech”) as well as written language (corpus-based linguistics). Research in linguistics can work historically—how did the use of these words change over time?—or with a single moment in time—what does it mean that some humans use language one way and other humans use it very differently? Linguists investigate just about any use of language, from words and patterns (including slang, dammit!) to pronunciation (accents like ‘valley girl’ or ‘youse guys’ in Philly and South Jersey) and interesting patterns of syntax and grammar.

**History** is the study of the past, usually the human past. Historians study primary sources, including written records, oral accounts, and objects of material and visual culture and use these sources as evidence to support interpretations about the past. Research and dissemination of history can embrace a variety of digital tools and platforms. A sub-field of history, public history

communicates historical interpretations to general audiences at museums and historic sites, and through exhibitions, podcasts, and a variety of digital platforms.

**English** is the study of the ways in which we use writing and reading as a cultural tool to produce human society. English researchers study literature, or those great works from the past, but they also study the millions of other forgotten works that might've even been greater than the ones we've kept track of. Some researchers in English are more concerned with the production of literate materials—writing, broadly considered. There's also a strong oral tradition in English studies, particularly in the sub field of Rhetoric. More recently, English has broadened the field of literate activities to include lots of other forms of human “writing”: visual texts (from photographs to movies and games), digital texts (texts made with the help of a computer), and oral texts.

**Geography** is the study of the land (and water!) of our planet. Geographers study human impact on our earth, make maps and study other spatial phenomena, and also study more human-centered activities such as those things we make called cities, or vacations. Some geographers research qualitative questions, like “how did planning and zoning laws in the 60s & 70s create an urban landscape structured by race and economics?” Other geographers study more quantitative questions, like “how can we best represent our 3-dimensional earth on a 2-dimensional plane we call a map?”

**Computer Science** is the study of that technology we've invented known as the computer. Computer Scientists study both the languages used to operate the machine—known as software—as well as the machines themselves—known as hardware. Some computer scientists study such math intensive operations as data mining or image compression, while others study more qualitative topics such as human computer interaction, interface design, or other ways that human beings use computers.

**Information Science** is the study of information. Information scientists research how information is ordered & should be ordered, how human beings use information and how we should use information, and how information is retrieved and interacts with other information. Growing out of libraries as storehouses of information, information science has grown to encompass a variety of approaches to how we use, order, interact with, and relate to information or data.

## **WCU Common Policies**

### **ACADEMIC & PERSONAL INTEGRITY**

It is the responsibility of each student to adhere to the university's standards for academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity include any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work, that involves misrepresentation of your own work, or that disrupts the instruction of the course. Other violations include (but are not limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means copying any part of another's work and/or using ideas of another and presenting them as one's own without giving proper credit to the source; selling, purchasing, or exchanging of term papers; falsifying of information; and using your own work from one class to fulfill the assignment for another class without significant

modification. Proof of academic misconduct can result in the automatic failure and removal from this course. For questions regarding Academic Integrity, the No-Grade Policy, Sexual Harassment, or the Student Code of Conduct, students are encouraged to refer to the Department Undergraduate Handbook, the Undergraduate Catalog, the Ram's Eye View, and the University website at [www.wcupa.edu](http://www.wcupa.edu).

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability that requires accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please present your letter of accommodations and meet with me as soon as possible so that I can support your success in an informed manner. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively. If you would like to know more about West Chester University's Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD), please visit them at 223 Lawrence Center. The OSSD hours of Operation are Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Their phone number is 610-436-2564, their fax number is 610-436-2600, their email address is [ossd@wcupa.edu](mailto:ossd@wcupa.edu), and their website is at [www.wcupa.edu/ussss/ossd](http://www.wcupa.edu/ussss/ossd).

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES POLICY**

Students are advised to carefully read and comply with the excused absences policy, including absences for university-sanctioned events, contained in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. In particular, please note that the “responsibility for meeting academic requirements rests with the student,” that this policy does not excuse students from completing required academic work, and that professors can require a “fair alternative” to attendance on those days that students must be absent from class in order to participate in a University-Sanctioned Event.

### **REPORTING INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

West Chester University and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to meet this commitment and to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Lynn Klingensmith. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project. Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person designated in the University protection of minors policy. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth at the webpage for the Office of Social Equity at [http://www.wcupa.edu/\\_admin/social.equity/](http://www.wcupa.edu/_admin/social.equity/).

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

All students are encouraged to sign up for the University's free WCU ALERT service, which delivers official WCU emergency text messages directly to your cell phone. For more information, visit [www.wcupa.edu/wcualert](http://www.wcupa.edu/wcualert). To report an emergency, call the Department of Public Safety at 610-436-3311.

### **ELECTRONIC MAIL POLICY**

It is expected that faculty, staff, and students activate and maintain regular access to University provided e-mail accounts. Official university communications, including those from your instructor, will be sent through your university e-mail account. You are responsible for accessing that mail to be sure to obtain official University communications. Failure to access will not exempt individuals from the responsibilities associated with this course.