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!

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 Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will:

- 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
- Summarize scholarly work in the digital humanities in a form appropriate for a general reader
- Apply some of the tools and methods of the digital humanities to a research, creative, or teaching project of their own design

- Compose a multimodal website to house the results of their own digital humanities project
- Assess the affordances of different digital tools and methods through the process of applying these methods and reflecting on this application

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: afamigliet@wcupa.edu

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

Office hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 11:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-2:00pm. No appointment is required for these hours, just drop in!

You can also reach me via Zoom at those times, using this meeting: https://wcupa.zoom.us/j/9236395500

You should be able to access that link without a password if you are logged in to your WCUPA Zoom account. If asked for a password, use the one from my initial welcome email. Please make sure you have your real first and last name set as your Zoom name so I know who I am letting into the call!

If you drop by the Zoom during office hours and I am not there, I may have stepped away from my computer. Send me an email and I'll log on promptly!

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

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

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

Participation (15%): 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.

Class DH Project Contributions (20%): Our class will work as a group to build a DH project over the course of the semester. The form of this project has been set by the instructor and is

designed to give you experience with some of the different skills employed by DH practitioners. The project will be divided into several stages where we will gather and prepare sources, process and analyze those sources, and present findings to an audience. For each phase students will be asked to complete specific project tasks.

Weekly Blog (15%): 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 reflect on your learning for the week.

Final Project Proposal (25%): Your final project will propose an idea for future digital humanities work. Your proposal 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 last third of our class.

"How did they make that?" presentation (10%): You will compose a short (5 minute) presentation explaining how one of the DH projects on the class DH projects list was made. You should consider the sources collected, the methods of analysis, and the form of presentation chosen by this project. You will produce a short visual to accompany your presentation.

Final Reflection (15%): You will write a short (400-800 word) reflective essay about your time in our class. This reflection will explain what you learned about digital technology, the humanities, and their intersection by completing your final project proposal and other class work.

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 *six 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 six 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:

1) 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.
2) 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.
3) 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 in-class learning activities (in particular, work on the collective class DH project) 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 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), and the use of text generated via automated process (for example, ChatGPT) without express permission from the instructor 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.

Week 1: Intro, what is/are the humanities? How do they connect to digital technology?

Mon 8/28

      IN CLASS: Intro and syllabus

Wed 8/30

      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 9/1

      WATCH: "[How Did They Make That](#)" by Miriam Posner
      IN CLASS: Discuss what DH does. Review Posner's "Sources, Processed and Presented" together using some examples. Expand to discuss educational and creative presentations.

Week 2: Creating and Collecting Digital Sources

Wed 9/6

READ: "O Revelations! Letters, Once Banned, Flesh Out Willa Cather" and take a look at the Willa Cather Archive

IN CLASS: Discuss the Cather Archive. How did they make this? What were the implications of making it?

Fri 9/8

IN CLASS: Meet with Ron McCall in Special Collections to learn about the yearbook collection. Begin capturing yearbook images.

Week 3: Creating and Collecting Digital Sources: Scanning, Cleaning, Metadata

Mon 9/11

IN CLASS: Meet at Library Special Collections to continue capturing and processing images

Wed 9/13

READ: Metadata intro reading from Ron McColl, TBA

IN CLASS: Meet at Library Special Collections to Discuss Metadata. Finish any last image captures. Begin working on metadata creation

Fri 9/15

IN CLASS: Continue building metadata for scrapbook pages back in our usual classroom. Any last image captures if needed. Clean up OCR text.

Week 4: Analyzing and Processing Digital Sources: Distant Reading

Mon 9/18

IN CLASS: Continue building metadata for scrapbook pages back in our usual classroom. Any last image captures if needed. Clean up OCR text.

Wed 9/20

READ: "Distant Reading" from Wikipedia AND "Distant Reading and Recent Intellectual History"

IN CLASS: Discuss Distant Reading as a method of analysis. What can it do? Why might it be an interesting and useful tool for scholarship, education, and creativity? Catch up on any metadata and OCR cleanup work that still needs to be done.

Fri 9/22

WATCH: "[Introduction to Voyant Tools](#)" (about 20 minutes)
IN CLASS: Begin using Voyant Tools to do a Distant Reading Analysis of scrapbook text.

Week 5: Analyzing and Processing Digital Sources: Mapping

Mon 9/25

IN CLASS: Continue with our Voyant exploration of the scrapbook text. Discuss possible insights arising from this exploration, and new questions the exploration might lead us to.

Wed 9/27

READ: "[Introduction to Spatial History and Mapping](#)" and "[Introduction: Mapping the First Party System](#)" by Lincoln Mullen. Also, take a look at a few of the [maps of Early US elections generated by Mullen and his team](#).
IN CLASS: Discuss DH mapping as a technique. How are DH maps different from the maps we use everyday? What are some different things DH practitioners might try to do with maps?

Fri 9/29

IN CLASS: Mapping Work, preparing to build a map of our scrapbook artifacts in Omeka (Neatline or Geolocate Map, TBD)

Week 6: Instructional Presentation of Digital Sources: StoryMapJS For Spatial Narratives

Mon 10/2

IN CLASS: Mapping work, building an analytic map of our scrapbook artifacts in Omeka Neatline.

Wed 10/4

READ: "[Narrative Maps]" by Lincoln Mullen. Click through to explore the sample sites he links to. Also investigate some example story maps up on the [StoryMapJS website].
IN CLASS: Discuss narrative maps. How do these maps differ from analytic maps? What are the goals of narrative maps? What do authors of narrative maps do to achieve those goals? Begin building story maps of scrapbooks using StoryMapJS.

Fri 10/6

IN CLASS: Continue building story maps in StoryMapJS

Week 7: Instructional Presentation of Digital Sources: Omeka Exhibits for Non-Spatial Material

Mon 10/9

IN CLASS: Finish up story maps and discuss

Wed 10/11

READ: "[Goin' North]" and "Redlining Virginia" (Explore these sites. Click around. See what's here.)
IN CLASS: Discuss the exhibits built by these sites. Begin gathering information/sources needed to build non-map exhibits using the Omeka Exhibit Builder.

Fri 10/13

IN CLASS: Continue building exhibits in the Omeka Exhibit builder

Week 8: Instructional Presentation of Digital Sources: Omeka Exhibits Redux and Cleaning Up

Mon 10/16: **FALL BREAK**

Wed 10/18

IN CLASS: Complete Omeka Exhibits and discuss.

Fri 10/20

IN CLASS: Overflow and Cleanup Day. Fix any messes left behind during the last 8 weeks.

Week 9: Creative Presentation of Digital Sources: Twine and Games

Mon 10/23

READ: "Introduction to Twine"
PLAY: A game from the top Twine games on itch.io of your choice
DOWNLOAD: Twine
IN CLASS: Try out Twine and talk about what it can do

Wed 10/25

IN CLASS: Build a Twine Presentation of A Day In the Life of a 19XX WCU Student, based on our Scrapbooks

Fri 10/27

IN CLASS: Build a Twine Presentation of A Day In the Life of a 19XX WCU Student, based on our Scrapbooks

Week 10: Reflection – How did we make that?

Mon 10/30

READ: Return to the page "What is Digital Humanities" from the beginning of the semester. Refresh the page a few times until you get a definition that you feel connects to your experience over the past 10 weeks in some way. Jot down a note to yourself about what you now understand about this definition having experienced the past 10 weeks of course work.
IN CLASS: Discuss the definitions we picked and why we picked them.

Wed 11/1

READ: "The Humane Digital" by Timothy Burke

IN CLASS: Discussion of how the values, practices, and ideas of "the humanities" might be relevant to our own lives as professionals, students, citizens, etc.

Discussion of how our experience over the past ten weeks lines up with Burke's Definition of "the humane."

Fri 11/3

READ: "See No Evil" by Miriam Posner. As you read, consider, this is the same author who taught us "Sources, Processed and Presented" in the "How did they make this" video. How did she come to write this piece about global shipping? What connections do *you* see that might link Miriam's explanation of Digital Humanities to her exploration of shipping, supply chains, and the economy? IN CLASS: Discuss how the Digital Humanities might help us make critical observations about the digital economy.

Week 11: More Reflection, Group Matchmaking and Project Proposal Brainstorming

Mon 11/6

IN CLASS: Discuss how the whole scrapbook project came together. What did we make? How did we make it? What did we learn along the way? Who might find what we made valuable and why? What else might we want to make?

Wed 11/8

IN CLASS: Review final project proposal assignment. Matchmaking for final project proposal groups.

Fri 11/10

IN CLASS: Review "How Did They Make That?" presentation assignment. In class work on presentations and/or brainstorming proposals.

Week 12: "How Did They Make That?" Presentations

Mon 11/13

IN CLASS: Students present on existing DH Projects from the DH Project list, explaining "How did they make that?"

Wed 11/15

IN CLASS: Students present on existing DH Projects from the DH Project list, explaining "How did they make that?"

Fri 11/17

IN CLASS: Students present on existing DH Projects from the DH Project list, explaining "How did they make that?"

Week 13: Project Work

Mon 11/20

IN CLASS: Groups work on final project proposals.

Wed 11/24: Thanksgiving Break

Fri 11/26: Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: Project Work

Mon 11/27

IN CLASS: Groups workshop final project proposals in progress

Wed 11/29

IN CLASS: Groups workshop final project proposals in progress

Fri 12/1

IN CLASS: Groups workshop final project proposals in progress

DUE: Draft Final Project Proposals (Friday, 12/1 at 11:59pm)

Week 15: Final project revisions

Mon 12/4

IN CLASS: Groups revise final project propsals

Wed 12/6

IN CLASS: Groups revise final project proposals

Friday 12/8

IN CLASS: Groups revise final project proposals

Mon 12/11

IN CLASS: Groups revise final project proposals

Finals Week Meeting: **Wednesday 12/13 at 3:30pm**. *Optional but highly recommended. Your last chance to discuss your project with me.*

Completed Final Project Proposal Websites due by 11:59pm **Wednesday 12/13**

Completed Digital Humanities Reflections due on D2L by 11:59pm **Wednesday 12/13**

WCU COMMON SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

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.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

West Chester University is committed to providing equitable access to the full WCU experience for Golden Rams of all abilities. Students should contact the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) to establish accommodations if they have had accommodations in the past or if they believe they may be eligible for accommodations due to a disability, whether or not it may be readily apparent. There is no deadline for disclosing to OEA or for requesting to use approved accommodations in a given course. However, accommodations can only be applied to future assignments or exams; that is, they can't be applied retroactively. Please share your letter from OEA as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations.

If you have concerns related to disability discrimination, please contact the university's ADA Coordinator in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: https://www.wcupa.edu/_admin/diversityEquityInclusion/ or 610-436-2433.

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 comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the University's commitment to offering supportive measures in accordance with the new regulations issued under Title IX, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator. 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: https://www.wcupa.edu/_admin/diversityEquityInclusion/sexualMisconduct/default.aspx

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND ANTI-RACIST STATEMENT

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to West Chester University's mission as reflected in our Mission Statement, Values Statement, Vision Statement and Strategic Plan: Pathways to Student Success. We disavow racism and all actions that silence, threaten, or degrade historically marginalized groups in the U.S. We acknowledge that all members of this learning community may experience harm stemming from forms of oppression including but not limited to classism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia, and recognize that these forms of oppression are compounded by racism.

Our core commitment as an institution of higher education shapes our expectation for behavior within this learning community, which represents diverse individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. Courteous and respectful behavior, interactions, and responses are expected from all members of the University. We must work together to make this a safe and productive learning

environment for everyone. Part of this work is recognizing how race and other aspects of who we are shape our beliefs and our experiences as individuals. It is not enough to condemn acts of racism. For real, sustainable change, we must stand together as a diverse coalition against racism and oppression of any form, anywhere, at any time.

Resources for education and action are available through WCU's Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), DEI committees within departments or colleges, the student ombudsperson, and centers on campus committed to doing this work (e.g., Dowdy Multicultural Center, Center for Women and Gender Equity, and the Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy).

Guidance on how to report incidents of discrimination and harassment is available at the University's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

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. 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.

COMMUNICATION VIA NAVIGATE

West Chester University uses Navigate as a communication tool between faculty, students, and student support offices. Throughout the term, you may receive text messages and/or WCU emails from Navigate regarding your academic progress. These messages will have information to promote your success and direct you to support services that will best fit your needs—please open and read them. Additionally, Navigate has useful features such as your course schedule, campus resources with contact and location information, and a feature called Study Buddies that lets you connect with other students in your class sections who are interested in studying together outside of class. To access Navigate, you will need to download the Student App to your phone by visiting the Navigate webpage (use the QR code). For technical assistance visit the helpdesk. For additional Navigate documentation, visit the Navigate Training Site.