

Digital Humanities

engl606s11: Humanities Computing

syllabus tinyurl: <http://tinyurl.com/7u8agwt>

community site: <http://community.wvu.edu/~cb002>

Professor Sandy Baldwin, Spring 2012

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ENGL 606/001

W 1900-2150, G18 Colson

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ENGL 606 is an introduction to Humanities Computing as the cutting edge of the humanities. The course is designed to accommodate PWE students, literary and cultural scholars, and creative writers. In a series of recent articles, *The New York Times* anointed *digital humanities* – the recently upgraded term for humanities computing – as “Humanities 2.0” and as “next new thing” in “language, history, and the arts.” The newspaper goes on to argue that the new generation of scholars will shift from interpretive philosophical or cultural questions to technological data-driven concerns (efficiency, innovation, etc.). This course both adopts this argument and inverts it, arguing that data and the digital are sites of cultural and philosophical questioning and debate. The goal of the course is to set a trajectory for digital humanities practice as hybridization or mingling of method and theory. Students will engage with pragmatic skills as a framework for interrogating and pushing the conceptualization and possibility of digital humanities. Starting from an introduction to the field, the course moves to explore some paradigms or background perspectives, then to a survey of critical topics in digital culture, and finally to specific topics of “electronic literature,” “critical internet culture,” and gaming. Readings and viewings range from McLuhan, Kittler, Hayles, Kirschenbaum, Cramer, Goldsmith, Lovink; to handbooks on web design, CSS, and Designing Social Interfaces. Short assignments including creating web pages, image editing, writing for social media, and composing electronic literature. Course structure combines seminar-style critical and theoretical exploration of digital humanities with practical exercises, including website design, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Web 2.0 apps, javascript, etc. The course goal is to *understand* and to *practice* media. No prior experience is expected.

Projects

- + **Basic website**, due Feb 1. Create a website with at least 1) a *home* page, 2) a [colophon](#) page, 3) a *response* page, and 4) a *story* page with several (>3) sub-pages that tell a linked narrative (2 links per page) *remediated* from print (choose an existing text; it could be fictional or not, i.e. could be a how-to/directions, or personal history, or archival docs, or an essay you wrote, or ...). 20% of grade.
- + **Graphic revision** of website, due Feb 29. Build on your basic site, using a wide image repertoire and color palette to redesign the background, navigation, and visual identity or “feel” of your site. Note: for these and subsequent revisions of your website, you can continue or diverge in the genre and voice you choose, i.e. focusing on the fictional/poetic/experimental, or on the personal/historical, or the technical/professional, or ... 20% of grade.
- + CSS, RSS, and Javascript **styling of website**, due Mar 21. Redesign your site with a minimum of three CSS stylesheets, with javascript

functionality, and with an RSS feed. 20% of grade.

+ **Socialization of your website**, due Apr 25. Re-vision your site with social media, including at least three of the following: mapping, google custom search, embedded YouTube, and user personalities. 20% of grade.

+ 1) **10+1 Reflections**. Reading responses of at least 300 words to any 10 classes from 1/25 to 4/18 (you choose). For 1/25, email the response to yourself (to be uploaded in class). For other days, post to a "response" page on your website. Response format consists of 3 thought-provoking, reflective questions in response to the reading, and your answer to one of the questions. 2) **Final reflection/response** on course, of at least 500 words, due May 2. 3) **Diigo links**, pertaining to the class discussion, with annotations posted to the group library (at least 20 links over the semester, starting 2/15). 20% of grade.

++ All due by class, unless otherwise indicated. More detail to follow on individual projects.

+++ Participation is assumed, including attending class prepared to discuss the reading.

Texts and Tools

+ Bogost, *How to do things with games*

+ Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing*

+ McLuhan, *Understanding Media*

+ Parikka and Sampson, eds., *The Spam Book*

+ Robson and Freeman, *Head First HTML with CSS & XHTML*. O'Reilly [home page](#) for book with code samples.

++ Plus other texts via the net (see below)

+++ Tools in the classroom include the Adobe Creative suite. See the resource list at the end of this document for free tools. You can create websites using WYSIWYG tools such as Dreamweaver or by hand.

Academic Integrity/Dishonesty Statement

"The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter."

Social Justice Statement

"West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veterans status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. [...] If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of

accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700).”

Schedule

(Read = read for class; look = referenced in class, recommended reading)

Jan 11

Read: Kirschenbaum, [“What is digital humanities? And what’s it doing in English Departments?”](#)

Look: Kirschenbaum, [“Hello Worlds”](#). [Digital Humanities Downfall](#). In class: Set up web accounts, ftp. See <http://oit.wvu.edu/web/community/>.

Jan 18

Read: Baldwin, [“Purple dotted underlines”](#); Berners-Lee, [“Information Management”](#); Kittler, [“There is no software”](#); Robson and Freeman, Head First HTML with CSS & XHTML, through Chapter 1.

Look: Kittler, [“Protected Mode”](#). In class: Languages, Word, many worlds, linking, creating basic web sites. [SOPA blackout](#) and [ACH](#). Discuss first project. Linked stories.

Three questions:

- + How does SOPA and the blackout relate to today’s readings?
- + Should graduate students be allowed to use a computer languages for PhD requirements?
- + In what way is html a language (or not)?

Jan 25

Read: McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, through Part I; Robson and Freeman, through Chapter 4.

Look: [History of books](#) ; [Canons of Page Construction](#).

Feb 1

Read: McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, through end; Robson and Freeman, through Chapter 5.

Look: Photoshop.

Feb 8

Read: Goldsmith, *Uncreative Writing*, Holzschlag, [“Thinking Outside the Grid”](#).

Look: [Creative Commons](#). Photoshop.

Feb 15

Read: Michel, et al., [“Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books”](#); Stanford [LitLab Pamphlets](#); Robson and Freeman, through Chapter 7.

Look: Svensson, [“The Landscape of Digital Humanities”](#). Set up Diigo accounts. See <http://diigo.com>.

Feb 22

Read: Hayles. "[Electronic Literature: What is it?.](#)" & "[Print is Flat, Code is Deep](#)"; Robson and Freeman, through Chapter 11.

Look: [Electronic Literature Collection 1 & 2](#) and Grid tutorial (based on [Potorac](#)).

Feb 29

Read: [The Agrippa files](#); ELO, "[Acid Free Bits.](#)"; Kirschenbaum, "[Every Contact Leaves a Trace.](#)" "[Digital Materiality](#)"; Robson and Freeman, through end.

Look: [Electronic Literature Collection 1 & 2](#), RSS feeds.

March 7

Read: Lovink, "[Blogging, the nihilist impulse.](#)", "[The Society of the Query and the Googlization of our lives.](#)" "[My Brain.Net](#)"; O'Reilly "[What is Web 2.0?](#)"

Look: Javascript.

Mar 14

Read: Crumlish and Malone, [Designing Social Interfaces: Principles, Patterns, and Practices for Improving the User Experience](#), through Part 3.

Look: Javascript.

Mar 21

Read: Crumlish and Malone, through end.

Look: Mapping.

Mar 28

Spring Break. No class.

April 4

Read: [Critical Point of View: A wikipedia reader](#) , Lovink, "[Twelve theses on wikileaks](#)".

Look: Wikipedia editing.

April 11

Read: Parikka and Sampson, eds., *The Spam Book*.

Look: YouTube.

April 18

Read: Bogost, *How to do things with games*.

Look: YouTube.

April 25

Last class / workshop.

May 2

Final due date.

Resources

- + [960 Grid System](#) (grid layout for websites)
- + [A List Apart](#) (the philosophy of web design)
- + [Audacity](#) (sound editing)
- + [Camtasia](#) (screen capture)
- + [CC Search](#) (shareable and remixable content)
- + [CSS Zengarden](#) (many styles for your site)
- + [Designing for the Web](#) (Mark Boulton's excellent web resource)
- + [Diigo](#) (bookmarking and web highlighting)
- + [Dreamweaver cookbooks](#) (tutorials from Adobe)
- + [Dreamweaver Widgets](#) (add ons, plugins)
- + [Gimp \(free image editor\) + Google Maps API](#) tutorial
- + [Google Web fonts](#) (open source fonts for the web)
- + [ImageAfter](#) (free textures)
- + [Internet Archive](#) (free everything)
- + [jQuery](#) (javascript library)
- + [jQuery fundamentals](#) (tutorial)
- + [Kompozer](#) (excellent free html editor)
- + [Lightview](#) (cool website overlays)
- + [Modernizr](#) (make websites flexible for mobile and other platforms)
- + [Pixlr](#) (free image editor)
- + [PSDtuts](#) (photoshop tutorials)
- + [Splashup](#) (free image editor)
- + [Thinking with type](#) (thoughts on type)
- + [Tilables](#) (patterns, backgrounds)
- + [Typetester](#) (compare type)
- + [W3 Validation](#) (check your code)
- + [W3 Schools](#) (tutorials about all things WWW)
- + [XRay](#) (bookmarkley to Xray websites)