

# MALS 289: Digital Humanities / Digital Studies

Dartmouth College

Fall '17

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Office Location & Hours: 420 Moore Hall, Wed. 2:30–4:30 p.m.

## REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis*. Chicago, 2012. 978-0226321424
2. Jockers, Matthew L. *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*. Illinois, 2013. 978-0252079078
3. Ramsay, Stephen. *Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism*. Illinois, 2011. 978-0252078200

**Course Description:** This graduate seminar provides an introduction to the various theories and methods used by digital humanists to study culture. We'll examine and critique recent computational approaches alongside the interpretative (hermeneutical) approaches found within cultural and literary studies. Throughout the term, we will give particular attention to subfields or areas of the digital humanities including critical code studies, game studies, machine learning, and text mining. Two short essays will enable you to interrogate oppositional positions within the field of digital cultural studies. Final projects will approach an object of American culture through digital methods or produce a reading of a digital object. Course readings include (among others): Alan Liu, N. Katherine Hayles, David M. Berry, Laura Mandell, Matthew L. Jockers, Lev Manovich, and Lisa Gitelman.

## Assignments:

1. **Labs:** We will use part of our Thursday sessions for hands-on labs to experiment with tools and basic programming (Python) concepts.
2. **Homework:** We'll have several short exercises that will offer the opportunity to evaluate the methods and critiques offered by our readings with hands-on practice.
3. **Course Papers:** There will be two shorter papers (4–5 pages) and one final research project (10–12 pages).
  - (a) **Short Paper #1:** Choose two readings from our first three weeks of class that were not assigned on the same day. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the theories and understandings of the project of digital humanities put forward by these essays. This paper will be due in the fifth week of the course.
  - (b) **Short Paper #2:** Select a critical reading from weeks four to eight and apply the methodology or an extracted concept to a selected object or text. Discuss the ways in which your selected critical essay can help you think about your object of interest and, most importantly, develop a reading that is an alternative to the method proposed by your selected reading. You may use another secondary source from the syllabus to develop this reading or produce it out of the object itself.
  - (c) **Final Project and Paper:** Options will be suggested for the format of this project, but you are also free to develop an idea of your own, provided you meet with me to discuss it in advance. Your project should be accompanied by a conference-length paper, i.e., 10-12 pages.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the term students will:

1. become familiar with both American Studies and digital approaches to the field.
2. develop fluency in several different methodologies used within the digital humanities.
3. be able to use a range of popular tools from the digital humanities / humanities computing.
4. be able to conduct independent research in digital studies and on digital culture.

## **COURSE POLICIES:**

**Class participation:** This is a graduate seminar. Proper preparation and participation in course discussions is expected of all students.

**Academic Honor Principle:** Dartmouth's Academic Honor Principle applies to all the work you submit for this course. Please refresh your memory by reading it over at least once again during the first week of term. You can work on homework assignments with other students, but each student must turn in their original work—this means you must write and submit the code yourself.

**Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services for this course are encouraged to see me privately as early in the term as possible. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (205 Collis Student Center, 646-9900, [Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu)). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

**Grading:** Graduate Studies at Dartmouth uses four grades: High Pass (HP), Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), No Credit (NC). To earn a “P,” students will be required to complete all assignments on time and to participate in class meetings. Failing to complete assignments, missing an excessive number of class meetings (more than two for courses meeting twice a week), and turning in late assignments may result in a lower grade. The grade of “High Pass” will be reserved for truly *exceptional work*.

**Additional Support:** In addition to visiting me during my office hours (posted to Canvas), you can get help at RWIT, the Student Center for Research, Writing, and Information Technology. RWIT is located in the library and now has graduate students available as tutors. This is a free service. See the RWIT website for additional information.

## DAILY SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

The schedule may be subject to revision throughout the course of the term. Any changes will be announced in class and through Canvas.

Week One	<b>Cultural Studies and the Digital Humanities</b>
Tues 09/12	Course Introduction: What are the Digital Humanities? Tara McPherson, "Digital," <i>Keywords for American Cultural Studies</i> (NYU, 2014)
Thurs 09/14	N. Katherine Hayles, "The Digital Humanities: Engaging the Issues" <i>How We Think</i> . Matthew Kirschenbaum, "What Is 'Digital Humanities,' and Why Are They Saying Such Terrible Things about It?," <i>differences</i> 25, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 46–63 <b>Lab:</b> Introduction to Python, Part I
Week Two	<b>Digital Studies</b>
Tues 09/19	Dennis Tenen, "Form, Formula, Format" <i>Plain Text: The Poetics of Computation</i> (Stanford, 2017). N. Katherine Hayles, "Print Is Flat, Code Is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis." <i>Poetics Today</i> 25, no. 1 (2004).
Thurs 09/21	Alexander Galloway, "Introduction" <i>Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization</i> . (MIT, 2006) Matthew Kirschenbaum, "Operating Systems of the Mind: Bibliography After Word Processing (The Example of Updike)" <i>PBSA</i> 108, no. 4 (2014): 381-412. Aden Evens, "Abstraction and its Consequences," <i>Logic of the Digital</i> (Bloomsbury, 2015) <b>Lab:</b> Introduction to Python, Part II
Week Three	<b>Theoretical Complexities</b>
Tues 09/26	Alan Liu, "Where Is Cultural Criticism in the Digital Humanities?," in <i>Debates in the Digital Humanities</i> , ed. Matthew K. Gold (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 490–509. David M. Berry and Anders Fagerjord, "Towards a Critical Digital Humanities" <i>Digital Humanities: Knowledge and Critique in a Digital Age</i> (Polity, 2016). Lisa Gitelman and Virginia Jackson, "Introduction" " <i>Raw Data</i> " <i>Is an Oxymoron</i> . (MIT, 2013) <b>Homework #1 DUE</b>
Thurs 09/28	Laura C. Mandell, "Gendering Digital Literary History: What Counts for Digital Humanities," in <i>A New Companion to Digital Humanities</i> , ed. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2016), 511–23. Matthew Jockers, "Evidence" <i>Macroanalysis</i> . Julia Flanders, "Learning, Reading, and the Problem of Scale: Using Women Writers Online" <i>Pedagogy</i> 2, no. 1 (2002). <b>Lab:</b> Data and Evidence

<b>Week Four</b>	<b>Ways of Reading</b>
Tues 10/04	<p>Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature," <i>Distant Reading</i> (Verso, 2013)</p> <p>Barbara Herrnstein Smith, "What was Close Reading?: A Century of Method in Literary Studies" <i>Minnesota Review</i> (2016).</p> <p>James E. Dobson, "Protocols, Methods, and Workflows: Digital Ways of Reading"</p> <p><b>Homework #2 DUE</b></p>
Thurs 10/06	<p>Matthew Jockers, "Tradition" &amp; "Influence" <i>Macroanalysis</i></p> <p>Stephen Ramsay, "An Algorithmic Criticism" &amp; "Potential Readings," <i>Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism</i></p> <p><b>Lab:</b> Deformation</p>
<b>Week Five</b>	<b>Method: Text Mining</b>
Tues 10/11	<p>N. Katherine Hayles, "How We Read: Close, Hyper, Machine" <i>How We Think</i></p> <p>Matthew Wilkens, "Canons, Close Reading, and the Evolution of Method" <i>Debates in the Digital Humanities</i> (Minnesota, 2012)</p> <p>Matthew L. Jockers and Ted Underwood, "Text-Mining the Humanities" <i>A New Companion to Digital Humanities</i> (2016)</p> <p><b>Homework #3 DUE</b></p>
Thurs 10/13	<p>Matthew L. Jockers, "Theme" from <i>Macroanalysis</i></p> <p>Matthew L. Jockers, "Measures of Lexical Variety"</p> <p>James E. Dobson, "Can an Algorithm be Disturbed?: Machine Learning, Intrinsic Criticism, and the Digital Humanities"</p> <p><b>Lab:</b> Text Mining</p>
Fri 10/14	<b>Short Paper #1 DUE</b> 11:59PM (Canvas)
<b>Week Six</b>	<b>Method: Sentiment Analysis</b>
Tues 10/17	<p>Andrew Reagan, et. al "The emotional Arcs of Stories are Dominated by Six Basic Shapes"</p> <p>Jianbo Gao, et al., "A multiscale theory for the dynamical evolution of sentiment in novels."</p> <p>Nick Montfort, "Text III" <i>Exploratory Programming for the Arts and Humanities</i> (2016)</p> <p><b>Homework #4 DUE</b></p>
Thurs 10/19	<p>N. Katherine Hayles, "Mapping Time, Charting Data"</p> <p>James E. Dobson, "Digital Historicism and the Historicity of Digital Texts"</p> <p><b>Lab:</b> Sentiment Analysis</p>
<b>Week Seven</b>	<b>Critical Code and Algorithm Studies</b>
Tues 10/24	<p>David M. Berry, "The Idea of Code" and "What is Code?" <i>The Philosophy of Software: Code and Mediation in the Digital Age</i> (Palgrave, 2011)</p> <p>Mark C. Marino, "Why We Must Read the Code: The Science Wars, Episode IV." <i>Debates in the Digital Humanities, 2016</i></p> <p>Stephen Ramsay, "The Turing Text" &amp; "'Patacomputing'" <i>Machine Readings</i></p> <p><b>Homework #5 DUE</b></p>
Thurs 10/26	<p>Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "On Sourcery and Source Codes" from <i>Programmed Visions: Software and Memory</i> (MIT, 2011).</p> <p>James E. Dobson, "The Cultural Significance of k-NN"</p> <p><b>Lab:</b> Code Analysis</p>

Week Eight	<b>Social Media and Databases</b>
Tues 10/31	<p>danah boyd, "Identity" and "Inequality," <i>It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens</i> (Yale, 2014)</p> <p>José van Dijck, "Facebook and the Imperative of Sharing" <i>The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media</i> (Oxford, 2013)</p> <p>Lev Manovich, "Trending: The Promises and the Challenges of Big Social Data" <i>Debates in the Digital Humanities</i> (Minnesota, 2012)</p> <p><b>Homework #6 DUE</b></p>
Thurs 11/02	<p>Stephen Ramsay "Databases" <i>A Companion to Digital Humanities</i> (Blackwell, 2004)</p> <p>Lev Manovich, "Database as Symbolic Form." <i>Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies</i> 5, no. 2 (1999): 80–99.</p> <p>Ed Folsom, "Database as Genre: The Epic Transformation of Archives" <i>PMLA</i> 122, no. 5 (2007): 1571-1579.</p> <p>N. Katherine Hayles, "Narrative and Database: Spatial History and the Limits of Symbiosis" <i>How We Think</i></p> <p><b>Lab:</b> Introduction to sqlite3</p>
Fri 11/04	<b>Short Paper #2 DUE</b> 11:59PM (Canvas)
Week Nine	<b>Critical Game Studies</b>
Tues 11/07	<p>Barry Atkins, "The Computer Game as Fictional Form" and "More than a Game?" <i>More Than a Game: The Computer Game as Fictional Form</i> (Manchester UP, 2003).</p> <p>Alexander Galloway, "Gamic Action, Four Moments" <i>Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture</i> (Minnesota, 2006)</p>
Thurs 11/09	<p>Mark Sample, "Virtual Torture: Videogames and the War on Terror." <i>Game Studies</i> 8.2 (2008).</p> <p>Patrick Jagoda, "Gaming the Humanities" <i>differences</i> 25, no. 1 (2014): 189-215.</p>
Week Ten	
Tues 11/14	Final Class Meeting: Wrapping Up
Tues 11/22	<b>Final Projects DUE</b> (Canvas, 8pm)