**INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL HUMANITIES**

English 389  
Fall 2011  
TTh 1:00-2:15 pm  
Math & Science N302

http://www.briancroxall.net/dh

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404.727.6810  
Woodruff Library  
Office Hours: MW 3-5 pm and by appointment  
Digital Office Hours: MW 3-5 pm or whenever I’m shown as available on the class website or when I’m hanging out on Google+

* I reserve the right to modify this syllabus.

**Course Description**

In many ways, humanities scholarship is already digital: whether you’re working on Chaucer or Chabon, most of us do our research, writing, and sometimes reading at a computer. In these situations, the computer replaces the index, the pen, and the printed book. In a sense, then, the computer has simply sped up processes with which humanists were already familiar.

But what might we gain if we begin to use the computer to do something that only it can do? What could we discover if we read every book published in the nineteenth century? What would we learn if we could visually break down and compare the language in two volumes of poetry? How would it change our understanding of a novel if we laid it out in geographical space? What would it mean to read a book as a distributed crowd? Does reading change if you can only do it on a computer?

In this course we will consider these questions as we explore the nascent field of digital humanities (DH). Through readings and various projects, we will familiarize ourselves with the concepts, tools, and debates of and within DH.

**Course Goals**

- To become familiar and conversant with various concepts and methods in the digital humanities  
- To develop the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate digital scholarship  
- To collaborate on research in a field that has traditionally privileged individual scholarship  
- To become more skilled writers through an engagement with writing as a continuing process

**Texts**

The **required** texts for this course are  
You are welcome to purchase these books from the Emory Barnes & Noble Bookstore, but you may very well find cheaper prices online at stores such as Amazon. You can get free shipping from Amazon if you join their Amazon Student program. Whatever you do, be sure that you have your copy of the text by the assigned dates.

Finally, there are a number of texts that are only available from Reserves Direct or online. **You must bring a copy of these texts to class with you on the day that we will discuss them, whether that is a hard copy or on a portable device.**

**Assignments**

**Participation:** This is an experimental class based on collaborative discourse. Students should come prepared to discuss assigned readings. As such, you must be in regular attendance (see below). More importantly, you need to come to class prepared to engage vigorously with the day’s material and with your peers and me.

**Blog:** Throughout the semester, we will engage with the ideas of the course through public blogging. Blogs only work when sustained by an energetic (and perhaps even chaotic) community. You will both post your own written responses to our class and comment on the posts of your colleagues.

**Mapping Mrs. Dalloway:** Working in assigned groups, you will prepare an interactive map of one character’s movements in *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf. You will present your map to the class and write a 3-4 page reflection on the assignment when it is completed.

**Digital Humanities Project Evaluation:** Working with a partner, you will study in detail a major digital humanities project. You will compose a 3-4 page evaluation of this project, analyzing both its virtues and its shortcomings. You will post your evaluations, and you will develop short presentations (more details to come) about your chosen project that you will deliver to the class.

**House of Leaves:** We will be reading the novel *House of Leaves* in conjunction with classes at four other universities. The classes will be contributing to a shared resource about the novel. You will write a 3-4 page reflection on this assignment when it is completed.

**Paper:** You will write one “traditional” essay assignment (6+ pages) during the semester about the poetry of Carol Ann Duffy. I am happy to discuss drafts, outlines, or ideas during my office hours. I am unlikely to respond helpfully to an email message sent the day before the paper is due.

**Class Project:** The final weeks of the semester will be spent on a collaborative class project on Duffy’s poetry, drawing on your class papers and more.

**Grades**

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

- Participation: 200
- Blog: 200
- Mapping *Mrs. Dalloway*: 100
- Digital Humanities Project Evaluation: 100
- *House of Leaves*: 100
- Paper: 150
- Class Project: 150
Points will translate into grades as follows:

- 1000-925 A
- 924-900 A-
- 899-875 B+
- 874-825 B
- 824-800 B-
- 799-775 C+
- 774-725 C
- 724-700 C-
- 674-625 D+
- 624-600 D
- <600 F

Course Policies

**Attendance:** You can miss three class sessions without penalty. After three, I reserve the right to lower your final grade; after six absences you risk failing the course. Note that this policy does not distinguish "excused" from "unexcused" absences—such a distinction puts me in a role I don't want to play. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining the relevant notes and information from your classmates. Also, be on time to class. I make note of when people are late, and being late three times is akin to an absence. Finally, if you do not have a copy of the text that we are discussing, you cannot participate effectively in our discussion, and I will mark you absent.

**Preparation and Participation:** This is a class based on collaborative discourse. As such, being prepared to participate in discussions is a course requirement. This entails having read, annotated, and thought about the complete assignment carefully before class starts. Furthermore, you must bring your copy of the text to class every day. Since we will be engaged in closely examining the texts we read and the language that they use, if you don’t have your text then you aren’t prepared for class, even if you have read the assignment. Naturally, this admonition applies to the texts that you will find online.

More broadly speaking: Ask questions. Be curious. You are more than welcome to have a different interpretation of a text than a classmate or me; just be sure to share your perspective in a productive and supportive manner. Since the course will be conducted as a seminar—and not a series of lectures—the substance of our class meetings will primarily consist of your responses to the course texts (such as general questions, impressionistic responses, or interpretations of particular passages) and, secondarily, my engagement with your responses. Your thoughts and questions will provide the starting point for our discussions. **Your active participation will be consequently factored into your final grade for the course.** If you’re reluctant to speak up, please talk to me and we’ll figure out a way for you to participate.

**Office Hours:** As noted above, my office hours are from 3:00-5:00 pm on Monday and Wednesday. I consider this your time, and I encourage you to make use of it. Please don’t think of meeting with me as something to do only as a last resort but rather as an important and integral part of your learning. Additionally, feel free to chat with me online during my digital office hours. I’ve been known to be there at times around the clock. If it says I’m available, I am.

**Assignments**

- Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you will miss class the day an assignment is due it is still your responsibility to turn in a hard copy of that assignment before class. **Late work will not be accepted,** except at my discretion (with a significant grading penalty). Assignment deadlines are not flexible.
- Papers must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins and must be in standard MLA style format. Furthermore, the pages should be numbered in the
upper right corner and must be stapled together. I know, I know: I’m picky. As Kurt Vonnegut has it in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, “So it goes.”

- You may not turn in work to me that you originally completed for another course (including one of mine). Should you wish to draw on a paper that you have written or are currently writing for another course, please discuss the matter with me.

**Late Instructor:** In the unlikely event that I am late to class, you may feel free to leave 10 minutes after the scheduled start of the class. Don’t count on this happening, though.

**Technology Problems:** This course relies heavily on access to computers, specific software, and the Internet. At some point during the semester you WILL have a problem with technology: your laptop will crash, a file will become corrupted, a server will go down, or something else will occur. These are facts of life, not emergencies. Sadly, technological excuses (“my printer died,” etc.) cannot be accepted under any circumstances. Always **make back-ups for your work**, and plan ahead so that you will have time to use the on-campus computers and printers if necessary. You may **not** submit work by e-mail.

**Academic Integrity:** For over half a century, academic integrity has been maintained on the Emory Campus through the student initiated and regulated Honor Code. Every student who applies to and is accepted by Emory College, as a condition of acceptance, agrees to abide by the provisions of the Honor Code so long as he or she remains a student at Emory College. By his or her continued attendance at Emory College, a student reaffirms his or her pledge to adhere to the provisions of the Honor Code. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be treated as such by both the University and myself. While we will be using other people’s work in our research papers, there is a fundamental difference between drawing on those sources and documenting them appropriately, and representing them as your own. The Honor Code is also detailed at [http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html](http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html).

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student who, because of a disability or any other circumstance, may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should let the professor know and should register with the Office of Disability Services: [http://www.ods.emory.edu/](http://www.ods.emory.edu/).

**Counseling Services:** Free and confidential counseling services are available from the Emory Counseling Center (404-727-7450): [http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/index.php](http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/index.php).

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center is an excellent resource for writers of all skill levels. It offers assistance with all aspects of writing, including brainstorming, organization, thesis formation, style, wording, and revision. I strongly encourage each of you to schedule a meeting at the Writing Center at least once this semester. It is a good idea to secure appointments as far in advance as possible, especially towards the end of the semester, when the Writing Center is busiest. The Writing Center is located in the Callaway N212, and its website is [http://writingcenter.emory.edu](http://writingcenter.emory.edu).
Schedule

Complete all assigned reading before coming to class. Please keep in mind that all reading assignments are subject to change. All page numbers refer to the editions/ISBNs that I have ordered. For some readings, you will download and print the text through the Reserves Direct system, indicated by RD.

Aug. 25 Th  First Day of Class
Introductions, Syllabus

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Definitions / Histories / Practices

Kirschbaum, Matthew G. “What is Digital Humanities and What’s it Doing in English Departments?” ADE Bulletin 150, 2010. (RD)


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Mapping Digital Humanities

*Bring laptops with Google Earth installed*

Sep. 8 Th  Moretti, Franco. “Maps.” In Graphs, Maps, Trees. 35-64.

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Sep. 13 T  Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, 3-64

Sep. 15 Th  Mrs. Dalloway, 64-128

Sep. 20 T  Mrs. Dalloway, 128-end

**Reading on a Networked Device**


**Woolf presentations**

Sep. 29 Th  Joyce, Michael. afternoon (read for at least 90 minutes)

Oct. 4 T  afternoon (read for at least 90 minutes)

Oct. 6 Th  afternoon (read for at least 30 minutes)

Oct. 11 T  Fall break

**Reading in a Network**

Danielewski, House of Leaves, front cover - 24 (Read all materials: prefatory, cover, appendixes, footnotes, exhibits as you come to them)

Oct. 18 T  House of Leaves, 24-79

Oct. 20 Th Class canceled
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Oct. 25 T House of Leaves, 80-245
Digital Humanities Project Evaluation Presentations
Oct. 27 Th House of Leaves, 246-346
Barthes, Roland. “The Death of the Author.” In Image, Music, Text. (RD)
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Nov. 1 T House of Leaves, 347-422
Nov. 3 Th House of Leaves, 423-528
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Nov. 8 T House of Leaves, catch-up

The Intentional Fallacy

Nov. 10 Th Duffy, The World’s Wife, 1-41
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Nov. 15 T Duffy, The World’s Wife, 42-end
Moretti, Franco. “Graphs.” In Graphs, Maps, Trees. 3-30.

Nov. 17 Th Duffy, Mean Time, 1-29
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Nov. 22 T Duffy, Mean Time, 30-end
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Nov. 24 Th Thanksgiving Break
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Nov. 29 T Rockwell, Geoffrey. “What is Text Analysis, Really?” (RD)

PAPER DUE

Dec. 1 Th Duffy project
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Dec. 6 T Duffy project
Dec. 8 Th FINAL EXAM: Duffy Project, 4:30 – 7:00 pm
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