

DigHT 215, Fall 2019

Write a short letter to future students in this class (or other classes I teach), letting them know what you think is most important about the instructor, the class, the assignments, and/or the reading.

Dear future students, Get ready for the most mind-stretching, yet interesting class you can take at BYU. Seriously this class is something for everyone, from video games to classic literature to social media, this class has it all. This class teaches you not just about the humanities, but about how to be a better thinker in general. We talk about real issues and behavior in humanity and how they all connect back to the digital age we are in now. I really think this is something everyone should take Dight 215. I want to give a couple just general tips for how to succeed in this class and then tell you why I loved this class. First of all, DO YOUR READING! Dr. Croxall treats us like the responsible college students we are and assigns a decent amount of reading, but it's reasonable. You use the reading to write your blog and be active in class discussions. This is probably the best I've been about reading for a class because I wanted to be a part of class discussions. Reading will also help you for the midterm! Don't forget to read and then try to cram it in before the midterm. That won't turn out well. Another tip is to find the topics in class that you're excited about and blog on those! Since we were expected to blog quite a bit, it might be easy to let the blogging feel like an arduous chore, but it shouldn't be. I ended up writing about a lot of things that pertained to my major or what I was learning in my classes. This made the blog assignment beneficial to me because I was developing on prior insights. Third, keep an open mind! Even if you think an assignment or reading is going to be difficult, just fully go for it and you'll be surprised how your brain grows to understand any new concepts. Not being a very avid gamer, I never thought I could write a 7 page paper on a video game. But I ended up having so much fun replaying the game and writing the paper. Lastly, have fun and get to know your classmates! This class might be small and intimate, but that just means you have more opportunity to learn with those around you more. Learn to appreciate Dr. Croxall's humor, and don't get upset if people have different opinions than you during class instructions. This class is all about stepping outside your regular box and adapting to the developing field that we call Digital Humanities. Sincerely, A Former Student

Future students in DigHT 215, Enjoy this class. It will be different than any class you've ever been in, and the assignments will be things you've most likely never done before. Don't be scared by how new and different it all is; Dr. Croxall knows this, and will help you out along the way with whatever you need. Don't shy away from participating in the discussions because you feel unqualified; this is a new area of study, and it is just as new for your classmates as it is for you. You will learn more from commenting than just sitting back - even if you make mistakes from time to time. Dr. Croxall's classroom is a no-judge zone. The nature of what we read and discuss can sometimes get a little uncomfortable, but there is no growth in the comfort zone. Spend your time on the readings. Really try your best to grapple with and understand them, so that you will have more to talk about in class. Don't stress if you only understand a little bit; it will all become clear in the discussion. The exams are nothing to stress over, either. If you do the readings and projects, you'll be just fine!

Dear future students, This class is quite honestly the best. I learned so much about technology and the way we can interpret all forms of the Humanities - including pop culture - but I learned the most by just listening in class. This class is (for the most part) very laid-back: just show up for class and do the readings and the few projects and you'll be fine. That said, the most important part of class is being engaged in class. This isn't like some other classes where you have to pretend that you know everything about the topic after just reading about it the night before. Whether or not you understood the reading, Professor Croxall wants to know - and so do your fellow classmates. So be honest and tell it like it is! The nice thing about this class was the openness and candor in the class discussions. Opinions don't derail the class - they add to it! Any opinions are welcome, mostly because not everything in the class has an answer. So it's mostly up to you - the students - to figure them out. Pretty much everything in this class is an experiment. That said, don't let the lack of finite answers discourage you. As Professor Croxall will undoubtedly tell you, that is the fun of this class. He may not know all the answers you are dying to get, but he can help you get them. In that way, the class is mostly self-taught through discussion and group projects. Professor Croxall is an excellent teacher, but most of the time, he will just guide your thought process and give you all the tools to find the answers. In a way, that makes this class much more freeing in some ways. You aren't expected to come up with a particular answer, but you are expected to put in the effort. So make time for the readings and projects. If nothing else, it is worth it for your own knowledge of how this kind of stuff works. Professor Croxall is a great teacher and he really cares about your feedback. Whether that is in-class discussion, project evaluations, or just an overall teacher evaluation, he takes it seriously. There's no need to try to say something just because it's nice; Professor Croxall wants to know the truth so he can make the class better with each year. So be honest! Be honest with Professor Croxall and with your classmates - this is one of the few classes I felt like I could be myself in because that's just the open environment it is designed to be. Professor Croxall wants you to have fun and enjoy this class as an experience, not a grade.

Hi future (now present) students, I came into DIGHT 215 having already taken 250 and 350, and am also an IT Major/CS Minor. If you're somewhere in the same boat, there's not quite as much coding, unfortunately. If you don't like coding/aren't really in a similar situation, then no worries. There's just a little coding kind of stuff, and Prof. Croxall does a very good job explaining it step by step. In regards to DIGHT 215, it's definitely weird. Like, good, but also weird. I was very thrown off because I couldn't figure out what the class was about, and didn't quite get it from the syllabus. So, a heads up, the digital humanities is basically taking a humanities approach to the digital (i.e. writing an essay on a video game, analyzing its components in that kind of way, not just on its specs or reviews) and/or taking digital tools (text analysis, digital maps) and applying them to humanities objects (like novels, short stories, etc.) There's a lot of the class where we're like, 'what the heck is this?' and Croxall is like, 'yes, what is this?' It was a little disorienting, but it does get explained. Some of the reading is super trippy and confusing. Don't worry too much, as the individual novels aren't the point of the class per se so much as the processes that are taken with them, and Professor Croxall helps explain things and doesn't test on anything too obscure. It's a relatively easy and very enjoyable class. You definitely learn a lot, even if it's a bit of a journey in the dark to get there at times. Have fun!

The main piece of advice I would give to future students is to approach the course, assignments, test, and pretty much everything with an open mind. This class will challenge you to try things you have never done before and learn through experimentation. It is different from most other courses, that mainly rely on lectures and textbooks, but if you approach everything with a willing attitude you will definitely get the most out of it. Also, from the beginning, I would say do your best to keep up with the reading assignments and glean the most essential information from them that you can. This will help not only with the midterm but also with your understanding of where the class is headed and what you can do within the Digital Humanities. The Professor is great, if sometimes quirky. Do the best work you can and make an effort, and Professor Croxall will appreciate it and help you improve. Don't be afraid to utilize Office Hours and get advice along the way! Also, don't be afraid to comment in class and add to the discussion. This is important not only because you get participation points that way, but it also helps you to learn the most. The Professor may be sarcastic, but never mean to students so say whatever dumb stuff you can. Overall, be present, do the readings, do the assignments, and you will learn new skills and concepts you never would have considered before. Have fun!

Digital Humanities is sort of an enigma. You might not have any idea what is going on half the time and it is difficult to explain to friends. Some of the reading looks at digital objects, and others is just literature. With the literature reading, it is more important with the projects to look at what we can DO with the text, rather than traditionally looking at what it means. Don't be afraid to participate in class - Professor Croxall is very respectful and cares about your perspective. He might tease you, but he won't bite. Please email him and ask for help if you get stuck - it will make your life easier, and chances are you aren't alone in your problem. Also, get started on blogging and commenting early - not because you can't finish it later, but because the assignments for your other classes will push it further and further back. The assignments are fun and manageable. Don't worry about your reflection papers too much, because Professor Croxall just wants to see that you've thought about it, not that you write perfectly. This is a fun class. Just keep up with the reading and blogging, and you'll be fine. Good luck!

Dear DigHT 215 of the future (and to whom it may apply): Welcome to the class! Let me just say the most important thing to remember about this class: it is unlike any other class you have taken before. The projects and tests are unconventional, yet educational. It's important to do the readings before class. Well, at least *some* of the readings. Enough so you can write a blog post and have at least some comments for class. The discussions are very important and enlightening; plus, you get credit for participating throughout the semester. Stay on top of the blog posts and comments! I almost didn't have enough blog posts by the end of the semester, so be sure to space those out. And try to get more done sooner rather than later. For blog responses, I actually kept up with this pretty well, so my suggestion is to really try to either write one (but aim for two) responses a week. This class is a relatively low-stress class, but that doesn't mean you can skate by without trying. It's NECESSARY to pay attention in class, keep up with the readings, and do the assignments. If you do all these, the projects and tests will be a piece of cake. Sincerely, A Student of Classes Past

Future Students, If you like structured discussion classes, this is the class for you. Rather than telling you new ideas, Professor Croxall leads you to them so they feel like they were your own discovery. I wasn't sure what to expect since I hadn't taken many humanities classes before this one, but it was far different from my previous ones. Don't be afraid to take some risks in this class because they will either help you learn better or help other people think in a different way too. Not every moment of this class is peaches and cream, but it's a worthwhile one to take nonetheless. I certainly haven't regretted it. Regards, Previous Student

Dear Potential Student of Professor Croxall, I have to be terribly honest. This class is stretching. It's unlike anything I've ever done before. I've learned a ridiculous amount of things that I didn't know were going to be important to me but now they simply just are. This is the best class I have ever taken. It's one I was taking because I needed something to fill my schedule and my counselor told me a digital humanities minor would go nicely with my major. This class has reminded me of how fulfilling learning can be and I've enjoyed this class a ridiculous amount. Professor Croxall is more than fair in all his assignments and sets things up in order for you to succeed. Sometimes I'm pretty sure he's crazy, but his chaos somehow always clicks and it's awesome to see. I have never met a professor who cares more about his students. He bribed us with extra credit AND chocolate to go to his office hours and he seriously just cares and you know it. His door is always open. The fact he is asking me to write this right now so other students can see it proves his how much he cares about those who may take his class. I guess I really want to say that everyone should take this class. It's so interesting and has helped me grow a lot. Talking in class isn't something I like to do, so the amount of discussion in this class was initially really intimidating. But I know the environment is safe and I've been able to not only grow is knowledge but also just putting myself out there. I love this class. IT makes you think and I can't find any fault in that. I'm just saying, my recommendation would be to take it. Past Student of Professor Croxall

Get ready for a wild ride in Dight 215 with Dr. Croxall! Honestly its's a party. Like any class there are difficult moments and tedious projects, but the class discussions are phenomenal. Do the readings as much as you can and take notes on class discussion. This semester we read some fascinating articles and discussed a wide range of topics. Croxall is not scared to talk about difficult subject matter and that is one of the things I appreciated. He is passionate about the work we do and while he may seem crazy in the way he organizes and handles things, in the end my perspective, analysis skills, and awareness of the technology around me changed. Croxall is passionate and opinionated. He'll be open about what he thinks and allow you to disagree with him. He's a strong personality but shared some great perspectives. I appreciated the ways he challenged us to think. He was also super helpful outside of class if you had questions or needed help on a project. It's not a perfect class but it's different and it's fun. Think your traditional English class gone wacko and instead of writing papers you have digital analysis projects. Honestly, just have fun with it!

Dear future student, The most important aspect of this course is that you start thinking differently about the humanities and or the technology you use daily. Yes, prepare to read a lot, but if you do not read, you won't be able to participate in the class discussion, which is where most of the learning will occur. Enjoy this course, enjoy the group projects, remember to love one another. :)

This class is a fun way to think outside the box. Make sure to keep up with the reading and do your blog posts. In addition, reading everyone else's posts is good preparation for class discussions. If you ever have questions or run in to problems with anything in the class, always ask Professor Croxall, he is happy to help.

Dear Future Students, Especially in DigHT 215, you might wonder what the class is actually about or how to actually describe what digital humanities is, and what you're doing with your time. Figuring this out is part of the journey that is this class. Doing the assignments and the readings will teach you in fun ways about the digital humanities. I suggest that you actually do the readings and that you are attentive and actively participate in group discussions during class time. This will help you with the midterm and the class projects. I think most importantly, you should have fun in this class which it turns out, isn't that hard of a thing to do.

If you're on the fence about this class, TAKE IT. It will teach you things that you never thought you would be able to learn. It pushes past the usual limits of a Humanities class that usually involves reading a book, talking about it, and writing an essay on it. Instead, you'll read an interesting piece of literature, talk about it, and actually DO something with it. There are very few classes that I've taken during my college career that have made me excited to do homework and come to class-- this is one of them. Professor Croxall is very flexible but also very structured. He is always willing to help out but also isn't afraid to push you to do a little bit more. The readings can get long sometimes, but all of it is very beneficial and is 100% applicable to what we discuss in class. I would highly recommend taking this course because it's one that I would take all over again.

This class is a lot of fun. While I'm not in love with the humanities, I genuinely enjoyed every day of class. The assignments are creative and fun, and Dr. Croxall is an understanding teacher. He's great, by the way: he is really good at teaching, he makes this fun, and he really cares about students. This class is not one you can nap or do other homework in; it's engaging, and you really get to know your classmates, which makes it awesome. I highly recommend it.

My number one piece of advice about this class is to do the work early. It's tempting to wait until day-of and skim the readings just before class, but a lot of them are difficult to understand, and it's pretty obvious in class if you don't know what you've read. Prof Croxall himself is an interesting character who plays by his own set of rules. He knows what he's talking about and is awesome at helping when you have problems, but be warned - if you come into this class with any expectations, they will all be broken. Finally, don't be scared by the assignments. They often seem overwhelming when they're first introduced, but they're all super manageable. Good luck!