

# Digital Humanities

**ENGL 428: Advanced Composition**  
**Fall 2017**  
**MWF 1200-1250**  
**Merrifield 312**

**Dr. David Haeselin**

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**Office Hours:** MW 3:00 – 4:00 and by appt.

## Course Description:

“Digital Humanities” is one of the most often used and most often misunderstood terms in recent scholarship. Many have called it the next big thing; others have called it the death of the discipline of literary study. Love them or hate them, all digital humanities (DH) projects use digital tools to try and analyze, preserve, or disseminate humanistic knowledge in one way or another. This course will introduce students to examples of the tools, techniques, and concepts across the diverse field(s) colloquially known as the digital humanities.

The major literary text for this class will be Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. After closely reading this book of poems and some major literary criticism on Whitman, students will set to work using digital tools and techniques to offer new insights into this classic of American literature. Assignments may include text-mining, mapping, comparing different editions, tagging/organizing, and remixing Whitman’s poems. *Leaves of Grass* makes for an exciting DH object for a few reasons: its central importance to American letters, its extensive revision history, its attempt to enumerate the diversity of American life during the years of Whitman’s life, and, lastly, the fact that it has already inspired decades of some of the finest DH scholarship around, particularly projects associated with the Whitman Archive. Thus, students’ interpretive work on Whitman’s poems will also offer them contextual insights into some of the major debates and disagreements that digital humanities methods and practitioners have inspired.

In all, students can expect to learn and experiment with a variety of electronic research databases and archives, computational methods for asking aesthetic and cultural questions, and new ways for disseminating their advanced humanistic discoveries to the popular and scholarly reading public.

**This course is approved for Graduate Credit.**

## **Texts:**

### **Required Books (available in campus bookstore and online)**

Gold, Matthew (ed.) *Debates in the Digital Humanities*.  
Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*.

Various selections available on the on the course's Blackboard site. Marked in the syllabus as BB.

## **Course Objectives**

- Introduce students to new methods for composing, designing, and distributing their ideas.
- Model process-based learning strategies for the composition, revision, and preservation of digital projects.
- Familiarize students with digital methods for analyzing literary and cultural objects.
- Encourage students to tinker with do-it-yourself and do-it-together strategies for creating and distributing digital media and writing.
- Enable students to reflect on the theoretical relationship between literary culture, academe, and digital culture.
- Foster proficiency in a variety of software protocols to reinforce students' confidence in creating, maintaining, and updating digital content in accordance with changing expectations in the workplace and graduate education.

## Major Assignments

- I. **Analog Reading** (20%)  
A short (4-5 page) paper interpreting Whitman's poetry, philosophy, or poetics.
- II. **Digital Reading Project** (25%)  
A continuation of the first assignment using evidence gathered from digital and distant reading methods. Includes short pitch paper worth 5% of your final grade.
- III. **Creative Project** (25%)  
A remix of Whitman's poetry into a format of your choosing. Includes short pitch paper worth 5% of your final grade.

## Additional Grade Elements

- IV. **The State of the Field** (20%)  
Short presentations on interesting and important DH projects going on elsewhere.
  - Solo presentation (10%)
  - Leading discussion on related article (10%)
- V. **Class Participation + Short Essays** (10%)

## Attendance, Class Participation & Lateness

I expect all students to be prepared for class everyday; being prepared means paying close attention to scheduled assignments, doing the homework, and *bringing relevant materials with you to class*. If you do not bring the text we are reading to class, you will be considered absent.

You are allowed **four** absences without penalty— following your fourth absence, your grade in the class will begin to drop by a **half-a-letter grade** per absence. Plan ahead if you think you might miss class for religious holidays or for other scheduled events. Just because you inform me of an absence beforehand does not mean that it does not count towards your total. ***I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences – you are allowed four absences – be they excused or unexcused – before your grade begins to decrease, unless other special arrangements have been made with me ahead of time.*** For every two days you are late to class, you will be marked for one absence. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for that day. If you miss a class meeting, you are responsible to contact your peers or **come to my office hours** for materials and information you've missed. Finally, you are responsible

for keeping track of your own absences. A sign-in sheet will be used daily and absences will be thus recorded. Please be conscientious of your class participation – make sure you get the sign-in sheet, and please don't expect me to keep a running tally of your absences!

## Scholastic Dishonesty

At UND, we trust in the excellence of our students and in the integrity of our academic programs. We also trust that your good ideas become better when you test them against the ideas of others. So for this course, feel free to discuss your ideas about the major writing assignments with other students. Collaborating on question/answer homework assignments or open-book quizzes, however, is not acceptable; these types of assignments are designed for me, your instructor, to monitor how you are handling specific parts of the course materials. Blatantly taking someone else's words, ideas or concepts, and using them without citing your source is plagiarism. So is using another student's essay, or part of his or her essay, as your own. In the world of writing (academic writing especially), this is a serious crime, and is treated as such. Anyone who uses non-documented material from another source, including online sources, will receive a **failing grade** for the entire course and will be referred to the Dean's office for possible further disciplinary action.

Plagiarism, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, is a serious offense and will be subject to official university policy and punitive action as found in the "Code of Student Life" available at <http://sos.und.edu/csl/index.php?main=1&pg=s3&subpg=3-3>.

If you have any questions, always feel free to ask me. It's been my experience that those writers who plagiarize are those who feel overwhelmed by the assignment and out of desperation, use someone else's work to stand in for their own. If you get so frustrated with an assignment that you feel like your only option is to plagiarize, come see me. My role as a teacher is to help students, not to punish them— *please* use me as a resource to help you write, brainstorm or work out your essays.

## Deadlines

All written assignments must be submitted on the due date, and missing the class when the assignment is due doesn't mean your assignment isn't late. Turning in an assignment on time is part of doing the assignment, and late work will be graded down, regardless of how well it's executed.

Lateness penalties are as follows:

- Final drafts. For every day that a final draft is late, you will lose **five** points on the final grade.
- Short assignments. All late assignments may receive a maximum of **half-credit**, regardless of how late they are.

## Using Recording Equipment in Class

If you need to tape or record classroom activities, you may do so for *personal* use or for all students presently enrolled in the class. However, you may not further copy, distribute, publish or otherwise use for any other purpose without my express written consent.

## Technologies

This course is focused on digital writing, so I will ask you to consistently bring technology with you to class. Please get in the habit of bringing your laptops, tablets, and smart phones to class with you everyday. You will also have access to the laptops provided in our room. Whenever you like to use one, just ask. That said, I expect you to use your technology class related work only. You will receive one warning about misuse. After that, you will be marked absent for the day. I also reserve the right to alter this policy, if need be.

## Learning Disability

If you have a learning disability that could impair your progress in this course, please contact Disability Services on campus (<https://und.edu/disability-services/>) We can arrange to accommodate your learning style based on DSS recommendations. Please notify me at the semester's beginning of your learning needs--do not wait until the semester becomes overwhelming to acknowledge the problem.

## General Guidelines For Submitting Assignments

- Please submit all assignments via submission links on Blackboard.
- All papers, including daily assignments, must be typed, numbered, double-spaced, with 1” margins. (Note: The default spacing in MS Word is 1.25”)
- Carefully edit and proofread all texts to eliminate problems in grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Any time you cite an essay, film, or book in your main essays, you will need to include a Works Cited section of your essay that provides complete and accurate bibliographic information of the material mentioned in your essay. If you're not sure how to cite sources, ask!

*Documents that do not meet these and other assignment-specific requirements will not be graded. They will be returned to you and when resubmitted will be treated as late submissions.* Pay attention to these details for handing in your final drafts. Superficial errors do not necessarily signify poor thinking, but they do indicate a lack of precision and nonchalance toward the task. When you write papers for your courses within your major, your professors will expect high quality, readable prose. Use this class as a stepping stone toward that end. You'll have to plan your writing process to make time for proofreading—printing a just-written paper 10 minutes before class time will probably not yield terrific results.

## On-Campus Writing Resources

I enthusiastically encourage all students to take advantage of the Writing Center in the basement of Merrifield Hall. All students are eligible for one-on-one tutoring, but you must make an appointment. Remember, though, that tutors are not editors. It is not their job to “correct” your work or simply edit it while you go on Facebook. Think of the writing tutors as supplementary instructors for the class. They can address some issues (from the lowest-level to the highest) in much greater detail than I can since are not responsible for teaching you academic argumentation. For those of you who feel anxious about the requirements of this class, I recommend that you establish a relationship with a tutor early in the semester and rely on their expertise regularly.

**Writing Center**, web address: <http://und.edu/academics/writing-center/>

**ESL Resource Center**, Merrifield Hall, Room 112. The ESL Resource Center arranges tutoring and/or conversation partners for multilingual speakers seeking more practice with the English language. Contact Mary Monette for more information: mary.monette@UND.edu or call 701-777-3624.

**Student Success Center**, Memorial Union, Second Floor. The Student Success Center offers advising, learning services, and specific program to help students meet their educational goals. Individualized assistance and assessments are available. <http://und.edu/student-affairs/studentservices/>

## Grading Policy And Scale

- A Exceptional. Assignment criteria met with creativity, rigor, and insight. Rich theoretical, historical, and creative analysis of the objects grounded within the larger academic context. Ideas articulated with convincing detail and display careful planning. Research and writing is lucid. Errors in style in grammar are rare and never prevent easy comprehension.
- B Good work. Displays sustained analysis, concentration and effort, although mainly recapitulated from class discussion and/or directly from class sources. Minor style problems never completely obscure writer's meaning.
- C Acceptable, but uninspired. There may be a glaring conceptual or execution problems. Work mostly descriptive with little to no historical, critical, or theoretical analysis. Serious issues with validity and/or depth of research. (Note: this is the median grade in the university system)
- D Unsatisfactory work. Ideas never move beyond generalizations. No analysis of any kind. Lacking research and focus. Work displays little to no grasp of the goals of the assignment.
- F Fail. Student does not submit complete work or shows no attempt to engage the concerns of the assignment.

## Expectations for Class Conduct and Devices

In ENGL428 we will spend our course time thinking about and discussing ideas; in order to succeed in this class, you will need to actively participate in these discussions.

Some of the reading for this class will come from handouts distributed via Blackboard. You are required to closely read these articles. Furthermore, you are required to bring a version of

each article to class. I prefer that you bring a printed copy, but I understand that many of you prefer to read on media devices. I will allow you to bring copies on your devices, but with a caveat. If, at anytime in the semester, I get the feeling that people are not reading the articles or that they are using their devices for non-class related activities, I will revoke this privilege and require everyone bring printed copies of the articles to class.

## **Class Participation**

Class time is yours; never forget that. We need to use our time together efficiently in order to give you all what you deserve. Making your voice heard during class discussion and brainstorming is the best way to ensure that we accomplish this together.

In terms of logistics, your in-class participation grade falls to my discretion and can nudge a borderline grade higher or lower. When you contribute to class discussion, be sure that your comments are helpful and constructive. You should be ready to participate in general class discussion at least once a week, and you should always be prepared to generate thoughtful input in small-group discussions and peer review work. Be sure to be supportive of your peers' ideas, even when you disagree with them.

Disagreement can be constructive - very constructive - but when you critique your peers' work, be sure to do so respectfully. Do your best by articulating your grounds for disagreeing with the text itself rather than with your peers personally. Of course, all discussion should refrain from language and tone that could be considered inappropriate or offensive.

If you have questions about the policies of this class, review the syllabus first, and then contact me.

I reserve the right to make any alterations, additions, or subtractions I see fit.



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## **Course Schedule**

### **UNIT I: What is the Digital Humanities?**

**Core concepts: humanities, method, funding agencies, epistemology, things.**

## Week 1

Wednesday, August 23: Introduction and course preview.

Friday, August 25: Fitzpatrick, "Humanities, Done Digitally" and Kirschenbaum, "What is DH?" (*Debates in DH*, afterwards *DDH*)

**Homework: 1 page essay on your personal computer Literacy. See Blackboard for prompt.**

Submit final paper via Blackboard by class time on Monday.

## UNIT II: Whitman

**Core concepts: Self, America, Soul, I, You, Me, Myself, Democracy, Love, Race,**

## Week 2

Monday, August 28: Whitman, "Come, Said My Soul," "One's Self I Sing," "As I Ponder'd in Silence," "Eidolons," "I Hear America Singing" and "Starting from Paumanok." (*LoG*)

**Due: Computer Literacy Response.**

Wednesday, August 30: Whitman, "I Sing the Body Electric," "Preface 1855," Letters between Whitman and Emerson (636-652). *LoG*,

Friday, September 1: Gold and Groom, "Looking for Whitman" (*DDH*) and Reynolds "To Heal a Nation" (*LoG*)

Introduce Whitman Archive/Presentations/ Wordpress Site.

## Week 3

**Monday, September 4: No class; Labor Day!**

Wednesday, September 6: Whitman, "Song of Myself." (*LoG*)

Friday, September 8: Whitman, "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand," "No Labor Saving Machine," "Song of the Open Road." (*LoG*)

**Due: 1 page response paper. What is the most important word that Whitman uses? Submit to Wordpress.**

## Week 4

Monday, September 11: Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Song of the Answerer," "Pioneers! O, Pioneers!," "To You." (*LoG*)

Wednesday, September 13: "To the Leaven'd Soil They Trod," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," "O Captain! My Captain!" "By Blue Ontario's Shore," (*LoG*)

**Friday, September 15: No class; Dr. Haeselin away.**

### **Week 5**

Monday, September 18: Whitman, "Passage to India," Grossman, "The Poetics of Union" Lawrence "Whitman" (*LoG*)

Wednesday, September 20: Whitman, "The Sleepers," Wilde, "The Gospel According to Whitman," and Irwin "Hierglyphic Bibles and Phallic Songs" (*LoG*)

Friday, September 22: **Due: Analog Reading Paper.**

Whitman, "Specimen Days." (*LoG*)

### **UNIT III: DH Methods**

**Core concepts: Text, Corpus, Distant Reading, Canon, Stylistics, Textual Bibliography, Concordance, Hermeneutics, cultural data, data mining.**

### **Week 6**

Monday, September 25: Moretti, "Style, Inc." (BB).

Wednesday, September, 27: Student Presentation 1, Moretti, LARB Interview. (BB)

Friday, September 29: Student Presentation 2, Witmore, "Text A Massively Addressable Object" and Kelly, "Visualizing Millions of Words." (*DDH*)

**Due: 1 page paper. According to Moretti, Kirschenbaum, Witmore, Fitzpatrick, or Kelly, what is the most important thing that digital humanities techniques offers scholars? Whose perspective do you mind most exciting?**

**Submit to Wordpress site.**

**Week 7**

Monday, October 2: Froehlich, “Getting Started with AntConc” (BB)  
Text Analysis Workshop.

Wednesday, October 4: Mapping Workshop.

Friday, October 6: Editorial Tools Workshop.

**Week 8**

**Unit III: DH Projects: Building or Sharing?  
Core concepts: Ontology, Center, Canon, Errata, Discovery,  
Preservation**

Monday, October 9: Student Presentation 3, Ramsay “On Building.” (BB)

Wednesday, October 11: Student Presentation 4. Sample, “The Digital Humanities is not about Building, It’s about Sharing” (BB)

**Due: Digital Reading Pitch.**

Friday, October 13: Student Presentation 5, Blog Posts from Part II (124-136) (DDH)

**Week 9**

Monday, October 16: Student Presentation 6, Fraistat Sample, “The Function of DH Centers at the Present Time.” (DDH)

Wednesday, October 18: Student Presentation 7, Wilkens, “Canons, Close, Reading and Evolution of Method.” (DDH)

Friday, October 20: Student Presentation 8, Fyfe, “Electronic Errata.” (DDH)

## Week 10

Monday, October 23: Student Presentation 9, Flanders “Time, Labor and Alternative Careers.” (DDH)

Wednesday, October 25: Kirschenbaum, “DH is/as A Tactical Term.” (DDH)

## **Unit IV: DH Projects: Knowledge or Art?** **Core concepts: Essay, Multimodal Composition, Juried Creative Work,**

Friday, October 27: **Due: Digital Reading Project Final Draft.**

Sample, “What’s Wrong with Writing Essays?” (DDH)

Watch

## Week 11

Monday, October 30: Student Presentation 10. Ramsay and Rockwell, “Developing Things.” (DDH)

Wednesday, November 1: Student Presentation 11, READING TBA.

Friday, November 3: Brier, “Where’s the Pedagogy?” (DDH)

## Week 12

Monday, November 6: Audio Workshop.

Film Workshop.

Wednesday, November 8:

**Friday, November 10: No class; Veteran’s Day.**

## Week 13

Monday, November 13: Student Presentation 12, Earhardt, “Can Race Be Unfettered?”

**Due: Creative Project Pitch.**

Wednesday, November 15: Student Presentation 13, Cohen 319-323.

Friday, November 17: Student Presentation 14, Davidson, “Humanities 2.0”

#### **Week 14**

Monday, November 20: Student Presentation 15, Liu, “Where is the Cultural Criticism in Digital Humanities” (*DDH*)

Wednesday, November 22: Project Work day. Come with materials and questions.

**Friday, November 24: No class; Thanksgiving.**

#### **Week 15**

Monday, November 27: “Neoliberal Tools (And Archives): A Political History of the Digital Humanities”(BB).

Wednesday, November 29: Student Presentation 16, Witmore, “The Ancestral Text”

Friday, December 1: Whitman, “Notes on his Art.” (*LoG*).

#### **Week 16**

Monday, December 4: Whitman, “Good-bye My Fancy,” Good-bye, My Fancy!”, “Years of the Modern,” “So Long!” (*LoG*)

Wednesday, December 6: Course Evaluations. Course wrap-up.

**Wednesday, December 13: Final Creative Project Due via Blackboard by 12 noon.**

# Digital Humanities

**ENGL 428**  
**Dr. Dave Haeselin**  
**Fall 2017**

## First Essay: Analog Reading

I imagine this assignment as a classic close reading essay. However, since Whitman's poems are profoundly interested in troubling our ideas of the one and the many, I'd like you to make an argument that follows this lead. First, pick one or two poems that you think speak to the most important goals of Whitman's poetic project in *Leaves of Grass*. Then argue that microcosmic aspects in this chosen sample help the reader understand the macrocosmic. Use the body of your essay to illustrate how, where, and why these connections occur. Don't be afraid to explore moments that complicate this process or where your observations break down. Whitman thrives on complexity; you would fail to do his work justice if you denied this fact. You are free to continue your work for the "most important word" assignment, but you can also start fresh if you'd prefer.

## Expectations

I expect:

- 4-5 typed, double-spaced pages.
- A clear focus on one or two poems maximum. You can briefly refer to others, but do so only to illustrate a point you are making about your chosen poem(s).
- That you spend at least one paragraph (and up to a page) reading a single line (or a very small chunk of text). Feel free to repeat this strategy multiple times if need be.
- You to find moments that trouble your take on the meaning of a line, word, or concept. You shouldn't have much trouble with this, Whitman does admit to contradicting himself, after all.
- You to not refer to outside criticism. You may make (brief) overtures to historical context and politics. Remember, this is a *close* reading; focus on interpreting his poetry itself.
- You to compare chosen words to synonyms in his poems and outside them.
- Adhere to the naming conventions mentioned in the syllabus.
- Attach Works Cited Page and In-Text Citations in MLA Format.
- Papers should also adhere the requirements explained in the syllabus.

**Final draft due 12PM, Friday, September 22. Please submit as a .doc file via link on Blackboard.**

# Digital Humanities

**ENGL 428**

**Dr. Dave Haeselin**

**Fall 2017**

## Midterm: Digital Reading

I think of this assignment as your chance to experiment using digital humanities analysis methods to better understand the work of Walt Whitman. What you need to know is that argument is more closely related to your analog (close) reading than other types of literary criticism. Namely, you should still refrain from citing outside sources and context. Rather than conduct outside research, this assignment will ask you conduct research *within* the corpus of *Leaves of Grass*. In essence, I want you to ask another question about how Whitman's poems work and how they make meaning, but this time I expect you to answer it using digital methods rather than classic reading strategies. That said, the types of questions should still be similar—what do Whitman's most important words really mean to him? How does he build his project across his poems? What are his poems' most important contradictions and how could we reconcile them? What's different, however, is the scale and scope of your reading strategy.

## Expectations

I expect:

- 5-7 double-spaced pages.
- An argument based around a specific pattern or patterns you notice across Whitman's poems.
- A brief description of your methodology. Be sure to discuss its affordances and possible limitations. For instance, you will want to answer these question: What tool did you use? What did it show you? Why do you trust it? Why might you not? What elements of the data didn't make sense to you?
- That you incorporate at least one *data visualization* that shows your reader how you are processing Whitman's poems. You should spend at least one paragraph interpreting the results within this visualization, much like you would analyze a block quotation in a classic literary analysis.
- That you spend at least one paragraph (and up to a page) reading a single line (or a very small chunk of text). Feel free to repeat this strategy multiple times if need be. *Notice that this description is exactly the same as the first assignment. Distant reading is a misnomer. Rather, digital reading invites you to closely read new patterns that you would have missed.*
- To point to the way the meanings of important word, concepts, and/or techniques differ, evolve, and remain the same across Whitman's corpus.

- No references to outside criticism, though you may make (brief) overtures to historical context and politics. This is a “distant reading” but you can only find the proof of your argument within the text itself.
- You to compare chosen words to synonyms across the poems and/or prefaces.
- Adhere to the naming conventions mentioned in the syllabus.
- Attached Works Cited Page and In-Text Citations in MLA Format.
- Papers should also adhere the requirements explained in the syllabus.

**1 page pitch due Friday, October 13 via Blackboard.  
Final draft due 12PM, Monday, October 30. Please  
submit as a .doc file via link on Blackboard.**