Humanities 2DH3: Introduction to Digital Humanities

Spring 2018, M X:XX-X:XX/W X:XX-X:XX

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Prerequisities:

I. What Are We Doing Here?

This class is an introduction to some of the key topics, theories, and conversations that underlie digital scholarship. It does so through an in-depth exploration of perhaps the most fundamental underlying concept in digital scholarship: the idea of "data." To do so, the course is divided into three units that all touch on data in one way or another. In the first, we will look at the ways that we organize ideas and material objects, thinking about both their benefits and critiques. The second unit will then build off the first, concentrating on ways to critically interpret both data and the methods that data is actually encoded in through examination of real-world examples. Finally, for the third unit we will put the lessons learned in the second unit into practice by finding, creating, and working with our own data sets.

All three units will exist within the framework of a game, wherein you will be asked to take on the role of new volunteers in an activist group (hereafter referred to as XXXXX, as one of the things you'll be deciding upon in the first week is the name of your group). That group has realized the potential of data-driven journalism to shape society, but lacks the tools and methods needed to really get their message out to the world. As new volunteers, you have been charged to learn everything you can about the role of data in forming decisions and shaping opinions, and to then put that knowledge in the service of XXXXX's goals.

Practically, what this will mean is that each class week will be divided into two parts. In the Monday class session, we'll discuss the readings and learn about some of the possibilities of data. In the Wednesday sessions, however, the classroom will be transformed into a collaborative workspace for activists, where members of many groups come together to put their knowledge into practice in the service of their group's goals.

Through all of this work, my goals for you in this course are to be able to:

- Describe, discuss and evaluate the role of emerging computational tools and methods within the humanities and society at large.
- Debate the benefits and drawbacks of these computational tools and methods as well as their applications.
- Evaluate and apply the DH tools and methods explored in the course to specific disciplinary fields and areas of study.
- Exercise and continue to develop your skills as an analytical reader, critical thinker, and articulate academic writer.

II. Required Texts and Materials

- All the required readings will be posted on Avenue to Learn, our Learning Management System.

III. How will I be graded?

A detailed description of each assignment will be posted in Avenue to Learn and explained in class, and will take the form of directives from the directorship of your various activist groups. Feedback – both from myself and your fellow students – will also happen in class during our collaborative workspace meetings, and more formal grades will be posted to Avenue to Learn.

During our first week, we'll also discuss what you want XXXXX to be like as an organization – what sort of things they're trying to do in the world, what their goals are, and how they might think data will fit into both of those things.

Weekly Topics

Week 1 - Introduction

January 8 – Introduction to the course
January 10 - Cohen, Hamilton, and Turner. "Computational Journalism." *Communications of the ACM*, 54(10): 66-71; "Critical Making: Conceptual and Material Studies in Technology and Social Life." *The Information Society*, 27(4): 252-260
Classroom discussion of the "rules" of the data journalism game, selection of topics and organization name.

Week 2 – Putting things in their place – Organizing things

January 15- Bowker and Star. *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences.* (1-16, 31-32, 53-64)
January 17- Finding information – research using a shared Google Doc for organization/structure.

Week 3 – What is data and how do we think about it?

January 22- Kitchin. "Conceptualising Data." *The Data Revolution: Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures & Their Consequences.* 1-26; Olshannikova, Olsson, Huhtamaki, and Karkkainen. "Conceptualizing Big Social Data." *Journal of Big Data* (available at https://journalofbigdata.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40537-017-0063-x)
January 24- Finding examples of social data and adding them to the existing class notes/Google Doc.

Week 4 – Classification of physical data – the archive.

January 29- Rosenberg, Daniel. "Data Before the Fact." In *Raw Data is an Oxymoron* (15-40).
In-class Visit to the William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections (Mills Library)
January 31- Development and presentation of classification systems to organize research around topics chosen in week 1.

Week 5 – The data debate – what can it do and what can't it?

February 5 – Lanier. *You are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* (3-14); Boyd "Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a cultural, technological, and scholarly phenomenon" *Information, Communication, & Society* 15(5): 662-679.

February 7 – Watch *The Joy of Data* and discuss on the differing conceptions of data can be utilized to accurately report on our topic.
DUE: Individual Reflections on Assignment 1

Week 6 – Visualizations, or how Graphs can be Misleading
February 12- Tufte. "Aesthetics and Technique in Data Graphical Design." In *The Visual Display and Quantitative Information* (2nd ed.) (177-190); D'Ignazio. "What would Feminist Data Visualization Look Like?" (Online at https://civic.mit.edu/feminist-data-visualization); Warden. "Why You Should Never Trust a Data Scientist" (Online at https://petewarden.com/2013/07/18/why-you-should-never-trust-a-data-scientist/)
February 14- Researching good and bad data visualizations. How could we build a visualization that achieves the goals of XXXXX?

Week 7 – MID TERM RECESS
February 19-MID TERM RECESS
February 21-MID TERM RECESS

Week 8: Data structures as critical thinking tool
February 26- Borgman, "Data Scholarship in the Humanities." In *Big Data, Little Data, No Data: Scholarship in the Networked World.*
February 28- Regularizing and organizing the classification system and information that already exists in the Google Doc

Week 9: Data Crosswalks
March 5- Whearty. "Adam Scriveyn in Cyberspace: Loss, Labor, Ideology, and Infrastructure in Interoperable Resuse of Digital Manuscript Materials"
March 7- Developing a structure to handle the information collected in the class Google Doc that matters for your group's topic.

Reference: Getty Crosswalk Guide (Online at http://www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic_publications/intrometadata/crosswalks.html)

Week 10 – Social media, metadata, and manipulating either.
March 12- Bond et. al., "A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization"; Wihbey, "How does social media use influence political participation and civic engagement? A meta-analysis."
March 14- Presenting on the structure developed to classify information about the topic of interest for XXXXX and how it fits into existing metadata schemas.

Week 11 – Memes, "Fake News," and Data Journalism
March 19- Marhoon – "Using Memes to Fight Fake News" (online at https://medium.com/journalism-innovation/using-memes-to-fight-fake-news-1a67a41844a0); Leetrau, "The Daily Mail Snopes Story and Fact Checking the Fact Checkers" (online at https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2016/12/22/the-daily-mail-snopes-story-and-fact-checking-the-fact-checkers/#6b83cbd2227f); Streitfeld, "For Fact-Checking Website Snopes, a Bigger Role Brings More Attacks" (online at

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/25/technology/for-fact-checking-website-snopes-a-bigger-role-brings-more-attacks.html)
March 21- Thinking about how data can be used to support and refute fake news
DUE: Individual Reflections on Assignment 2

Week 12 - Formally structuring our information
March 26- Ramsay, Stephen. "Databases" In *A Compansion to Digital Humanities*
March 28- Research and population of a sql database as a prelude to final outcomes.

Week 13 - Presenting your findings
April 2- Grey, Bournegru and Chambers – "Delivering Data" (online at http://datajournalismhandbook.org/1.0/en/delivering_data.html)
April 4- Continuing development of the SQL databases and in-class development of final outcome – visualization, report, etc.

Week 14 – Final outcomes