CMPU 187
Introduction to Digital Humanities
Spring 2021

Wednesday & Friday, 1:30-2:45 p.m.
Sanders Classroom 106 and Zoom

Prof. Jonathan Gordon

This is a six-week course, beginning April 14.
The password for the Zoom meeting is 12604.

ZOOM  CAMPUSWIRE  GRADESCOPE
SYLLABUS

Course description
What could we discover if we read thousands of books? What would we learn if we
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cs.vassar.edu/~cs187

Overview

What could we discover if we read thousands of books? What would we learn if we tracked the word choices of a poet throughout their life? How would it change our understanding of a novel if we mapped the characters' movements? This course explores the theory and practice of using computational methods to illuminate questions in the humanities, with an emphasis on the role of data in literary studies. Readings, discussion, and hands-on practice facilitate engagement with computational methods and their application in the context of scholarly research.

Course format

This syllabus is a plan, not a contract. This is an unusual semester, and I want us to work together to find the best way for you to learn.
Shadow Syllabus

1. I'll tell you exactly how to get an A, but you'll have a hard time hearing me.
2. I could hardly hear my own professors when I was in college over the din and roar of my own fear.
3. Those who aim for A's don't get as many A's as those who abandon the quest for A's and seek knowledge or at least curiosity.
4. I had bookmarked a citation for that fact, and now I can't find it anywhere.
5. The only way to seek knowledge is to open your hands and let your opinions drop, but that requires even more fear.
6. The goals and outcomes I am required to put on my syllabus make me depressed; they are the illusion of controlling what cannot be controlled.
7. I end up changing everything halfway through the semester anyway because the plan on paper is never what the living class ends up being about.
8. I desperately needed A's when I was in college because I didn't know what else I was besides on A.
9. Our flaws make us human; steer toward yours. I steer toward mine. That won't always be rewarded in "the real world."
10. "The real world" isn't the real world.
11. I realize that I, as the authority figure in this room, might trigger all kinds of reactions, and I hope not to frighten any of you. I only want you to be better than you thought you were.
You currently have no assignments.

Create an assignment to get started.

Create Assignment
Readings
Grades
“All through our education, we are being taught a kind of reverse mindfulness. A kind of Future Studies where – via the guise of mathematics, or literature, or history, or computer programming, or French – we are being taught to think of a time different to the time we are in. Exam time. Job time. When-we-are-grown-up time.

To see the act of learning as something not for its own sake but because of what it will get you reduces the wonder of humanity. We are thinking, feeling, art-making, knowledge-hungry, marvelous animals, who understand ourselves and our world through the act of learning. It is an end in itself. It has far more to offer than the things it lets us write on application forms. It is a way to love living right now.”

Matt Haig, Notes on a Nervous Planet
A professor of mine went to go hear Derrida speak once. The entire talk was about cows; everyone was flummoxed but listened carefully, and took notes about...cows. There was a short break, and when Derrida came back, he was like, “I’m told it is pronounced ‘chaos.’”
Projects to discuss
Explore selections of over 27,000 photographs from the Meserve-Kunhardt Collection at Yale's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Reload this page for more.

Robots Reading Vogue
Data Mining is in Fashion

Few magazines can boast being continuously published for over a century, familiar and interesting to almost everyone, full of iconic pictures — and also completely digitized and marked up as both text and images. What can you do with over 2,700 covers, 400,000 pages, 6 TB of data? Students, librarians and faculty are excited about the possibilities of working with Vogue to explore questions in fields from gender studies to computer science. We highlight some early experiments below:

- **Slice Histograms**: Direct visualization of color patterns. Explore »
- **Cover Averages**: Visual continuity and change across the decades. Explore »
- **n-gram Search**: Search and compare word usage in 400,000+ pages within ads, articles, or all texts. Explore »

**Topic Modeling**

**Advertisements**

**Statistics**

bit.ly/voguebots
Scanned Maps

Thousands of the Harvard Map Collection's maps and atlases from around the world are available online in hi-res.

EXPLORE THIS COLLECTION ONLINE

bit.ly/3dfKe0I
NAVIGATING THE GREEN BOOK

The Green Book was a travel guide published between 1936 and 1966 that listed hotels, restaurants, bars, gas stations, etc. where black travelers would be welcome. NYPL Labs is in the process of extracting the data from the Green Books themselves and welcomes you to explore its contents in new ways.

View a map of the data extracted from the Green Books

Visualize a trip using the Green Books

Map A Trip

bit.ly/navgreenbook
Tomb of Menna in the Theban Necropolis

Learn more: https://www.ercr.org/
AFRICA: Despite America's deep links to Western Africa, dating back to the slave trade, Africa and African nations are rarely mentioned. In the 19th Century, presidents reported on the U.S. Navy's purposefully ineffective anti-slave trade
DISSINET
Dissident Networks Project

The “Dissident Networks Project” (DISSINET), hosted at Masaryk University’s Centre for the Digital Research of Religion, is a research initiative exploring dissident and inquisitorial cultures in medieval Europe from the perspective of social network analysis, geographic information science, and computational text analysis. It uses computational methods to shed new light on the social microstructure and spatiality of medieval dissident Christianities, on inquisitorial trials and records and, by extension, on medieval social networks.

DISSINET in brief

• the close and critical reading of sources combined with computational techniques of exploration, analysis, and visualisation;
• a representative selection of medieval inquisitorial records and dissident religious cultures;
• interdisciplinary investigation of historical, social, and digital aspects.
Emoji on Instagram: Up and to the Right

It is a rare privilege to observe the rise of a new language. Instagram has always supported emoji, but they did not see widespread adoption until the introduction of the emoji keyboard on iOS (October 2011) and on most Android platforms (July 2013). The graph below shows the percentage of text (comments and captions) containing emoji characters graphed over time.
Acknowledgments

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