course overview

In this ENG 250 [crn:16078], we will explore how the digital humanities can help us critically consider: what does it mean to be at home? how does it feel to lose one’s home or be displaced? how do ideas of home and homeland intersect with class, race, ability and disability, nationhood, and citizenship? and how do ideas of home shape our sense of self and our ability to make our way within the world? Through this exploration, we will consider how we can capitalize on what makes us human in order to harness the power of technology to critically research and produce knowledge in the digital age.

We will focus our study on the University of Oregon common read The Best We Could Do, a collection of indigenous poetry, the Walt Whitman Archive, and other literary works that connect to the idea of home and homeland in American culture. As we explore these questions together, you will have the opportunity to speak, think, and write critically about the affordances and constraints of digital humanities methods and tools; work with structured data to create data visualizations, digital maps, and network graphs that make creative and logical arguments; work individually and in teams to create public artifacts that enrich understanding of the course’s guiding questions.

This class satisfies a General Education Arts and Letters Group Requirement. It is a required course in the DH minor and serves as a prerequisite for English 470: Technologies and Texts Capstone.

course goals

1. To become familiar and critically conversant with various concepts and methods in literary studies and the digital humanities.
2. To use and critically explore digital tools and their potential for humanistic inquiry.
3. To evaluate the potential of digital methods for use in your individual scholarly pursuits.
4. To collaborate on research in a field that has traditionally privileged individual scholarship.

course structure

Our class sessions will follow two parallel tracks, with one day each week devoted to reading discussions and analysis of mature digital humanities projects, and the other day devoted to hands-on technology workshops. The majority of our hands-on workshops will take place online. Your attendance will be required at labs during scheduled course time, but you will not be required to be physically present in our classroom. This will allow you to access the technology you need and to work at a pace that works for you. You may wish to make arrangements to work on labs with one or more members of your team.
required texts

The Best We Could Do: available at the bookstore + on reserve

Sing!: Poetry from the Indigenous Americas, available at the bookstore + on reserve

Intro To Digital Humanities (http://dh101.humanities.ucla.edu/): available online

Walt Whitman Archive (https://whitmanarchive.org/), available online

Various digital humanities projects, secondary articles, and digital tools available online

responsibilities + policies

I am here to help you succeed! It is our shared responsibility to communicate respectfully. The syllabus and Canvas are your starting points when you have questions about what is happening in class. It is my responsibility to be as clear as possible about expectations, assignments, and assessment procedures. It is your responsibility to contact me when feeling confused, overwhelmed, or unsure. If you do have questions about an assignment after it has been graded, assessed, or commented on, I ask that you wait 24 hours and that you have specific questions for discussion when you contact me.

attendance

This class uses contract grading. Engagement + reflection (we'll define this together!) during in-person and online meetings is critical to our ability to meet course learning goals. See the grading contract for more details.

course content + intellectual discussion

We are going to be talking about oppression, violence, racism, and privilege frequently in this class—not an easy thing to talk about. We’re going to have to build community and trust in order to do that, and therefore we need guidelines for delving into these difficult topics. We will use a “brave space” classroom in order to do that. Please read through the course "Charter for Compassion and Bravery." I'll ask you to make suggestions and to pledge to uphold the groundrules we decide on as a class. Our rules will help us do all that we can knowing we’ll fail on occasion, to restore compassion to the center of our lives (at least in this course and during this quarter) and attempt to engage with our colleagues in this course with compassion. This means we will work to think first of others, their benefit, their well being, and their learning, knowing that others are compassionately working for our benefit. We will strive to see our interdependence and interconnectedness, and labor for one another. If at any time, course content makes attendance or engagement difficult, I ask that you let me know so that we can find a solution together.
academic honesty, authorship, and plagiarism

It's important to understand ‘authorship’ and ‘ownership of ideas and words’ in academic writing and projects. This helps writers give the correct credit to others for their words and ideas. When you use someone else’s words or ideas without telling your reader where they come from, you are PLAGIARIZING. Common examples of plagiarism include incorrect academic citation and copying and pasting parts of an essay from the internet or other students. Getting too much help from someone editing your writing is also a form of academic dishonesty. I am looking to help you improve your academic. I am not expecting perfect writing. If you have a question about using ideas and words from others in your essays, please ask!

All work submitted in ENG 250 must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to the summary of the Code of Student Conduct on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where academic dishonesty has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course is the standard practice of the English Department. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources, translator or editors, or website you might consult as you are thinking about your questions of issue and developing your reasoning and your writing.

access

If you have a disability (physical or learning) that you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the term’s first week so we can make arrangements, if necessary, for your full access to classroom activities.

safe campus policy

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, coercion, and/or sexual harassment is encouraged to seek help. Please visit https://safe.uoregon.edu for information. You are also strongly encouraged to contact Renae DeSautel, Sexual Violence Response & Support Services Coordinator, desautel@uoregon.edu. She will keep your information confidential. In addition, the UO Ombudsperson Bruce MacAllister (541 346-6400 or ombuds@uoregon.edu) can provide confidential support and assistance. You can also contact any pastor, priest, imam, or other member of the clergy. All of these people, including all UO faculty members, have an obligation not to reveal your name or other specific information without your permission, although faculty members do have to provide “general information” that will help us create a safer campus. As your instructor, I can also reassign work partners and make other necessary accommodations.

observance of religious holidays
Students who observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances must inform instructors in advance of the holiday. Students are responsible for making up missed work according to a schedule determined with the teacher.
Grading Contract

Rationale

Work in the Digital Humanities requires critical doing and making with technology to select objects of study, analyze them, and make arguments and tell stories about what you discover. ENG250 is built on a "workshop" model of learning where working scholars gather to share and support each other, generate ideas, and provide engaged and thoughtful feedback and suggestions. The work of the course is as or more important than the products you will produce as novice digital humanists. I have found in my own experience as a teacher and a student that "traditional" grading systems too frequently shift the focus away from the process of learning. Further, as a writer and scholar, I have learned the most when I have been able to take risks and to fail and to learn from the failure. Grades don’t allow for that to happen. Rather than assigning grades based on a judgment about the quality of the work you produce in class, I will assign grades based on the labor or work you perform as you attempt new kinds of products. You will find a detailed chart below about what that will mean in practice.

The spirit of this contract is equity—not everyone has the same background or experience with technology or literature or relationship to academic English. At UO we are fortunate to find ourselves in a diverse learning environment where we encounter a range of backgrounds. We will recognize the role of language attitudes and standards in empowering, oppressing, and hierarchizing languages and their users. American academic English is a type of dialect. Like spoken accents, written accents do not represent intelligence, ability or accomplishment and will not result in lower grades. Rather, you will determine your grade by behavior, effort, reflection, and investment in improving and how you consider and respond to feedback from me and your class colleagues.

I will lead the course and design the assignments and activities. You will be responsible for your own learning. As a community of scholars, we will also be responsible for each other’s learning by supporting and pushing each other to work through difficulties. This contract focuses on the responsibilities we will assume together rather than what you will be held accountable for. A key component of the course will be developing a culture of support or a community of compassion – a group of scholars who genuinely care about each other’s wellbeing. The best way to learn is to teach others, to help, to serve. Rather than thinking of the members of the classroom as students and teachers, we will instead function as collaborators and allies with various skills, abilities, experiences, insights, and talents we can offer each other.

The default grade for the course is a “B”. If you do all that is asked of you completely and in the spirit in which it is assigned; engage in the readings, discussions, and workshops; participate and collaborate as defined; and show evidence of improvement in both these processes and your understanding of course concepts, then you will receive a “B.” Your grade will be lower if you turn in assignments late, do not attempt to increase your work’s intensity based on feedback from me and your peers, forget to do assignments, etc. An “A” is earned through additional assignments, detailed later. Rather than keeping
track of what you earn on assignments, you will keep track of your complete, incomplete, missing, and late assignments to determine your grade. Due dates for each assignment will be posted on Canvas. Assignments are grouped into the following areas:

process work
- engagement in class: weekly freewriting, quizzes, mini-assignments, etc.
- lab notebooks: 8 total

analysis work
- digital discussions: 4 total
- midterm critical tool analysis

synthesis work
- final individual project/exam: includes proposal + exploratory writing
- collaborative class projects

the “b” contract agreement

You are guaranteed a course grade of B (85%) if you meet all of the following conditions:

1. You agree to fully participate in at least 17 of the scheduled 19 in-person and online class sessions (there is only one asynchronous online session in Thanksgiving week). This requires that you are mentally and physically/virtually present and willing to try new tasks.
2. SHARING and COLLABORATION. You agree to work cooperatively and collegially in groups. We will decide together what this will look like for our class.
3. WORK/LABOR CONDITIONS. You agree to complete all assignments, including all components of digital discussions, lab notebooks, and midterm and final projects, on time and in the manner and spirit of responsible work for a 200-level course. You will keep track of how much time you are spending outside of class in your engagement log. You can expect to spend about 8 hours on work outside of scheduled in-person and online class times. If your experience is vastly different, let’s strategize!
4. INCOMPLETE WORK. I will use a basic rubric to determine whether your work meets all of the requirements of each assignment. If I determine that your work is missing something and therefore not meeting "B" level expectations, I will let you know. You have 48 HOURS to revise and resubmit any incomplete work before it becomes MISSED WORK.
5. MISSED WORK. If you submit late work AFTER the 48 hours, then it will be considered Missed Work. If you do not revise and resubmit INCOMPLETE work, it will be considered Missed Work. There are two exceptions to the MISSED WORK clause: you must submit a midterm and final project that meet minimum requirements in order to pass the class.
6. LATE WORK. You are expected to turn in all work on time. However, I understand that life can be unpredictable. You may turn in a few assignments late (see table below). Late work is defined as any work that is submitted AFTER the due date/time BUT within 48 hours of the deadline posted on Canvas.
7. IGNORED WORK. You agree not to ignore any work expected of you. Ignored work is any work unaccounted for in the quarter—that is there is no record of you doing it or turning it in. Accumulating any Ignored Work will keep you from being a learner in our community and meeting contract expectations.

chart of responsibilities

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how to improve your grade

Higher grades require more labor. You can improve your grade by 1/3 (B to a B+) for each of the following assignments completed in the spirit asked of you up to a full letter grade (B to A). You are welcome to do as many as you would like, but only up to THREE will be counted toward your overall grade. Completing three in-depth assignments will raise your contracted grade by one full letter (B to A). Each is intended to give you a more in-depth experience with digital humanities and course concepts. Guidelines for each are on Canvas.

- A web-based tutorial of a tool not covered in class (including tool reviews) due by Nov. 5
- Scheduling and attending at least two tutorial sessions to work with a Writing Associate on your final project and writing a brief description and reflection about your experience. At least one of the sessions must be scheduled prior to Nov. 12. To schedule an appointment, go to https://english.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/writing-associates-tutoring-services
  (https://english.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/writing-associates-tutoring-services)
- One additional workshop + lab notebook entry post by Monday, Oct. 29
- One additional working + lab notebook by Monday, Dec. 3. Optional labs + tutorials are posted on Canvas.
- An online teaching demonstration on a key term, having consulted with me at least 48 hours in advance. I’m open to team-lead and synchronous or asynchronous demonstrations. You must sign up for a demonstration by Oct. 4. Demonstrations must be complete prior Nov. 28.
Completing BOTH the Final Project and Final Exam options.

emergency clause

As administrator of the contract, my job is to make sure that it is fair to all members of the classroom and meet the university’s regulations on attendance, conduct, and workload in classes. By signing this contract, you grant me the authority to grant an exception to contract terms due to rare and unusual circumstances once per student if needed during the quarter. It is NOT an “opt-out clause” for anyone who happens not to fulfill the contract in some way. I will decide in consultation whether an exception to contract terms is warranted. If something happens beyond your control, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible, usually before contract terms are not met.

exemplary labor

If by our final assignment deadline during Finals Week, you miss no in-person or online class sessions, participate in all activities, have not late, missed, or ignored assignments, and have not exercised the emergency clause, then your course grade will increase by 1/3 (from a B to B+).

accepting the terms of the contract

By staying in this course and attending class, you accept this contract and agree to abide by it. I (Emily) also agree to abide by the contract and administer it fairly and equitably. Signing the contract does not commit you to striving for any grade. I assume that you all would like a B or better! I am available for consultation anytime during the term to help you strategize to the grade you desire.

final caveat

Because Labor-Based Contract Grading may seem to you to be an odd—and possibly unnerving—approach to education, you will have the option of having your performance in the class assessed by me according to the conventional grading practices as described in the course syllabus and the English Department Grading Policies. I will keep a Ghost Grade Book for this purpose. However, I insist that everyone try the Grading Contract approach until midterm.

At the end of Week Six (Friday, Oct. 2), you may request to see your Ghost Grades so that you may determine whether you want to renew your contract. At the beginning of Week Seven, we will renegotiate the terms, and you will need to make a final decision on your grading option—either Contract or Conventional—which will apply for all work completed during the term. This decision cannot be revoked.
assignment overview

Course assignments give you experience working as a novice digital humanist: selecting objects for study; interpreting, processing, and analyzing objects and elements of objects as data; and synthesizing findings for public presentation online. Further details will be added as we discuss each in class. All work will be assessed on its completeness. As a community, we will provide each other compassionate, critical feedback to improve and enrich each other's work.

engagement + reflection

due: end-of-day Mondays, in-class

**purpose:** Engagement and reflection assignments will give you practice in speaking, thinking, and writing critically about literary and digital objects and the affordances and constraints of digital humanities methods and tools. You will build skills and knowledge needed to complete other course assignments, prepare for collaboration, and deepen understanding of course material.

**what you will do:** To help you prepare for the work of the week, you will complete a "quiz" by Monday night to assess your comprehension and prepare you to participate in class and in our collaborative projects. Quizzes can be repeated until you successfully complete the questions. Other assignments will be completed in class. Not completing engagement and reflection assignments will result in a "non-engagement day" in grading contract terms. Details about engagement and reflection work will be posted on Canvas. "Quiz 1" is a survey about your experience with digital tools and literary culture. "Quiz 2" will ask you to reverse engineer a digital humanities project following an in-class workshop.

weekly lab notebooks

due: end-of-day Friday following each lab/workshop

**purpose:** Most weeks, you will participate in virtual or physical workshops during or in lieu of class to become familiar and critically conversant with commonly used digital humanities tools and methods. Doing the work and documenting and reflecting on your experience allows you to replicate the process, share with others, and make improvements. You will develop strategies for independent learning and critical evaluation of tools that you may use in this class or other pursuits.

**what you'll do:** You will follow instructions, working through tutorials, and take note of challenges, and successes. By end-of-day Friday, you will update your lab notebook on Canvas (template provided) to describe what you did, reflect on the affordances and constraints of what you explored, and pose two critical questions related to the course. Workshops are designed to allow for both completion and writeup of during the two hours we would otherwise be meeting in class. Planned workshops include exploration of Hypothes.is (a social annotation tool), archiving and digitizing objects, creating and cleaning spreadsheets, data visualization tools, and HTML.
digital writing circle

due: wk3, wk6, wk8, wk10

**purpose:** In this series of assignments, you will use writing to critically explore and test out project ideas and will practice critical and empathetic reading of your peers' ideas. A writing circle is a group of writers formed to support and provide feedback. Together, you will learn to be critically conversant in an online space and engage in intellectual inquiry as a social activity. In the process, will extend our communal thinking about home, the digital humanities, and other questions raised through the course and begin to develop the narrative or argument of your final project.

**what you'll do:** Four times during the term, you will write a 500-word discussion board post describing an area of critical inquiry raised by what we read, discuss, and do in class. You will also critically and empathetically read two classmates' posts and in 150-200 words describe one or two points of engagement with their work, offer 1-2 suggestions for objects, processes, and presentation tools, and raise a question for further exploration. After reading your peer's responses, you will write a follow-up post describing what you learned and how your thinking has progressed. Posts should become increasingly more specific to your final project. Initial posts will be due on Wednesdays, feedback posts on Fridays, and follow-up reflections on Sundays.

midterm critical digital tool review

due: oct. 25 by noon

**purpose:** We will use and critically explore a number of digital tools in class and consider their potential for addressing the questions that come up from our study of literary objects and their cultural significance. This assignment gives you the opportunity to practice this method of critical exploration on a new tool on your own. Further, this assignment builds on the UO critical thinking methods of inquiry outcomes by asking you to use what you've learned about the digital humanities to "describe, investigate or analyze" the tool. Critical thinking in this assignment requires you to question critically, think logically and reason effectively about the tool.

**what you'll do:** In this assignment, adapted from [Quinn Warnick](http://quinnwarnick.com), you will teach yourself how to use a new digital tool, create documentation on what you did to become familiar with the tool, and critically reflect on how the tool might enable and limit digital knowledge production related to a question from class or your final project. Your tool should be one that we won't cover in class. You are required to select your tool by the start of wk3 (Oct. 8). A great place to start looking is DiRT Directory ([http://dirtdirectory.org/](http://dirtdirectory.org/)), but you can look beyond that list, too. I don't expect you to achieve mastery with the tool. Your exploration should be as deep as needed for you to create a beginner's guide to the tool. You will share this guide with your classmates and post a revised version to our public class webpage.

final individual project and/or final exam
due: Dec.3

**purpose:** Designing and planning an open-ended project gives you the opportunity to put into practice the tools and methods we've been exploring together in class to address an issue important to you.

**what you'll do:** You will select literary and/or cultural object(s) for your project, process and analyze your object(s) using digital humanities tools and methods, and design and plan a digital presentation that tells a compelling story or makes an insightful argument related to some area we've covered in class. You will propose a project, meet with me to negotiate the details, and write a memorandum of understanding to govern what will represent a "complete" project. You will present your work-in-progress during the term to your classmates in digital writing circles assignments.

Everyone is required to design and plan a project. You have the option of either completing and submitting a final project or completing a final exam. Both options will require a reflective component that directly connects the work you have done on your project to one or more of the course goals and data from your engagement log. You can opt to choose both to raise your final grade by 1/3.
reading + workshop schedule

Because we will be using our Thursday class meetings primarily for workshops, all reading for the week (with the exception of wk1!) should be completed before noon on Tuesday. Engagement + reflection assignments/quizzes are due on Mondays. You can expect to use information from previous weeks as well as the upcoming reading. Lab notebooks are due on Fridays following each workshop.

Beyond wk2, this list is tentative and engagement assignments less detailed. I will provide up-to-date details on Tuesdays for the following week. We will see together where we want to go as a class!

wk 1 / 09.24 - 09.30

home, belonging, digital humanities

reading: "As We May Think
(http://static1.1.sqspcdn.com/static/f/346077/3614949/1247871875603/As+We+May+Think+Vannevar+Bush+450910.pdf?token=60YbuVzYy9ZPAUE8Ahh9MX1%2Bvig%3D)" by Vannevar Bush, Robots Reading Vogue,
(http://dh.library.yale.edu/projects/vogue/) The Garden of Earthly Delights,
(https://tuinderlusten-jheronimusbosch.ntr.nl/en#) Six Degrees of Francis Bacon,
(http://www.sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/?ids=10000473&min_confidence=60&type=network) The Green Book Map,
(http://publicdomain.nypl.org/greenbook-map/) reading guide

engagement + reflection: digital literacy inventory [due 09.26]

workshop [lib 41, 12-2 pm, 09.27]: reverse engineering dh projects

wk2 / due 10.01 - 10.07

"close reading" + poetry in the digital age

reading: "The American Scholar
(http://digitalemerson.wsulibs.wsu.edu/exhibits/show/text/the-american-scholar/the-american-scholar)," Sing [introduction + all poems in the first two sections of Sing (Calyx and Ptarmigan), browse the remaining collection]; dh101 5B
(http://dh101.humanities.ucla.edu/?page_id=48)

engagement + reflection: take quiz on reading + reverse engineering digital humanities projects; create engagement log
(https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TTf40m9kaPbcd558YT9gCA5cwJhwGUBcOWIUW7KccLc/edit?usp=sharing); sign up to be lead researcher on nine poems on the Sing spreadsheet
(https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cdT6mUG9wyxm5tiYr0PXAX94_oA_mjffjzN8DKcFT1c/edit?usp=sharing)
workshop [online, 12-2 pm, 10.04]: Hypothes.is (https://web.hypothes.is/), close reading, social annotation

wk3 / 10.08 - 10.14

data, metadata, digital objects


engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: structured/unstructured data, close/distant reading

first DWC due!!!

wk4 / 10.15 - 10.21

power, ontologies, and the archive


engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: archives, digital archives, OCR, transcription

wk5 / 10.22 - 10.28

spreadsheets, ontologies, literature
reading: more WW [what we don't cover in wk4], Stephen Ramsay. "The Hermeneutics of Screwing Around; or What You Do with a Million Books.” Pastplay. 2014.

engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: you're in charge! presenting critical tool reviews in groups; midterm critical tool review due!!!

wk6 / 10.29 - 11.04

dirty data / tidy data


engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: cleaning data, intro to data visualization

wk7 / 11.05 - 11.11

data visualization and some complications

reading: The Best We Could Do, "Humanities Approach To Graphical Display (http://digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/5/1/000091/000091.html)," "To Cite or To Steal (https://hyperallergic.com/308436/to-cite-or-to-steal-when-a-scholarly-project-turns-up-in-a-gallery/)?,"

engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: data visualization continued: network graphs, Google Fusion Tables, mapping

wk8 / 11.12 - 11.18

maps and networks

engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: html [asynchronous workshop moved to wk9...WE WILL HOLD IN-PERSON CLASS ON BOTH TUESDAY + THURSDAY]

wk9 / 11.19 - 11.25

Thanksgiving Holiday

interfaces + access

reading: "Demystifying Networks, Parts I & II", select network projects [Star Wars Social Networks, dh101 7A]

engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: wk8 html workshop carried over to wk9 [NO IN-PERSON CLASS MEETINGS IN WK9]

wk10 / 11.26 - 12.02

big data, augmented reality, inequality: where do we go from here!?

reading: read + review materials from term/project to prepare for the final

engagement + reflection: reading quiz

workshop: in-class presentation of final project plans

wk11 / 12.03 - 12.09

final project/final exam due