ENG 250: Literature and Digital Culture / SU19 / CRN / 42488, Online

What will we be reading in this course? As digital humanities scholars, we will read five primary texts: three digital projects, a digital art installation, and the UO 19/20 Common Reading. We will also read secondary "texts" to aid in our study of the digital humanities and home, belonging, and environmental justice. Plan to spend significant time reading and re-reading each central text. Digital texts are available online. Under the Feet of Jesus is available through the UO Duck Store.

What else will you need to engage in the course? Daily access to Canvas and your student @uoregon.edu email; OneDrive (accessible through your UO account); a trial account on Omeka; Hypothes.is, a browser extension you can download for free; Chrome (recommended); a free account on Pressbooks, a digital publishing platform; and the ability to download other free web applications and software onto a computer or laptop. You can do some work on a phone or tablet but you will need access to a desktop or laptop for some LAB activities.

Dr. Emily Simnitt

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course overview

Literature and Digital Culture offers a guided introduction to some of the new technologies that scholars use to study and make arguments about literature. This course is designed for the “tech-curious” with opportunities for all levels to learn new ways of using technology to critically answer humanistic questions. We will be pairing our study of digital culture with the University of Oregon 2019/2020 Common Reading *Under the Feet of Jesus* and a selection of digital humanities projects that explore ideas about home, belonging, and environmental social justice and how those ideas intersect with class, race, ability and disability, nationhood, and citizenship. In the course, students will define and identify data related to our reading and discussion; practice processing data using digital methods such as digital asset management, mapping, digital text analysis, and digital publication; and work individually and in teams to use technology to develop critical questions and arguments about literature and environmental justice. Together we will consider how technology might be wielded in support of humanities research and interdisciplinary projects like the UO Common Reading Program.

This class is offered online and 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.

navigating this course

This course is fully online. You will be able to complete all work remotely. I have an office and office hours on the University of Oregon campus in 210 PLC, to which you are welcome, but you will not be required to attend class on campus or submit hard copies of work.

You cannot wait until the end of the term to complete the work for the course. To succeed in the course, you will need to follow the weekly schedule of readings and assignments.

The primary skill you need to succeed in this course -- and in the Digital Humanities -- is the ability to closely read and follow instructions.

course organization

The course is organized in 4 modules, following the 4-week summer session. All the information you need for each week is included in the week’s module. We will read print + digital texts each week together, and you will complete a quiz, discussion board post, and lab notebook each week. Although some online courses can be completed in
a flurry of activity at the very end of the term, this course will require consistent and regular participation in different activities and assignments each week.

learning goals

Studying literature can give us insight into addressing issues that face us outside of the classroom. Our guiding question asks us to consider where our ideas about home and belonging come from and to think about who might be excluded from experiencing a sense of home and belonging. The question relates to both social issues and personal experience. Because we are centering our literary study on the Common Reading *Under The Feet of Jesus*, we have the opportunity to explore environmental justice as a broader social issue related to home and belonging.

We will also examine digital humanities as a *method of inquiry*: What are the affordances and constraints of using digital tools in humanities research and interdisciplinary projects like the UO Common Reading Program?

learning goal 1: dh methods of inquiry

To become familiar and critically conversant with various concepts and methods in literary studies and methods in the digital humanities.

This class is an introduction to the digital humanities. We are exploring methods of digital humanities to increase our understanding of home, belonging, and environmental justice. You will come to identify the components of DH projects (assets/sources, processes, structure, presentation) as well as key concepts such as data in literary analysis, metadata and ontology, digital text analysis, and digital interface.

We will also explore how digital tools support central components of literary study including close reading print and digital literary texts, using context to deepen understanding of literary texts, and analyzing literary texts based on our individual and collective experiences.

learning goal 2: critical exploration

To use and critically explore digital tools and their potential for humanistic inquiry.

The best way to learn to about the affordance (possibilities) and constraints (limits) of digital tools for research and writing in the humanities is to give them a try. Through hands-on experience, you will be better able to critically evaluate the tools to reveal how the tools and methods we use shape what questions we can ask and how we might present our answers. Critical awareness means that you learn to question your own assumptions and acknowledge that there are multiple perspectives. We will use *The Ultimate Critical Thinking Cheat Sheet* to guide this work.
learning goal 3: individual goals

To evaluate the potential of digital methods for use in your individual scholarly pursuits.

Digital humanities work is both highly collaborative and highly self-directed. The course provides you the opportunity to develop your ability to work independently and take responsibility for your own learning and engagement. You will have the opportunity to work through challenges and likely "failure" of digital tools at times. You will also have ample opportunity to reflect on how you might take what you learn in ENG 250 into future coursework.

learning goal 4: collaboration

To collaborate on research in a field that has traditionally privileged individual scholarship.

Collaborating in an online space is challenging. Discussion Boards offer you the opportunity to work with others. Discussion Challenge assignments ask you to problem solve further as you seek to encourage volunteers to respond to your new questions. Further, we will consider together what we, as a class, can add to the UO Common Reading Program that adds up to more than what an individual can do.

grading + evaluation policies

Your grade for ENG 250 will be determined by the labor you put in and your own engagement with course material, activities, and learning goals. ENG 250 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. All work will be assessed as either "complete" or "incomplete" according to assignment-specific rubrics.

You will earn a "B" in ENG 250 if you:

1. Complete 4 weekly quizzes. The next week’s module won’t unlock until you complete the previous week’s quiz. The module in which you will submit your final work will unlock once you complete the wk4 quiz.

2. Attempt + complete all assignments.
   o weekly discussion board posts (5 total)
   o lab activities + notebooks (4 total)
   o final exam (1 total)
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3. **Use 2 or fewer wild cards.** Wild cards can be played to make up for an "incomplete" assignment or work you turn late but within 48 hours of due date. Note, "incomplete" work is work that is attempted in full but is missing up to a few components. Wild cards can only be played for weekly discussion boards and lab activities + notebooks. Wild cards may not be used for quizzes or final exam/final project. Note: Once you have used up wild cards, I will not accept any additional late work without agreed upon extenuating circumstances. "Late" work will be counted as "ignored." See definition of "ignored" under "C/Pass requirements."

**challenging yourself + improving your grade**

In weeks 1-3, there will be two challenge opportunities you can choose from to boost your engagement and learning in the class. With your increased labor, your grade will rise accordingly.

- For an "A": complete 1 challenge each week for a total of four challenges. Only one challenge per week can count toward an "A". You must complete the FINAL CHALLENGE PORTFOLIO.
- For an "A-": complete 3 challenges in any combination.
- For a B+: complete 2 challenges in any combination.

You can use one challenge IN ADDITION to your wild cards to make up for either one "incomplete" or one "late" assignment. For example, if you use your wild cards to excuse two late assignments and earn an "incomplete" in a third, which would lower your grade to a "C." If you complete one challenge assignment, your grade will be a "B" for the course.

**"C"/Pass requirements**

If you find that you cannot engage in the labor required for a "B" or better in the course, you can earn a "C" or a "pass" (under the pass/no pass option) by opting to use one additional wild card for a total of 3 wild cards.

This additional wild card can be used to excuse one additional "incomplete" or "late" assignment. You can also use all three wild cards together to excuse one "ignored" assignment. An "ignored" assignment is one you do not attempt or make any effort to contact me if you are having difficulty.

Ignoring the final exam or final project will result in failure in the course.

**late work policy**

I am able to offer extensions on lab activities + notebooks and the final exam OR final project regardless of your reason for needing them. To receive an extension, you must contact me ahead of the due date. We will come to an agreement about how you will
submit your work. I cannot give extensions for weekly discussions because of the way it affects your peers. I will not grant extensions on quizzes because of the importance of accessing each week's material in a timely manner. I will not grant extensions on challenge assignments. Part of the challenge is to do the work as it is assigned.

responsibilities

I will do my best to be clear about assignment expectations and how I will assess your work. It’s your responsibility to contact me—in my office or by e-mail—when you are confused, overwhelmed, or unsure about class expectations. Talk to me before an assignment is due, not after. That way I can help you talk through your confusion, brainstorm ideas, consider possibilities, give you resources, and discuss your work with you—that’s an integral part of my role in our class! I can’t make exceptions or extend grading deadlines unless you talk to me before the assignment is due.

emergency clause

As the course instructor, 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. In remaining in the course, you agree to allow me to grant a single exception to any terms due to rare and unusual circumstances if the need arises. I will decide in consultation whether an exception to any class policy is warranted. If something happens beyond your control, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible, usually before your work is affected.

other policies

**A Final Grade of Incomplete**: A request for the grade “Incomplete” must be placed in advance of the end of the quarter. Such approval will be granted only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed by a student through unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

**Access**: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

**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.
academic honesty + authorship + plagiarism

It’s important to understand ‘authorship’ and ‘ownership of ideas and words’ in academic writing. This helps writers give the correct credit to other writers and thinkers 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 citation of sources and copying and pasting parts of an assignment from the internet or other students. Getting too much help from someone editing your writing is also a form of academic dishonesty.

We will discuss further in this course how writing in digital environments and collaboration on digital projects complicates our understanding of authorship. We will learn about fair use and copyright, and you will be expected to make every effort to apply what we learn to your own writing and project work in the course.

I am looking to help you improve and gain important experience in writing in academic and digital spaces. I am not expecting perfect writing or adherence to rules you are just learning. If you have a question about using ideas and words from others in your essays, please ask!

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course without permission. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please refer to our e-handbooks as well as the Library Citation and Plagiarism guide and the Student Conduct Code on the Office of the Dean of Students website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of up to an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the English Department. Please see me BEFORE you submit your work if you have any questions about your use of sources.

technical requirements + knowledge

required equipment

Access to a desktop or laptop computer will be necessary to complete some LAB activities. You will need a web cam and something to take digital photos.

necessary skills
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Studying digital humanities projects and methods requires you to have Internet access and a basic knowledge of computer and Internet skills to be successful. These same skills will help you be successful in an online course. However, you do not need to be a "tech expert" to take this course.

You should be "tech-curious." That means, you will need to:

- develop the ability to find, read about, and try out digital tools on your own
- be persistent in investigating solutions to "technical difficulties"
- know when and how to ask questions
- learn to be comfortable with failure

**basic knowledge**

- knowledge of terminology, such as *browser, applications, upload, download*, etc.
- understanding of basic computer hardware and software; ability to perform computer operations, such as:
  - using keyboard and mouse
  - managing files and folders: save, name, copy, move, backup, rename, delete, check properties
  - software installation, security and virus protection
  - using software applications, such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel, email clients
  - knowledge of copying and pasting, spell-checking, saving files in different formats
  - sending and downloading attachments
- internet skills (connecting, accessing, using browsers) and ability to perform online research using various search engines and library databases
- ability to use online communication tools, such as email (create, send, receive, reply, print, send/receive attachments), discussion boards (read, search, post, reply, follow threads), chats, and messengers
- ability to set up accounts in web applications, download software to your computer, and navigate online tutorials

***Technology problems:*** Technology can be tricky, but you need to be organized enough to anticipate computer problems. I will never excuse late work based on technology problems. The university has provided ample computer labs, so if your personal technology has failed, you need to find an alternative on campus or near your residence. Because everything will be turned in online, be sure to back up your hard drive regularly. Don’t wait until the last minute to begin LAB work. I can help troubleshoot and find solutions as long as you contact me well before the 11:59 p.m. Sunday due date of LAB assignments.

**assignment overview**
You will be doing three types of weekly assignments in this course: Discussion Boards where you work out new concepts and ideas in writing with your classmates; LABs where you try out digital tools and ask critical questions about what the tools allow you to do and what new limits they reveal; and Quizzes where your basic comprehension of the week's material [especially that covered in UNIT presentations] will be tested. You must successfully complete the week's quiz before moving on to the next week's work. You will also complete a Final Exam and have the option of submitting a Final Portfolio if you are choosing to complete "A" requirements as outlined in the grading policy.

discussion board assignments, due weekly

You will earn a “complete” for the weekly discussion board assignment if you post “primary” and posts by the due date (by midnight each Friday) and at least one "secondary" post and two "peeps" by midnight each Sunday. Each post type is described in How To Complete Discussion Board Assignments.

lab assignments, due weekly

LAB activities require you to follow a series of steps outlined in instructions that you should carefully read through in full before beginning. Find full instructions in each week’s overview. For each LAB, you are required to complete a LAB notebook using the LAB notebook template. Below are descriptions of the tools you will explore and what you will learn.

LAB 1: DH Project Platforms, due July 28

In this digital lab, you will create an Omeka.net site that you will use now and in future lab work. Completing the lab will help you develop a working knowledge of the three components of digital humanities projects: identifying and curating objects related to questions at issue, digital processing objects, and presenting objects to contribute to humanities knowledge and conversations. Because the objects you will be curating, processing, and presenting will be related to home, belonging, and environmental justice, completing this lab assignment will further your exploration of these key course concepts.

LAB 2: Social Annotation + Close Reading, due August 4

In UNIT 2, you learned about how data and databases are one way of collecting and structuring information. By exploring Hypothes.is, you will gain practice in a very different way of collecting and structuring information. You will create a Hypothes.is account and make digital annotations on online articles related to Under The Feet of Jesus. You will gain practice in making notes and recording connections to home, belonging, and environmental justice. Because Hypothes.is is a born-digital tool that supports social annotation you will be able to see and respond to your classmates.
LAB 3: Digital Text Analysis, due August 11

In this digital lab, you will use Voyant Tools to "distant read" for patterns in resources related to *Under the Feet of Jesus*. You will learn more about how digital humanists approach text analysis and gain practice using the affordances of technology to quickly analyze large amounts of material. We will explore what "data" means in studying literary.

LAB 4: Digital Publishing, due August 18

In this digital lab, you will learn more about what it means to author and publish work in the digital age by exploring the affordances and constraints of Pressbooks, an open source book formatting software that is used by self-published authors and for textbook creation. You will learn more about fair use and copyright as well as the various kinds of collaboration possible in creating digital projects and texts.

final exam, due August 18

In the final week of the course, the final exam will be opened. The final exam is an opportunity for you to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired this term about digital humanities as a field of study and the novel, digital projects, and digital tools on which we focused our inquiry. The exam also provides a final opportunity to reflect on your developing ideas and experience with home, belonging, and environmental justice. The exam will include multiple question types and methods for demonstrating your learning. I will answer questions about the final exam AFTER instructions are published in WK4.

discussion board challenges [optional, required for grades above "B"]

In weeks 1-3, there will be two challenge opportunities you can choose from to boost your engagement and learning in the class, one related to the week’s Discussion Board assignment and one related to the week’s LAB activity. With your increased labor, your grade will rise accordingly as described in the grading + evaluation policy.

Discussion Board Challenges, due weekly

Weekly discussion board challenges offer you the opportunity to share insights from your group’s discussion with the entire class and to pose a new question to inspire and engage others to think more deeply about the week’s topic on the class General Discussion Board.
LAB Challenges, due weekly

LAB activity challenges offer you the opportunity to engage more deeply with the digital explore and require a second LAB notebook entry. Descriptions of weekly LAB activity challenge assignments will be released with each week's module.

Final Portfolio Challenge, due August 18 [required for an "A"]

A final portfolio is required in order to receive an "A" as your final grade in the course. Mastery of the skills for digital humanities work requires a metacognitive understanding of the labor and processes necessary for achieving excellence in literary study in digital environments. The portfolio requires you to track your learning and engagement each week (as described in the Final Portfolio instructions) and to collect your best work at the end of the term to demonstrate your progress during the four weeks toward the four learning goals for the course.

assignment schedule

Below is a schedule of assignments for the course. You can also see assignments and due dates on the course Syllabus page and on your Canvas calendar. NOTE: I reserve the ability to change the schedule but only after notifying you in advance by an announcement on Canvas.

WK 1

Introductions + Defining Digital Humanities

Voices from the Valley (Links to an external site.), Just Stories, Environmental Justice Atlas (Links to an external site.)

UNIT 1 + 1.2: Why study DH and environmental justice? How do I read DH projects?

Digital Tool in Focus: Omeka

Syllabus Quiz due by Wednesday, July 24

Introduction Discussion Board Post due by Thursday, July 25

Week 1 Quiz, Discussion Board Post, Lab Notebook on Omeka due by Sunday, July 28

Optional for grade increase [one required for "A"]: WK1 Discussion Board and LAB Challenge assignments due Tuesday, July 30

WK 2

Reading Print + Digital Objects

Helena María Viramontes Under the Feet of Jesus
UNIT 2: Close Reading In The Digital Age

**Digital Tool in Focus:** Hypothes.is

**Week 2 Quiz, Discussion Board Post, Lab Notebook due by Sunday, August 4**

Optional for grade increase [one required for "A"]: **WK2 Discussion Board and LAB Challenge assignments due Tuesday, Aug. 6**

WK 3

Methods Of Inquiry In DH

UO Common Reading Resources for *Under the Feet of Jesus*

UNIT 3: DH Tools For Text Analysis + inquiry

**Digital Tool in Focus:** Voyant

**Week 3 Quiz, Discussion Board Post, LAB 3 due by Sunday, August 11**

Optional for grade increase [one required for "A"]: **WK3 Discussion Board and LAB Challenge assignments due Tuesday, August 13**

WK 4

Digital Authorship

*[Re] Activate Mama Pina’s Cookbook*

UNIT 4: DH Projects + Digital Authorship

**Digital Tool in Focus:** Pressbooks

**Week 4 Quiz, Discussion Board Post, LAB 4 due by Sunday, August 18**

FINAL

**Final Work Due: by Sunday, August 18**

Final Exam

[REQUIRED FOR "A"]: **Final Portfolio**
Optional for grade increase [one required for "A"]: WK3 Discussion Board and LAB Challenge assignments due Tuesday, August 13

WK 4
Digital Authorship

[Re] Activate Mama Pina's Cookbook

UNIT 4: DH Projects + Digital Authorship

Digital Tool in Focus: Pressbooks

Week 4 Quiz, Discussion Board Post, LAB 4 due by Sunday, August 18

FINAL
Final Work Due: by Sunday, August 18

Final Exam

[REQUIRED FOR "A"]: Final Portfolio