2018-2019 Praxis Program Charter

# Praxis 2018-2019 Charter

Collaborate → Iterate → Discuss.  
These principles will guide us as we embark on the 2018-19 Praxis project.

## Individual Goals

As we begin our year of working together, we decided to set individual goals for what each of us wants out of the program. We don’t want to limit ourselves or one another and force ourselves into roles or boxes, but we do think that transparency about our interests and hopes will help us help one another along the journey.

With that in mind, here’s what we want out of this year:

* Emily
  + Learn and develop strategies for effective collaborative work.
  + Gain skills in presenting audio in digital formats.
  + Start coding.
  + Learn what I may and may not be interested in within the digital humanities.
  + Learn about new disciplines and working methods from my (fabulous) collaborators
* Cho
  + Learn the key concepts and methods in digital humanities
  + Learn and apply data science tools and methodologies in this field and deliver the knowledge to a wider public audience
  + Gain concrete skills of text mining and GIS spatial analytics
  + Stay curious
* Catherine
  + Improve my project management and pedagogical skills.
  + Blog a lot.
  + Make a thing. (As Emily says: “Better done than perfectly theorized.”)
* Chris
  + Understand methods and approaches of other digital humanists - i.e. understand the possible
  + Learn to use code to work efficiently
  + Manage large databases
  + Learn to build and manage a website
* Mathilda
  + Develop an engaged, useful and publicly-oriented humanities praxis
  + Improve website design skills
  + Build digital tools to foster humanistic inquiry within the University and beyond
* Eleanore
  + Become conversant in the digital humanities
  + Engage publicly (especially by not being precious about writing)
  + Learn sufficient technicals skills to facilitate and support the exploration and development of DH projects now and in the future
  + Engage and collaborate with colleagues in Praxis and the Scholar’s Lab

## Common Goals

First and foremost, we echo the vision of the Scholars’ Lab of seeing the whole person–not dividing our lives into the professional, the scholarly, and the personal but imagining ourselves and each other complexly. We encourage one another to share our work outside of the project, to share our successes and struggles in our own research, and to seek out one another’s friendship. That said, we will respect the work/life boundaries of each collaborator, looking for ways to facilitate healthy participation in the project, friendly interaction outside of it, and openness about needs and availability. We take inspiration from the practice of many in academia, particularly women, who strive to build one another up rather than viewing one another as competition. The way we see it, a rising tide lifts all boats.

We pledge to resist the urge to shroud our work in inaccessible language and to perform our sense of belonging. We accept one another as colleagues. We will work against the social pressure that induces us to be guarded in our speech and in our conduct and instead commit ourselves to honesty and to mutual trust. In that same spirit, we embrace transparency (a key principle of the Scholars’ Lab) and will meet the challenge posed to us by Praxis to share our project-development process with the public through regular blogging. We will try to use accessible language, to have a public presence for the work on and off the web, and to be honest in our communication with each other.

We value the disciplinary diversity of our cohort and pledge to build a project that incorporates each of our perspectives regardless of the nature of the corpus on which we are working. We strive to build something that matters to all of us and takes our individual disciplinary backgrounds into account; however, we are open-minded about what that may ultimately look like. We promise to look out for one another’s interests and to attend to flagging enthusiasm with care. In pursuit of this objective, we will give sufficient time to articulating our goals before choosing the tools that will realize them.

## Guiding Values for Our Project

We are aware that Praxis inherits both digital humanists’ tradition of open access and librarians’ tradition of public humanities and we are committed to working within those traditions while being aware of our own limitations and biases. We aim to build a project that is guided not just by what is legal and permissible, but what is ethical and productive. Individually, many of us come from disciplines with a history of colonialism and extraction—and collectively, we benefit from this university as an institution with its own history of exploitation. With this history in mind, we will ask these questions of ourselves as we work with the “public domain”:

* Who are we assuming is the public? Who is being left out of that assumption?
* Who benefits from making this cultural product publicly accessible? Who is harmed?
* What resources are needed to access this project? Can we reduce those barriers? Should we?
* What would it mean to design with rather than for the public? How can we involve the community in our creative process?

In addition, we are aware that we are funded by a public institution and we plan to build on public-domain works. To that end, we aspire to create a dynamic project that encourages public interaction that is a product of not just our Praxis cohort’s collaboration but of a collaboration with a broader community. We strive to practice an engaged, useful, and ethical humanities that connects the university to publics beyond its walls.

Finally, we will carry on the strong Praxis tradition of giving credit where credit is due. We will recognize the labor that is often made invisible, whether it is that of our fellow Praxis collaborators, Scholars’ Lab and library staff and collaborators, or of other contributors.

## Practices & Promises

To put the above into action, we commit to the following practices:

1. We will check in regularly, both to facilitate project accountability and (more importantly) to keep communication about our personal and emotional bandwidth open. Our initial goal is to do a [project update](https://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/agile/scrum/meetings/daily-scrum) in our **Tuesday meetings** to set goals for the week, then check in on **Fridays** (either remotely or in person) to see how the week went. We will also use these project updates to consult one another about upcoming blog posts and promise not to publish anything about conflict resolution or other sensitive issues without first consulting one another in person.
2. We will aim to spend time collaborating together in person outside of the general session, most likely in smaller groups. To that end, we will use Slack to plan **“if-you-can” working lunches or small meetings** in the fellows lounge (our general fall 2018 availability being Mon/Wed between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and Friday afternoons). The point being: we’re going to prioritize face-to-face collaboration over remote collaboration when possible. We will also commit to following up with those who were not in attendance if matters where the whole group’s input is needed were discussed.
3. We will take turns **hosting a social gathering** once a month.
4. In our meetings, we will **support one another** when we ask for help or clarification.
5. We will share our new ideas, our struggles, and our successes with each other and with the University community so that all may learn from our process. **Frequent blogging** will enable us to do this.