

CMS.S62/CMS.S98 – Special Topic (Spring 2019):

## Digital Humanities: Active Archives

Wednesdays, 2-5 PM, Room 16-644

**Instructor:** Kurt Fendt, Room 14N-421, office hours T 3-4 PM or by appointment, email: fendt@mit.edu

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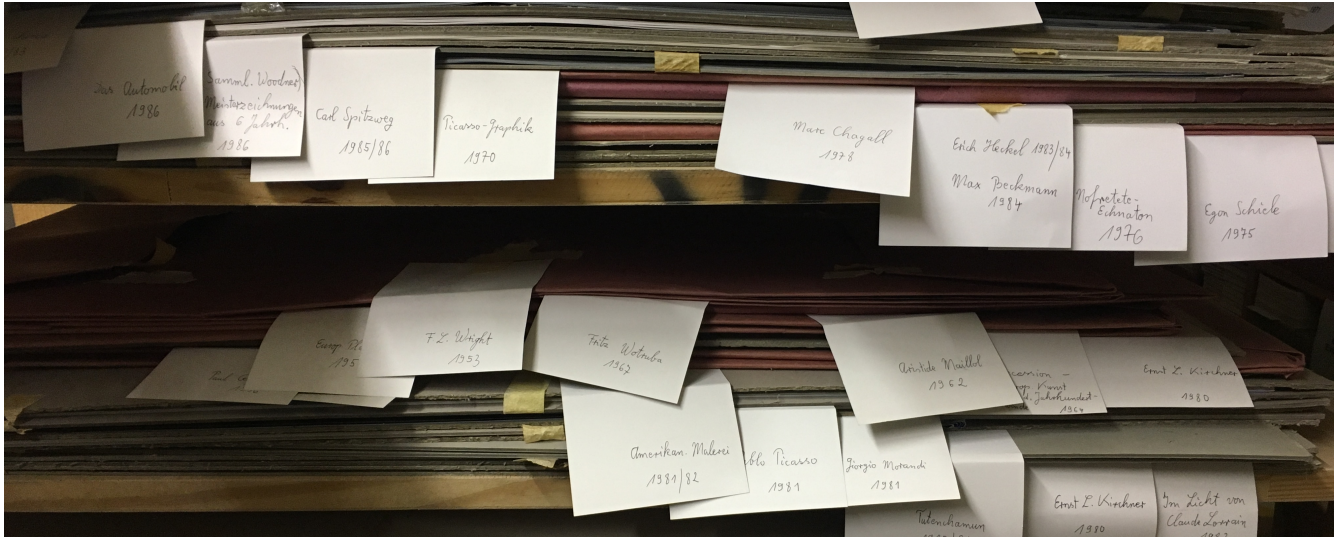


Photo: Archive, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2019)

This project-based subject investigates the digital archive as an emerging platform for critical inquiry through analysis, seminar discussion, and experimentation with user-oriented design. Weekly readings will provide theoretical, analytical, and practical perspectives from multiple academic fields, including media studies, cultural studies, UI/UX design, and philosophy. These readings will address a range of topics, including participatory digital culture, data curation, visualization, and the archive's role in activism. Students choose a final group project to develop throughout the semester. In this project, students will have the opportunity to work directly with institutional archives in Germany and the US, designing exhibitions around their collections and physical spaces. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Digital Humanities (CMS.633/833) is NOT a prerequisite for this subject.

## Format and Requirements

This course will consist of reading discussions, demonstrations of tools and techniques, hands-on project work time, and collaboration on final group projects. In addition, guest speakers who work in museums, archives, libraries, and design labs will discuss their work in class or at site visits. Students are expected to participate in class discussions on readings, project presentations, and review sessions. Students will annotate readings using the tool Annotation Studio and contribute weekly reading comments as well as project updates on the course's GitHub site. Teams will be formed to work on a range of smaller projects throughout the semester. The final, larger group project will be selected at the beginning of the semester and will have to be completed along with a design document by the end of the term.

Grades will be based on the following criteria:

- Final project (40%), including design paper and prototype (optional)
- Short projects (15%)
- Presentations and project updates (15%)
- Class participation (15%)
- Reading comments on Annotation Studio and Github (15%)

Class attendance is required. Unexcused absences result in a lower grade. There will be no final exam in the class.

Students will be annotating selected readings using the web-based tool *Annotation Studio* (Link on Stellar), our class name for creating an account is : **CMS.S62/S98 S19**. In addition, students post weekly reading comments and project updates on our Github site: [CMS62.github.io](https://github.com/CMS62).

For each class, a student is responsible for leading the discussion on the assigned readings, graduate students will be assigned additional readings (see syllabus, assignments, and Stellar).

The Stellar site for the class is at: <https://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/CMS/sp19/CMS.S62>

Project work for this class includes working with content (digital artifacts, metadata, extracted data) from a variety of museums and archives in the US and Europe and direct interaction with curators, archivists, artists, designers, and museum curators. Main deliverable for the final class project is a detailed design paper (25 pages), functional prototypes are welcome but not required.

Avoid *plagiarizing*. **Plagiarism** is the use of another's intellectual work without acknowledgment. Full acknowledgment for all information obtained from sources outside the classroom must be clearly stated in all written work submitted. All ideas, arguments, and direct phrasings taken from someone else's work must be identified and properly footnoted. Use quotation marks to identify all sources of wording that are not yours. Identify sources of ideas with appropriate footnoting. Plagiarism receives an F in the subject, the instructor is required to forward the case to the Committee on Discipline. See <http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/avoiding-plagiarism/> for more information.

The WCC at MIT (**Writing and Communication Center**) offers *free* one-on-one professional advice from communication experts. The WCC is staffed completely by MIT lecturers. All have advanced degrees. All are experienced college classroom teachers of communication. All are published scholars and writers. Not counting the WCC's director's years (he started the WCC in 1982), the WCC lecturers have a combined 134 years' worth of teaching here at MIT (ranging from 4 to 24 years), so they are intimately familiar with MIT culture and with the academic and professional expectations of all fields. The WCC works with undergraduate, graduate students, post-docs, faculty, staff, alums, spouses and partners. The WCC helps you strategize about all types of academic and professional writing (dissertations, theses, papers for courses, proposals, articles for publication, job applications and CVs) as well as about all aspects of oral presentations (including practicing classroom presentations & conference talks, and designing slides). No matter what department or discipline you are in, the WCC helps you think your way more deeply into your topic, helps you see new implications in your data, research, and ideas. The WCC also helps with all English as Second Language issues, from writing and grammar to pronunciation and conversation practice. The WCC is located in E18-233, 50 Ames Street). To guarantee yourself a time, please make an appointment. To register with our online scheduler and to make appointments, go to <https://mit.mywconline.com/> . To access the WCC's many pages of advice about writing and oral presentations, go to <http://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-and-communication-center/> . Check the online scheduler for up-to-date hours and available appointments.

## Syllabus

Week	Topic, Readings, Assignments
Week 1 February 6	<p><b>Archives as Storage to Critical Platforms, Introduction</b></p> <p><i>Lit.</i> Anne Burdick et al., <i>A Short Guide to the Digital_Humanities</i> (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2012), SG2-5;</p> <p>Kate Theimer: <i>The Future of Archives is Participatory: Archives as Platform, or A New Mission for Archives</i>, ArchivesNext Blog, 2014 ( <a href="http://archivesnext.com/?p=3700">http://archivesnext.com/?p=3700</a>)</p> <p>Graduate students also read: Isto Huvila, <i>Participatory Archive: Towards Decentralised Curation, Radical User Orientation, and Broader Contextualisation of Records Management</i>, in: <i>Archival Science</i>, 8-1 2008, 15-36 .</p> <p><i>In-class Activity:</i> Evaluation of cultural heritage archives</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Evaluate and present an online archive of your choice, explore Museum 4.0 projects</p>
Week 2 February 13	<p><b>From Physical to Digital Archives</b></p> <p><b>Guest Speaker: Katrin Glinka, Prussian Heritage Foundation, Berlin, Germany (via Skype)</b></p> <p><i>Lit.</i> Museum 4.0 (<a href="https://www.museum4punkt0.de/en/">https://www.museum4punkt0.de/en/</a>)</p> <p>Mike Featherstone, <i>Archive</i>, in: <i>Theory, Culture &amp; Society</i>, 23-2-3 (2006), 591-596</p> <p>Johanna Drucker, <i>Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production</i> (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, no year), pgs i-ix; 125-129. Graduate students also read pages 64-84.</p> <p>Anne Burdick et al., <i>Digital_Humanities</i> (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2012), pgs 42-45.</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Criteria for participatory archives, initial selection of archives for final project, develop initial ideas for project „Berlin in the 1920s“</p>
Week 3 February 20	<p><b>Visualizing Controversial History - New Design Approaches to Political Archives</b></p> <p><b>Guest Speakers: Design Team, Berlin (via Skype)</b></p> <p><i>Lit.</i> Excerpts from: Henriette Roued-Cunliffe, Andrea Copeland, eds., <i>Participatory Heritage</i> (London: Facet Publishing, 2017); Lawrence Liang, <i>The Dominant, The Residual And The Emergent In Archival Imagination</i>, in: <i>Spheres, Journal for Digital Cultures</i> (2-2015) and response by Robert Rapoport</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Extraction of online content via scraping and API access, curation of extracted content; Selection of projects and groups for final projects.</p>
Week 4 February 27	<p><b>Curation and Online Archives - Bauhaus Archive Harvard Art Museums</b></p> <p><i>Lit:</i> Vannevar Bush, <i>As we May Think</i>, in: <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>, 7 (1945), online version</p> <p>Taylor de Klerk, <i>Ethics in Archives: Conscientious Collection Curation</i> (<a href="https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/news/special-collections/ethics-in-archives%3A-conscientious-collection-curation">https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/news/special-collections/ethics-in-archives%3A-conscientious-collection-curation</a>)</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Digital curation via scraping and APIs ; first presentation of concepts for final projects.</p>
Week 5 March 6	<p><b>Special Collections - The Challenges of Physical Archives</b></p> <p><b>Guest Speaker: Emilie Hardman, MIT Special Collections</b></p> <p><i>Lit.</i> Peter McMurray, <i>Archival Excess: Sensational Histories Beyond The Audiovisual</i>, In: <i>Fontes Artis Musicae</i>, 3-2015, 262-275</p> <p>Katie Shilton, Ramesh Srinivasan, <i>Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections</i>, in: <i>Archivaria</i>, Spring 2007, 87-101</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Models for text and content extraction, machine reading, metadata processing</p>
Week 6 March 13	<p><b>Digital Archives as Platforms</b></p> <p><i>Lit.</i> Dario Rodighiero et al. <i>Mapping affinities in academic Organizations</i>, in: <i>Frontiers</i>, February 2018</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Presentation and discussion of revised final project concepts, spaces, technologies, and designs</p>

Week	Topic, Readings, Assignments
Week 7 March 20	<b>Visualizing Networks, Visualizing Archives</b> <b>Guest Speaker: Dario Rodighiero, Postdoc, CMS/W</b> <i>Lit.</i> Excerpts from Ellen Lupton, <i>Design Is Storytelling</i> (New York, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, 2017) and Jennifer Douglas, <i>From the Sidelines to the Center: Reconsidering the Potential of the Personal in Archives</i> , in: <i>Archival Science</i> , 3-2018, 257-277 <i>Assignment:</i> Watch Carles Sora: Art, Archives, Storytelling; Final project updates, including first designs.
Spring Break	
Week 8 April 3	<b>Archives and Storytelling</b> <i>Lit.</i> Stan Ruecker et al., <i>Visual Interface Design for Digital Cultural Heritage: A Guide to Rich-Prospect Browsing</i> (New York, Routledge, 2016) Getraut Koch, <i>Augmented Realities</i> , in: <i>Digitization: Theories and Concepts for Empirical Cultural Research</i> (New York, Routledge, 2016, 230-247) <i>Assignment:</i> Experimentation with visual display of complex archival content; presentation and discussion of final project updates
Week 9 April 10	<b>User Interface Design: Principles, Methods</b> <b>Guest Speaker: Mindy Seu, Harvard U. (tbd.)</b> <i>Lit.</i> Andrew Flinn: <i>Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges</i> , in: <i>Journal of the Society of Archivists</i> Vol. 28, No. 2, October 2007, 151 – 176 Grad students: Mary Stevens, <i>New frameworks for community engagement in the archive sector: from handing over to handing on</i> , in: <i>International Journal of Heritage Studies</i> Jez Collins, Oliver Carter, <i>"They're Not Pirates, They're Archivists": The Role of Fans as Curators and Archivists of Popular Music Heritage</i> , in: <i>Preserving Popular Music Heritage</i> (New York, Routledge, 2015) <i>Assignment:</i> Revision of UI and UX concepts of final projects
Week 10 April 17	<b>Activist Archives, Fan Archives</b> <b>Guest Speaker: Ben Silverman, CMS/W; Media Archives and Fandom</b> <i>Lit.</i> Ahmed Elgamma et al. <i>The Shape of Art History in the Eyes of the Machine</i> , conference paper, 32nd AAAI conference on Artificial Intelligence (New Orleans, 2018) Lisa Gitelman (ed.), <i>"Raw Data" Is an Oxymoron, Introduction</i> (Cambridge, Mass, MIT-Press, 2013, 1-14) <i>Assignment:</i> Review of design concepts and project deliverables
Week 11 April 24	<b>Archives and Machine Learning: Models, Concepts, Experiments</b> <b>Final Project Work</b> <i>Assignment:</i> Discussion and revision of final projects, review with museum/archive counterparts
Week 12 May 1	<b>Final Project Work</b> <i>Assignment:</i> Review of Final projects, including beta versions of exhibition designs, blog posts
Week 13 May 8	<b>Dry Run for Final Project Presentations</b>
Week 14 May 15	<b>Final Project Presentations (Public)</b>