

ANTH 3890 – REL/DIV 6793

Special Topics in the Digital Humanities: Encoding Culture

Purposes of the Course

This course provides an introduction to the theory and methods of the digital humanities with particular attention to the disciplinary perspectives of Anthropology, Classical Studies, Literature, History, and Religious studies. This course is designed for graduate and undergraduate students who would like to acquire research skills in the techniques of digital data encoding and analysis. Students will learn the fundamentals of digital text editing and database usage from the guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). Students will engage with theoretical questions concerning how to encode cultural data and the challenges of representing information about the past through new media. By the conclusion of the course, students will have built the beginning stages of a digital project and crafted a future research plan specific to their research agenda.

The application of new media and information technology to interpretive questions in the humanities holds significant promise for future research on human culture. Although the field of “digital humanities” is only now gaining prominence, historians and linguists had an essential role in its early formation. For example, Fr. Roberto Busa (1913-2011) is widely considered to be a founder of “humanities computing” through his pioneering work to encode the *Index Thomisticus* using IBM punch cards over a period of two decades (from the 1940-60s). Since Busa’s time, a large variety of digital corpora have been created which are of interest to a variety of fields of cultural research. These collections range from vast electronic corpus of ancient archeology and comparative editions of medieval and early modern manuscripts to the collected works of twentieth-century authors.

The creation of these digital collections bring with them a variety of accompanying questions worthy of scholarly reflection. How does access to such digital corpora alter existing patterns of scholarly research? What impact will “distant reading” (Franco Moretti) of electronic corpora have on the study of human culture? What interpretive assumptions are implicit in the encoding of texts and construction of databases? How can scholars effectively undertake research computationally across hundred, thousands or potentially millions of documents?

This course offers students an opportunity to directly reflect on these questions as they explore potential applications of digital technology to their own research in Anthropology, Literature, History, Religion, and other areas of Cultural Studies. Specifically, this course will serve three broad purposes. First, we will seek to introduce “digital humanities” and investigate the theoretical and methodological issues in applying technology to humanistic research, including identifying the limits and epistemological constraints of technology. Second, we will learn specific tools for research with an aim to identifying emerging trends, successful models, design values, and potential pitfalls. Lastly, over the course, students will develop a specific plan for implementing a digital element into their own research. In preparation, students will have the opportunity to learn new technical skills and tools.

Spring 2019 Details

Professors:

David Michelson
Michelle Taylor

Time & Location:

Tuesday & Thursday 9:35-10:50 in 344 Buttrick Hall (Digital Humanities Center)

Office Hours:

Michelson: 11:00-12:00 Tuesday & by appointment in 214 Divinity
Taylor: 9:30-10:30 Wednesday & by appointment in 134 Cohen

Course Websites:

<http://brightspace.vanderbilt.edu>

https://www.zotero.org/groups/2268102/vanderbilt_rel_6793_encoding_culture_spring_2019

Materials

All readings will be posted on Zotero or Brightspace. There are no textbooks to purchase for this course, all of our readings will be electronic. You must either bring a laptop, tablet, or printed copies of the readings to class. (Tablets and laptops are available for checkout from the library if needed).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you will...

- 1) Understand the Digital Humanities as an emerging field of research.
- 2) Know how to mark up texts using the guidelines of the Text-Encoding Initiative (TEI).
- 3) Know how to create and use an XML database.
- 4) Contribute to an existing digital research project or undertake your own digital research.

Divinity Degree Learning Goals for Students Enrolled in DIV 6793

The above learning outcomes are in support of the learning goals of the

MDiv and MTS degrees at Vanderbilt University as published in the Divinity School Catalogue.

Specifically...

- Learning outcome 1 above is in support of the following degree learning goals: *MDIV* 1, 2, 3, 6; *MTS* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
- Learning outcome 2 above is in support of the following degree learning goals: *MDIV* 1, 2, 3, 5; *MTS* 1, 2, 3, 5.
- Learning outcome 3 above is in support of the following degree learning goals: *MDIV* 5;

MTS 5.

- Learning outcome 4 above is in support of the following degree learning goals: *MDIV* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; *MTS* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Assessments

The learning outcomes of this course are measured by the following assessments. In addition to the assignments listed below, there may be *ungraded* in-class assessments at various points.

Please read this entire syllabus. Unless you ask for clarification, we will assume that you understand all of the assignments and procedures. Please do note that any aspect of this syllabus may be subject to change at any point to fit the needs of the course. Changes to the syllabus will be posted to Brightspace. Please consult the online version of the syllabus for the most recent version in the event of a change.

Assignment	Brief Description	Learning Outcome(s)	Final Grade Percentage	Points (1000 total)	Due Date
Discussion Participation*	Requirements: 1) attendance <i>with reading completed</i> 2) active participation	1, 2, 3	5%	50	Weekly (This grade is cumulative and will be assessed at the end of the semester.)
Short Reading Response (750-1000 words)	“What is DH and Why Should I Care?”	1	10%	100	January 17
TEI XML Exercises*	Out-of-class exercises to help you grasp the rules and format of TEI XML documents	2	15%	150	Throughout January and February
Project Reviews	Reviews of individual TEI projects using guidelines from Burdick, et. al.	1	20%	100 each	January 31 and March 21
Project Prospectus*	Project proposal on a topic of your choice, including a work plan,	3, 4	Pass/Fail	Required to pass course	February 28

	schedule, and deliverables				
Intermediate Project Report	500-word progress report including an updated project plan and schedule	3, 4	5%	50	April 2
Final Presentation*	Open house style presentation of your work to the Vanderbilt DH community	3, 4	5%	50	April 25
Final Project**	Dataset and/or database and a 1500-word evaluation of your work	3, 4	30%	300	April 25
Future Implementation Plan*	“How will I use DH methods in my future research?”	4	10%	100	April 25
Extra Credit	Extra credit opportunities will be available at the discretion of the instructors	1	1% each for a maximum of 2%	10	TBD

*Students auditing the course are required to complete assignments marked with a single asterisk.

**For students enrolled in ANTH 3890 for undergraduate credit the scope of this project will differ from those enrolled for graduate credit in REL/DIV 6793.

Intellectual Property Rights

All work submitted in this class should include an intellectual property declaration, such as a copyright statement, license information, or a statement rejecting such rights.

Grading Scale

Your grade for the course will be calculated along the following percentage scale:

A 93-100
A- 90-<93

B+ 87-<90
B 83-<87

B-	80-<83
C+	77-<80
C	73-<77
C-	70-<73
D+	67-<70
D	63-<67
D-	60-<63
F	<60

PLEASE NOTE: WE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE GRADES.

Exam grades will be calculated on the basis of points. Written assignments will be graded using the following letter designations and then converted to the top range of the scale for each letter grade (A=100 A-= 93, etc.).

Written assignments are a central part of this course and have been weighted so as to reward you for improving over the course of the semester. For the evaluation of your written work, we have adopted the following standards from Princeton University:¹

An A or A- paper is one that is good enough to be read aloud in a class. It is clearly written and well-organized. It demonstrates that the writer has conducted a close and critical reading of texts, grappled with the issues raised in the course, synthesized the readings, discussions, and lectures, and formulated a perceptive, compelling, independent argument. The argument shows intellectual originality and creativity, is sensitive to historical context, is supported by a well-chosen variety of specific examples, and, in the case of a research paper, is built on a critical reading of primary material.

A B+ or B paper demonstrates many aspects of A-level work but falls short of it in either the organization and clarity of its writing, the formulation and presentation of its argument, or the quality of research. Some papers or exams in this category are solid works containing flashes of insight into many of the issues raised in the course. Others give evidence of independent thought, but the argument is not presented clearly or convincingly.

A B- paper demonstrates a command of course or research material and understanding of historical context but provides a less than thorough defense of the writer's independent argument because of weaknesses in writing, argument, organization, or use of evidence.

A C+, C, or C- paper offers little more than a mere summary of ideas and information covered in the course, is insensitive to historical context, does not respond to the assignment adequately, suffers from frequent factual errors, unclear writing, poor organization, or inadequate primary research, or presents some combination of these problems.

Whereas the grading standards for written work between A and C- are concerned with the presentation of argument and evidence, a paper or exam that belongs to the D or F categories

¹Princeton University, "Department of History Grading Practices."

demonstrates inadequate command of course material.

A D paper demonstrates serious deficiencies or severe flaws in the student's command of course or research material.

An F paper demonstrates no competence in the course or research materials. It indicates a student's neglect or lack of effort in the course.

Attendance

Attendance is an essential part of successful learning in this course. There is a strong correlation between attendance in lecture and passing the course, accordingly we encourage regular attendance.

Attendance will be taken regularly in your discussion section. If you miss more than 3 seminars, your participation grade for the semester will be an F at 0%. Students with more than 4 absences from discussion will automatically fail the course unless an alternate plan has been arranged with the professors and Academic Dean.

Students with extenuating circumstances should meet with the Academic Dean to document their situation and form a plan for assistance.

Late or Missed Assignments

Written assignments are considered late if both the paper and electronic copies are not turned in by the beginning of class or other stated time on the due date. If you will not be in class, find someone to turn your assignment in for you. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized one letter grade and will not be accepted if they are more than one week late.

Religious Holy Days and Observances

We are happy to accommodate all students needing accommodation for religious holy days and observances following the guidelines of the Vanderbilt University Office of the University Chaplain and Religious Life. In order to make an equitable and efficient accommodation, please review the due dates listed on this syllabus and contact the professors as soon as reasonably possible, preferably within the first two weeks of class, to request accommodation.

Audio/Video Recording Policy

Out of consideration of privacy, no audio or video recordings are allowed in any class session.

Accommodation

All students are encouraged to meet with the professors to discuss any needs related to the course!

If you require particular accommodation please let us know; we are happy to assist you. All accommodations for students with documented physical or learning disabilities must be arranged by the student through Student Access Services at 615-322-4705.

Vanderbilt Honor Code

The Vanderbilt Honor Code applies to all work in this course. For information about the Honor System, including the Code and examples of its application to written work, please see <https://divinity.vanderbilt.edu/portal/VDS-honor-constitution.pdf>.

Sexual Harassment & Violence Mandatory Reporting

Sexual harassment and violence occur on university campuses and, tragically, Vanderbilt is no exception. Please be informed that Vanderbilt prohibits all forms of sexual and gender-based harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual violence, and stalking. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. It is illegal under state and federal law and is a violation of University policy. Any Vanderbilt student, staff or faculty who has been subjected to sexual harassment or misconduct is encouraged to immediately notify law enforcement and/or seek immediate medical attention. All faculty members must report allegations of sexual misconduct and intimate partner violence to the Title IX Coordinator. Confidential and limited confidential places for reporting are listed at https://www.vanderbilt.edu/title-ix/docs/VUOnePageResourcesList_Students_2017-18.pdf. Additional resources are available through Project Safe: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/projectsafe/advocacy-services/>.

Staying in Touch

We will be using both your official @vanderbilt.edu account and the Brightspace website to contact you with information about the course. It is your responsibility to regularly check your email and Brightspace. We are not responsible for lost or returned e-mails.

We will all typically respond to your e-mails within 48-72 hours. Please note that it is not possible to reply immediately to all e-mails. Please copy both professors on all e-mails to avoid confusion.

You are also encouraged to meet with the professors in person! Please see the office hours posted above.

Course Schedule

Tuesday, January 8

Discussion:

What are the Digital Humanities?

Hockey, Susan. "The History of Humanities Computing." In *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, 1–19. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470999875.ch1>.

Burdick, Anne, et al. "Questions and Answers: Digital Humanities Fundamentals." In *Digital Humanities*, 122–135. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/digitalhumanities>.

Schenfeldt, Tom. "Where's the Beef? Does Digital Humanities Have to Answer Questions?" In *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/18>.

In-class:

Review Syllabus

Discuss Short Reading Response Assignment

Thursday, January 10

Discussion:

Digital Humanities, Potential and Critique

Posner, Miriam. "What's Next: The Radical, Unrealized Potential of Digital Humanities." In *Debates in the Digital Humanities* 2016, edited by Matthew K. Gold and Lauren F. Klein, 32–41.

University of Minnesota Press, 2016. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1cn6thb.6>.

Landers, Jane, Pablo Gómez, José Polo Acuña, and Courtney J. Campbell. "Researching the History of Slavery in Colombia and Brazil through Ecclesiastical and Notarial Archives." In *From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme*, edited by Maja Kominko, 259–92. Open Book Publishers, 2015. <http://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/283>.
https://www.openbookpublishers.com/htmlreader/978-1-78374-062-8/9.Landers.xhtml#_idTextAnchor113.

Shilton, Katie, and Ramesh Srinivasan. "Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections." *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 87–101.

<https://archivaria.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13129>.

Allington, Daniel, et. al. "Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A Political History of Digital Humanities." *The Los Angeles Review of Books*. May 1, 2016.

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/neoliberal-tools-archives-political-history-digital-humanities/#>

Weiskott, Eric. "There Is No Such Thing as 'the Digital Humanities.'" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. November 1, 2017. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/There-Is-No-Such-Thing-as/241633>

In-class:

Download Oxygen

Tuesday, January 15

Discussion:

Why XML?

- Birnbaum, David J. "What Is XML and Why Should Humanists Care? An Even Gentler Introduction to XML," August 28, 2015. <http://dh.obdurodon.org/what-is-xml.xhtml>.
- Roueché, Charlotte. "Why Do We Mark Up 'Texts?'" In *Collaborative Research in the Digital Humanities*, edited by Willard McCarty and Marilyn Deegan. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=442443&site=ehost-live>.
- Flanders, Julia. "Collaboration and Dissent: Challenges of Collaborative Standards for Digital Humanities." In *Collaborative Research in the Digital Humanities*, edited by Willard McCarty and Marilyn Deegan. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2011. <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=442443&site=ehost-live>.

Browse this encyclopedia entry and its TEI source code:

- Coakley, J. F. "Manuscripts." Edited by Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron Butts, George A. Kiraz, and Lucas Van Rompay. *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*. Piscataway, N.J.: Beth Mardutho, The Syriac Institute; Gorgias Press, 2011. <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Manuscripts> and <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Manuscripts/tei>.

In-class:

Check the Oxygen is Set Up
Mark-Up Exercise (Michelson)

Thursday, January 17

Due:
Short Reading Response

In-class:

Basic Introduction to XML: Trees, Tags, Attributes (Taylor)
Discuss XML Exercise #1 (Taylor)

Tuesday, January 22

Due:
XML Exercise #1

- Burnard, Lou. "Introduction." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources. Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/679>.

- Burnard, Lou. "The TEI and XML." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources. Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/680>.

In-class:

Basic Introduction to XML (Taylor)
Discuss Digital Project Review Assignment #1

Thursday, January 24

Due:

XML Exercise #2

In-class:

Introduction to Oxygen (Michelson)

TEI: The TEI Header (Taylor)

Reading/exercises post-class for reinforcement: TEI By Example, The TEI Header

Tuesday, January 29

Due:

XML Exercise #3

NOTE: This turned into a review day, and consequently some other days on TEI have been pushed back.

Thursday, January 31

Due:

Digital Project Review Assignment #1

Burnard, Lou. "The structural organization of a TEI document." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources. Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/681>.

Burnard, Lou. "The TEI Header." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources. Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/691>.

In-class:

5 minute reports on reviewed projects

TEI: The Basics of Prose Encoding (Taylor)

Recommended reading/exercises post-class for reinforcement: TEI By Example, Prose

Tuesday, February 5

Due:

XML Exercise #4

NOTE: This turned into a review day, and consequently some other days on TEI have been pushed back.

Thursday, February 7

Burnard, Lou. "Varieties of textual structure." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources*. *Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/688>.

In-class:

TEI: The Basics of Poetry Encoding (Taylor)

Recommended reading/exercises post-class for reinforcement: TEI By Example, Poetry

Tuesday, February 12

Due:

XML Exercise #5

Burnard, Lou. "The TEI cornucopia, part one." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources*. *Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/689>.

Burnard, Lou. "The TEI cornucopia, part two." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources*. *Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/1340>.

In-class:

TEI: Representing Primary Sources (Taylor)

Recommended reading/exercises post-class for reinforcement: TEI By Example, Primary Sources

Thursday, February 14

Due:

XML Exercise #6

In-class:

TEI: Critical Apparatus (Taylor)

Recommended reading/exercises post-class for reinforcement: TEI By Example, Critical Editing

Tuesday, February 19

Due:

XML Exercise #7

In-class:

TEI: Manuscript Description (Michelson)

Thursday, February 21

Due:

XML Exercise #8

Burnard, Lou. "Conclusion: what is the TEI?." *What Is the Text Encoding Initiative?: How to Add Intelligent Markup to Digital Resources. Encyclopédie Numérique*. Marseille: OpenEdition Press, 2014. <https://books.openedition.org/oep/693>.

In-class:

TEI (encode *Chronicle of Edessa*) (Schwartz and Taylor)

Tuesday, February 26

In-class:

TEI (encode *Chronicle of Edessa*) (Schwartz and Taylor)

Thursday, February 28 (Midterm Grades) (Schwartz and Taylor)

Due: Project Prospectus

In-class:

TEI (encode *Chronicle of Edessa*)

Identify documents for encoding

SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 12

Due:

XML Exercise #10: Chronicle of Edessa (6%)

In-class:

Sign up for revising Chronicle of Edessa

XPath and Advanced Search Functions in Oxygen (Michelson)

Planning a Project (Michelson)

Discuss in Pairs Project Development (Michelson)

Thursday, March 14

In Class:

XPath and Advanced Search Functions in Oxygen (Michelson)

Planning a Project & Database Tools (Michelson)

Discuss in Pairs Project Development (Michelson)

Burdick, Anne, et al. "Questions and Answers: Digital Humanities Fundamentals." In *Digital Humanities*, 122-135. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/digitalhumanities>.

Amatya, Alok. "For Beginners, What Makes a Good DH Project?" HASTAC (blog), September 22, 2017. <https://www.hastac.org/blogs/alok/2017/09/22/beginners-what-makes-good-dh-project>.

Appleford, Simon, and Jennifer Guiliano. "Designing Your First Project." DevDH.Org (blog), 2013. <http://devdh.org/lectures/design/>.

Tuesday, March 19

Due:

XML Exercise #11: Chronicle of Edessa Revisions (6%)

Updated Project Prospectus and Sample TEI

In Class:

Discuss in Pairs Project Development

Work together on encodings

Browse (do not read in full):

Morgan, Paige. "How to Get a Digital Humanities Project off the Ground," June 5, 2014.

<https://www.paigemorgan.net/how-to-get-a-digital-humanities-project-off-the-ground/>.

"PM4DH: Project Management for the Digital Humanities." PM4DH: Project Management for the Digital Humanities. Accessed March 11, 2019. <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/pm4dh/>.

Schlosser, Melanie. "Workflow for TEI Encoding Projects." LETRS/E-Text Planning. Accessed March 11, 2019.

<https://wiki.dlib.indiana.edu/display/ETDC/Workflow+for+TEI+Encoding+Projects>.

Thursday, March 21

Due:

Digital Project Review Assignment #2

In Class:

Discuss in Pairs and Group Project Development

Work together on encodings

In-class:

5 minute reports on reviewed projects

Tuesday, March 26

Workshop:

Encoding Documents (Michelson)

Thursday, March 28

In Class:

Discuss in Pairs and Group Project Development

Work together on encodings

Tuesday, April 2

Due:

Intermediate Project Report

In Class:

Set up TEI publisher

Discuss in Pairs and Group Project Development

Work together on encodings

Thursday, April 4

In-class:

Roundtable with Prof. Charlotte Roueché

Tuesday, April 9

In Class:

Discuss in Pairs and Group Project Development

Work together on encodings

Feedback on Interim Reports (Michelson and Taylor)

Thursday, April 11

In Class:

Discuss in Pairs and Group Project Development

Work together on encodings

Tuesday, April 16

In Class:

Discuss in Pairs and Group Project Development

Work together on encodings

Thursday, April 18

In Class:

Discuss in Pairs and Group Project Development

Work together on encodings

Tuesday, April 23

No class

Thursday, April 25

Due:

Final Presentations

Final Project and Evaluation

Future Implementation Plan

Final presentations will be given during an open house in the Digital Humanities Center from 9:35-10:50 AM on Thursday, April 25.

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