Jeff Hill

ENGL 877

Uncommon DH Critic

Natalie Houston

I really enjoyed spending the day with other digital humanities students and staff for Dr. Natalie Houston’s visit to UNL. The three-part day was an exciting way to see another scholar actively working in the field that I am peripherally working in (as a digital humanities graduate certificate-seeking student and a research associate in the Walt Whitman Archive).

The first part of the day was personally the most interesting to me and my studies and goals. It was really refreshing to spend a very informal hour-or-so with Dr. Houston as she talked through her career path and what led her to DH. I did a little bit of pre-reading the week of before she joined us in the library conference room and found her scholarship to be very accessible and of particular interest to me as a creative writer and literary scholar. So putting a voice and a face (and a friendly one, at that!) to the words was nice. The second part of the day was a great way to get to know a few other DH students, ranging from undergraduate to graduate to PhD programs. The very idea of how different so many of our paths are is really a great reminder of how important and exciting work in the digital humanities can be and is. I also really found it useful when we brainstormed alongside other CDRH faculty and staff members of what could be done in the future. I’ve loved the first half of the certificate program and am looking forward to seeing more ways to connect and learn as I go forward. The third part of the day was one of the best-attended English lectures I’ve ever been to. “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Poem: Descriptive Modeling for Computational Criticism” was a fantastic way to end the day. I think Dr. Houston was a perfect mixture of professional credibility and relatable and realistic for students who are hopeful for an eventual career in the field.

Thanks again for providing this opportunity for us students. I am excited to see where the last half of my graduate certificate program will take me. And I am happy to start incorporating some of the network, readings, and skills into my own classroom.