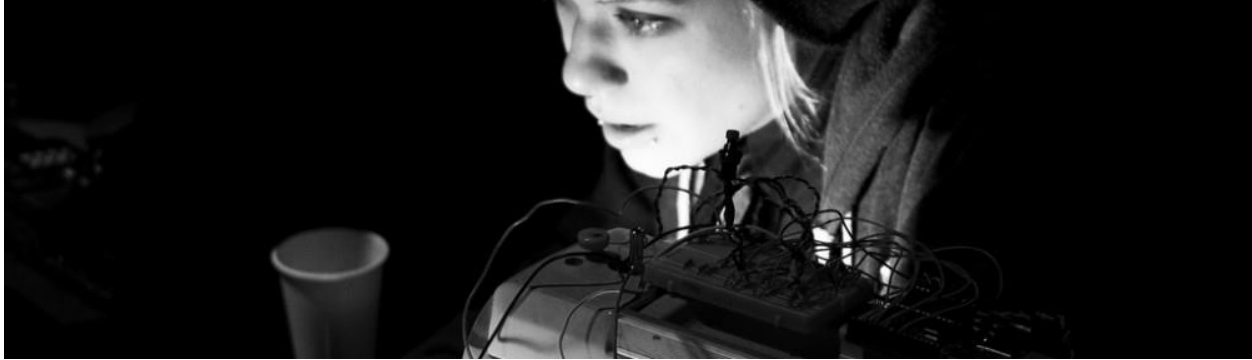


ENGL 668K: Critical Topics in Digital Studies

University of Maryland
Fall 2015



Tuesdays, 6:30-9:00 pm

Matthew Kirschenbaum, with Ed Summers and Raff Viglianti
Office: Tawes 3201

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30-3:00, and also by appointment
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Email should be used for simple queries or communications only; please allow 24 hours for response.

Course Description

Digital Studies is one of several rubrics denoting a contested array of topics, theoretical allegiances and approaches, hands-on skills and competencies, and disciplinary formations that have emerged to name the academic humanities' engagements with digital media over (at least) the last three decades. In this it is coterminous (though not necessarily interchangeable) with widespread interest in what has been variously termed "Digital Humanities," "Humanities Computing," "New Media Studies," and "Cybercultural Studies"; certainly other rubrics and nomenclatures are possible as well.

Rather than fixating on definitions, taxonomies, or genealogies, however, this course is designed to introduce you to different (and divergent) topics and practices in this diverse, complex, and rapidly changing area. It is thus organized around three independent units or modules, each extending over a period of four weeks. They are as follows: **Reimagining the Archive**, **Media Archaeology**, and **Exploits of the Social Web**. For each we will read, think, experiment, and *do* in equal measures; in other words, this is neither a "skills" nor a "theory" course, but rather a course that attempts to break down the divisions and binaries between those two institutional constructs. In addition, the course will place particular emphasis on Digital Studies as it is currently practiced here, at the University of Maryland College Park. To that end, the course will feature a number of visiting speakers as well as site visits to

various locales around campus. Staff and personnel from the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) will be heavily involved throughout.

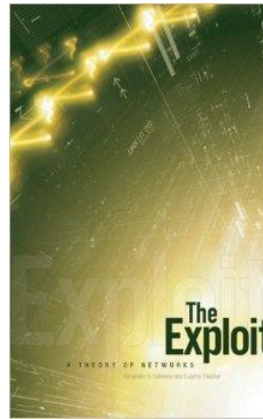
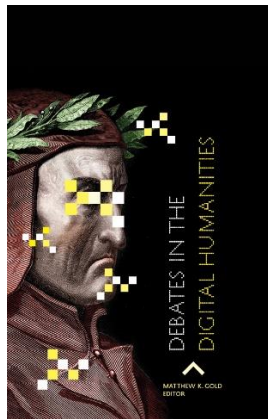
No special skills are required or assumed other than a willingness to experiment and learn.

ENGL 668K this semester is also the pilot course for a Graduate Certificate in Digital Studies in Arts and Humanities that is currently working its way through the campus approval process. Students in this course are under absolutely no obligation to pursue the Certificate, but this course *will* count toward the Certificate requirements for those students who wish it to.

This class is not available for 700-level seminar credit.

Texts

There are two required texts for the course, *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (Minnesota, 2012), and Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker, *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks* (Minnesota, 2007). Both can be ordered from any quality bookseller.



The *Debates* volume's contents are also available online in their entirety here:

<http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/>

Other readings will be available through ELMS (usually as PDFs) or directly from the Web.

Course Grading

- Exercises (20% each, 60% total)
- Fieldwork (20%)
- Final Essay (20%)

Exercises will be assigned throughout the semester and due as per the schedule below. All Exercises are to be turned in at the *beginning* of the class meeting for which they are due.

Late Exercises cannot receive higher than a B grade absent some specific prior arrangement with me, and will not be accepted at all if more than a week overdue. The Fieldwork component of the course requires you to go places and do things: we are situated in the midst of one of the greatest cultural heritage centers in the world, with a thriving area-wide digital studies community. You must accumulate 10 points of fieldwork over the course of the semester; you will keep your own tally (according to a point schedule below) and submit a record of your fieldwork to me at the end of the semester. The Final Essay (6-8 pages) will ask you to synthesize and reflect on key readings and ideas from the course.

More about Exercises: The Exercises are designed to give you some practical exposure to various tools and technologies. Their primary object is not instilling professional-grade competencies and skills; rather, they are best understood as an alternative format for our collective critical engagement—hands-on instead of readerly and reflective. More detail about each will be distributed at the start of their respective modules, but in brief:

- Exercise 1 will ask you to transcribe and apply encoding (markup) to a manuscript page from the materials in the Shelley-Godwin Archive currently under development at MITH. You will be exposed to textual/editorial considerations as well as the principles of markup, one of the oldest forms of digital scholarship in the humanities.
- Exercise 2 will ask you to work with a variety of obsolete hardware and software materials from the collections on hand at MITH. You will be exposed to basic principles of forensic computing, as well as software emulation; you will also learn how to formulate research questions at the intersection of literary and technological history.
- Exercise 3 will ask you to choose a living author and harvest (“scrape”) their data from Twitter, prepare that data set for computational analysis, and then apply several different kinds of tools to the data set you have created and curated. You will be exposed to some of the principles involved so-called “big data” or quantitative literary research, as well as basic principles of social network analysis and information visualization.

For each exercise, you will receive instruction from a member of the MITH staff with expertise in that area. You will work sometimes alone and sometimes with a partner or in a small group, and you will have access to members of the MITH staff (as well as the computing facilities at MITH). Each exercise will also include one or more milestones where we will check your progress before it is submitted for evaluation.

More about Fieldwork: Here are some examples of Fieldwork opportunities. You are responsible for keeping a tally of your own activities, to be submitted to me at the end of the semester. You must accumulate 10 points in order to receive full credit. **If you have an idea for a Fieldwork opportunity that is not described below just ask!**

- Attend a relevant campus talk, including [MITH Digital Dialogues](#) (2 pts)

- Attend a [DCHDC](#) meet-up or another organized social event involving professionals working in some aspect of Digital Studies (2 pts)
- Attend a relevant talk elsewhere around town (3 pts)
- Visit another Digital Humanities center, or a library, museum, or archives doing noteworthy digital work (3 pts)
- Attend a conference with numerous Digital Studies sessions for half-a-day or more (4 pts)
- Fabricate something in the MakerSpace (1-3 pts—check with me)

Expected Outcomes: By the end of the course you will: have an understanding of current debates and issues in the field of digital studies; have a mental map of the field, including major scholars, centers, projects, initiatives, resources, and methods; have experimented with some commonplace tools, platforms, and technical practices; have practical strategies at your disposal which may affect your thinking about how you teach, research, and how you communicate with others in your discipline; have a clear path forward to further engagement with digital studies here at UMD if you so choose.

By the end of this course you will not: have had all your questions answered; have read everything there is to read; have experimented with everything there is to experiment with; know how to design Web sites; know how to program a computer; be done with digital studies.

Academic Integrity: The University is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered Code of Academic Integrity and an Honor Pledge. The Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. *All students in this class are expected to abide by the terms of this code at all times and are assumed to be operating under its strictures.* More information is available here: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/SHC/Default.aspx>.

Religious Observances: The University of Maryland policy “Assignments and Attendance on Dates of Religious Observance” states that students should not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances and that, whenever feasible, they be allowed to make up academic assignments that are missed due to such absences. *It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences or need for other accommodation for religious observances in advance.*

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The University is legally obligated to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. In order to ascertain what accommodations may need to be provided, students with disabilities should inform the instructors of their needs at the beginning of the semester. They will make arrangements with the student to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations. Student should also register with Disability Support Services (DSS) <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS> (301-314-7682).

Attendance Policy: University policy excuses the absences of students for illness (self or dependent), religious observances, participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, and extreme extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control. If you wish to have any absence formally "excused" for one of the above reasons please supply me with appropriate written documentation. Unexcused absences will have not have options for making up for any lost instruction.

Inclement Weather: Official closures and delays are announced on the campus Web site, social media, and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW) as well as local radio and TV stations.

ELMS: The class is listed on ELMS. I will use the ELMS site primarily to distribute readings, but we may also take advantage of discussion forums and other features. Course news and announcements will be distributed through ELMS email. Please make sure you have a current address recorded there that you check regularly and that your spam filter is not blocking ELMS messages. *You will be held responsible for any electronic announcement 24 hours after it has been distributed.*

Class Meetings: Class meetings will typically encompass several different kinds of activities, including: lectures and formal instruction; discussions; hands-on workshops; guest speakers; site visits; and group work. If you have a laptop computer or tablet please bring it to class (a laptop is preferable; neither is required, however). Please also bring copies of any readings assigned for discussion. Drinks and light snacks are fine during class, but please don't bring your dinner.

MITH and Digital Dialogues: After the first day class meetings will take place at MITH unless otherwise announced. We will have use of two workstations at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities for the duration of the course. Feel free to drop in and use these at any time during MITH's normal operating hours (M-F, 9:00-5:00). Please do not, however, expect support or consultation from MITH staff without a specific prior appointment.

MITH's Digital Dialogues series is on Tuesday's at 12:30. The current schedule is here: <http://mith.umd.edu/digitaldialogues/schedule>. This is a fabulous opportunity to hear from leading scholars in the field. *You are strongly encouraged to attend as often as your schedule permits.*

Schedule

Readings and other assignments are to be completed by the date listed on the schedule below. **DDH** means the text can be found in the *Debates in the Digital Humanities* volume. **ELMS** means the text is available on ELMS in the "Files" folder, usually as a PDF. For online materials, consult the service listed or use the direct link provided.

Occasionally a project (such as *Infinite Ulysses*) will be assigned as a "reading"; obviously this does not mean attempting to read through the entirety of the project's content in a linear fashion. Rather, you should get a feel for what the project is, where it comes from, what

design principles are at work, what technologies are involved, and what critical or theoretical issues it raises in the context of the class. Some ideas on how to do this: read the “About” page if there is one; look at who the designers and sponsors are; look at sample entries or pages; try some searches; look “behind the scenes” at how URLs are rendered or for other visible signs of technological implementation. You should “spend” at least the same amount of time on a project as you would on a short essay—landing on the splash page and clicking around for a minute or two isn’t enough.

Logging On

September 1

Readings	Kathleen Fitzpatrick, "The Humanities, Done Digitally" (DDH); "Day of DH: Defining the Digital Humanities" (DDH); "Interview with Brett Bobley" (DDH); Tara McPherson, "Why are the Digital Humanities So White? or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation" (DDH); SIGCIS listserv discussion of McPherson ("Is Unix racist?") .
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September 8

Readings	Stephen Ramsay and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Developing Things: Notes Toward an Epistemology of Building" (DDH); Willard McCarty, "A Telescope for the Mind?" (DDH); Alan Liu, "Where is Cultural Criticism in the Digital Humanities?" (DDH); Marina Warner, "Out of an Old Toy Chest" (ELMS)
Guest	Ed Summers, Lead Developer, MITH
Instruction	Introduction to GitHub/Git

Reimagining the Archive

September 15

Readings	Jacques Derrida, from <i>Archive Fever</i> (ELMS); Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines" (ELMS); Ken Price, " Edition, Project, Database, Archive, Thematic Research Collection: What's In a Name? "; Neil Fraistat, "Literary Archives and the Participatory Turn" (ELMS); The Shelley Godwin Archive
Guests	Neil Fraistat, Professor, English, UMD; Raff Viglianti, Research Programmer, MITH

Instruction	TEI Encoding and Transcription
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September 22

Readings	Anne Cong-Huyen "Toward a Transnational Asian/American Digital Humanities: A #transformDH Invitation" (ELMS); Fiona Barnett, "The Brave Side of Digital Humanities" (ELMS); The Mukertu Project
Guest	Alexis Lothian, Assistant Professor, Women's Studies, UMD, Raff Vigilanti, Research Programmer, MITH
Instruction	TEI Encoding and Transcription

September 29

Readings	Sarah Werner, " Digitized First Folios " and " What Do We Want from Online Facsimiles of Shakespeare? "; Paul Duguid, " Inheritance and Loss? A Brief Survey of Google Books "; George Williams, "Disability, Universal Design, and the Digital Humanities" (DDH)
Guests	Raff Vigilanti, Research Programmer, MITH; Sarah Werner, Independent Scholar
Instruction	TEI Encoding and Transcription

October 2-3

transformMDH (un)conference: <http://transformdh.org/2015-conference-thatcamp/>

October 6

Digital Dialogue: "[A Woman's Touch: Manual Labor, Pink Collar Workers, and Feminist New Media Origin Stories](#)." Elizabeth Losh, Associate Professor of English and American Studies, College of William and Mary

Readings	Elizabeth Losh, "Hacktivism and the Humanities" (DDH); Andrew Stauffer, Book Traces ; Amanda Visconti, Infinite Ulysses ; NYPL, What's on the Menu? ; Smithsonian Transcription Center ; Rap Genius ; University College, London, Transcribe Benthem ; Amazon's Mechanical Turk
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Guests	Meghan Ferriter, Smithsonian Institution; Raff Viglianti, Research Programmer, MITH; Amanda Visconti, Assistant Professor, Libraries, Purdue; Neil Fraistat, Professor, English, UMD
Instruction	TEI Encoding and Transcription

Media Archaeology

October 13

Digital Dialogue: title TBA. Cheryl Ball, Associate Professor of Digital Publishing, West Virginia University

Due	Exercise 1
Readings	Friedrich Kittler, "There is No Software" (ELMS); Wolfgang Ernst, "Media Archaeography" (ELMS); Wendy Chun, "The Enduring Ephemeral, or the Future is a Memory" (ELMS)
Instruction	Introduction to Deena Larsen and Bill Bly Collections

October 20

Digital Dialogue: "[What Counts as Contemporary Fiction? Scale, Value, and Field.](#)" James English, Professor of English and Director of the Penn Humanities Forum, University of Pennsylvania

Location	Class to meet in McKeldin Library, John and Stella Graves MakerSpace
Readings	Kari Kraus, et al. " Bibliocircuitry and the Design of the Alien Everyday " (PDF); Cheryl Ball, " Designed Research: Publishing Designs as Scholarship " (PDF); Mark Sample, "What's Wrong with Writing Papers?" (DDH); Debbie Chachra, " Why I Am Not a Maker "
Guest	Kari Kraus, Associate Professor, iSchool and English, UMD
Instruction	Introduction to MakerLab Facilities

October 27

Digital Dialogue: “[Experimental Models and Art Historical Computing: Networks in the Golden Age of Dutch and Flemish Printmaking](#).” Matthew Lincoln, PhD Candidate in Art History, University of Maryland

Readings	Lori Emerson, from <i>Reading/Writing/Interfaces</i> (ELMS); Dene Grigar and Stuart Moulthrop, from Pathfinders ; Kirschenbaum, “Operating Systems of the Mind” (ELMS)
Instruction	Disk Imaging and Emulation

November 3

Digital Dialogue: “[Music, Technology, and Digital Scholarship](#).” Richard Freedman, Associate Provost for Curricular Development and Professor of Humanities, Haverford College

Readings	Jason Farman, “Stories, Spaces, and Bodies” (ELMS); Lisa Nakamura, “Indigenous Circuits” (ELMS)
Guest	Jason Farman, Associate Professor, American Studies and Director, Design Cultures and Creativity, UMD
Instruction	TBA

Exploits of the Social Web

November 10

Digital Dialogue: “[Murder Networks: A New Materialist Look at Violence](#).” Trisha Campbell, Assistant Professor of English, Salisbury University

Due	Exercise 2
Readings	Alex Galloway and Eugene Thacker, “Nodes” (Part I) from <i>The Exploit</i> (Prolegomenon optional); Nicole Starosielski, “ Internet of Islands ”
Guest	Ed Summers, Lead Developer, MITH
Instruction	Data Gathering and the Social Web

November 17

Readings	Alex Galloway and Eugene Thacker, “Edges” (Part II) and “Coda” from <i>The Exploit</i> ; Matthew Kirschenbaum, “ What is an @uthor? ”; Mark Sample, “Unseen and Unremarked” (DDH)
Guest	Ed Summers, Lead Developer, MITH
Instruction	Data Curation and the Social Web

November 24

Readings	Zeynep Tufekci, “ Why Twitter Should Not Algorithmically Curate the Timeline ”; Frank Pasquale, from <i>The Black Box Society</i> (ELMS)
Guest	Ed Summers, Lead Developer, MITH
Instruction	Data Analysis and the Social Web

December 1

Readings	Nowvieskie, “What Do Girls Dig?” (DDH); Lev Manovich, “Trending” (DDH); Michael Witmore, “Text as a Massively Addressable Object” (DDH); Matthew Lincoln, “ Simulating Print Production Networks ”; Shawn Graham and Scott Weingart, “The Equifinality of Archaeological Networks: an Agent-Based Exploratory Lab Approach” (ELMS)
Guests	Matthew Lincoln, Ph.D. Candidate, Art History, UMD; Ed Summers, Lead Developer, MITH
Instruction	Data Analysis and the Social Web

Logging Off

December 8

Due	Exercise 3
Readings	Dan Cohen, “The Social Contract of Scholarly Publishing” (DDH); Cathy Davidson, “Humanities 2.0” (DDH); Alexander Reid, “Graduate Education and the Ethics of Digital Humanities” (DDH); Ian Bogost, “The Turtlenecked Hairshirt” (DDH).

Final Paper Due: TBA