

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This seminar explores how we tell stories and make arguments in the age of the internet and “big data.” We will investigate literary works from a variety of eras and genres—including fiction, poetry, film, and video games—to see how writers and readers have grappled with the implications of new reading and informational technologies throughout history. We will also study the ways writers have produced new kinds of writing in response to such changes. We will analyze historical interplays among technology, new media, culture, and literature in order to better understand the social and literary upheavals of our own technological moment. Students will develop skills for making sense of textual data, as well as for writing *about data* and writing *with data* through a variety of media. Students will weave together code and prose in multimodal, online publications; analyze texts using computational tools; and develop projects, such as literary “bots,” that explore the boundaries between digital technology and creative expression.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will:

1. Understand many of the ways that literature helps society grapple with the meaning and implications of new technologies;
 2. Expand your skills of critical reading and interpretation, with a particular eye to navigating and filtering information available online;
 3. Improve your writing skills in a range of media;
 4. Create, analyze, and employ data in support of your ideas;
 5. Compare typical genres of literature with new forms of interactive media and videogames;
 6. and Reflect on your own relationship to IRL and online aspects of life in the digital age.
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Prerequisites

“Reading and Writing in the Digital Age” presumes no prior experience with computational methods and thus is well suited for students interested a “hands-on” introduction to the medium that underlies much of early-twenty-first-century life. The class offers all students an opportunity to develop their abilities analyzing, interpreting, and creating texts in a range of media through a blending of traditional and computational methods.