**HUMAN 2DH3**

**Introduction to Digital Humanities**

Winter Term 2015

**Time:** Wednesdays, 14:30-17:20

**Location:** Wong Classroom (Mills Library)

**Secondary Location:** Sherman Centre for Digital Scholarship

**Office Hours:**

Maps/GIS office hours (Maps/Data/GIS, Mills main): Thursday, 3-4

Archives office hours (Research Collections, Mills lower level): Thursday, 2-3

General office hours (Sherman Centre, Mills main): Tuesday, 3-4

or by appointment

**Check the updated syllabus regularly! http://is.gd/human2dh3**

**Instructors:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Email** | **Expertise** |
| Dale Askey | askeyd@mcmaster.ca | video editing, writing, image editing, copyright, German language and culture, Web design |
| Gord Beck | beckg@mcmaster.ca | WWI map & air photo interpretation, history, referencing & toponymy |
| Jason Brodeur | brodeujj@mcmaster.ca | GIS (geocoding & georeferencing) |
| John Fink | jfink@mcmaster.ca | copyright |
| Myron Groover | groover@mcmaster.ca | archival theory & practise, copyright |
| Paige Morgan | pmorgan@mcmaster.ca | literature, writing, image editing, visual design |

**Introduction**

In the century since WW1 began, people from many disciplines have worked to preserve records of what happened between 1914 and 1918. These records take many forms: maps, letters, photographs, diaries, novels, poems, registers, ID numbers, ledgers, and more.

Today, few people who experienced that war survive. All that remains is the information they left behind: mountains of data that are almost too vast to be read.

21st-century technology offers a solution. The Digital Humanities allow scholars to develop new questions, and find new perspectives on literature, history, and culture -- for the Great War, as well as for other periods and topics.

HUMAN 2DH3 will introduce you to new tools and methods for studying humanities subjects. No prior knowledge of computing is required. This term, we will explore the data that remains from those who fought and those who lived through what has come to be known as the Great War.

**Objectives**

There are two sets of objectives for this course: one set related to digital humanities, and one related to WW1.

**Digital Humanities Objectives:**

* be familiar with several major digital humanities research techniques (including text mining, media creation, GIS), and able to discuss what each can accomplish
* know how to combine digital and non-digital methods in order to develop and answer research questions
* be able to discuss how a range of humanities [and social science] fields intersect and overlap with each other
* understand how humanities professionals adapt different artifacts (texts, images, maps, physical objects) for both preservation and research purposes
* be able to read and interpret texts for their individual significance, and identify keywords and themes that trend across multiple texts

**WW1 Objectives:**

* have gained experience studying the Great War from the perspective of individual experience, and large-scale quantitative data. They will be able to discuss and critically assess the outcomes, advantages, and weaknesses of each approach
* be able to contrast the experience of the war according to gender, profession, political stance (pacifist vs. non-pacifist) or geographical proximity to the battlefields or other historically significant locations
* be able to discuss the emotional impact of the war in various contexts including public documents and speeches, private letters and journals, and across genres and forms, i.e. literary vs. non-literary texts, political texts vs. poetry
* understand the impact of the war on everyday life: the choices that it presented, and how decisions were made

**Required texts and materials**

*The Return of the Soldier*. Rebecca West (public domain; available via Internet Archive in various editions)

*All Quiet on the Western Front*. Erich Maria Remarque (Campus Store)

**Software and computing requirements**

The Wong classroom where we will meet each week has computer workstations that you will be able to use during class -- however, you will find it easier to bring your own laptops. You will also have access to three high-powered workstations in the Sherman Centre, though you will need to book them (beware of assuming that they will be free at the last minute!) The Lyons New Media Centre also has powerful media workstations that will meet your needs.

If you are using your own laptop, you will need to have access to certain tools for working with digital texts and images, as well as file management. **You do not need to purchase any software for this class.** All the tools we will be working with are either free, or free for you to use as McMaster students. We will announce in class and online (Avenue) what software you need before each class.

**Please note:** Some of the programs you will work with are web-based -- and even the most stable web-based tools sometimes crash or become temporarily unavailable. In short: don’t wait till the last minute to do assignments involving online tools. We will make sure that you have plenty of time to complete tool-based assignments -- as a result, “the website wasn’t working!” will not be a good excuse for unfinished work. If you’re having trouble with a particular tool, please let us know so that we can help you troubleshoot.

**In-Class and Homework Exercises**

In this course you will complete a number of small assignments, intermediate assignments, and one final group project. The majority of the small and intermediate assignments will be preparation for the final project, and you are encouraged to reuse them, editing and improving wherever appropriate.

Mental battlefield map and place name list - While reading Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*, record a list of place names and geographical features. Based on this list, draw your own map without consulting actual maps, based on the scale and images in your imagination.

Text corpus with precis - Gather texts associated with your figure in a machine-readable format into a single folder (as though you were going to make them publicly available for others to use.) Include a 1-page description of the features of your corpus (discussed in class on January 21st).

Storymap script - Each member of every group will write a documentary-style script for their storymap, i.e.- the type of text that the narrator of a documentary would read to draw the viewer in and provide context for the visual components. This should be 3-4 pages in length and capture the story that your maps and texts will tell.

Storymap - A storymap combines maps with other information to tell a narrative. People, place names, geographical features can all play a part in a storymap, and maps can include text, audio and video.

Group work reflection - Write a brief (1 page) narrative reflection on the process of working through the assignments with your group. The structure is up to you. Things to consider: what worked, what didn’t, what surprised you, what you learned.

**Grading Policy**

The assignments for this course will be a mixture of group and individual assignments. Other short assignments will be assigned in class and count toward the participation grade.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment | Type | Percentage | Due Date |
| All Quiet on the Western Front Interpretive Map | individual | 10% | February 4 |
| Text corpus with precis | group | 15% | February 11 |
| Storymap script | individual | 25% | March 25 |
| Final storymap | group | 35% | April 8 |
| Group work reflection | individual | 5% | April 8 |
| Participation | individual | 10% | n/a |

**Attendance**

We will introduce you to new techniques for working with text and images each week, and give you time to get started on your assignments during the class period. As a result, it will be important for you to attend class meetings so that you can feel confident in the tasks we’re asking you to do.

Attending class will also be important because some of your assignments will be group-based -- so class meetings will allow you to consult with each other without having to juggle your schedules otherwise.

**Classroom Environment and Etiquette**

Come to class **on time**. One weekly session is still is actually a very limited amount of time to work with, so you should be in your seats and prepared to start at 2:30 sharp.

Come to class **prepared.** Even though most homework is turned in online, we will usually discuss it in class, and in order to contribute to discussion and benefit from it, you will need to have your answers/drafts accessible to refer to, either in print, or on your laptop.

In class, we encourage you to ask questions, or suggest alternate ways of looking at texts, arguments, and situations. However, it is vital that you respect the opinions and ideas raised by others, and treat them, and us, with the same courtesy that you expect to be treated. Derogatory or discourteous language is never appropriate, or necessary – nor is interrupting, or talking while someone else is speaking.

Sleeping during class, surfing the web, texting, and working on homework for other courses all constitute distractions that undermine the value of class time, and may negatively impact your participation grade. If you need to take a stretch break or stand up in order to avoid falling asleep, feel free to do so discreetly.

**Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”) and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

**Accommodations**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or email [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.](http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf)

**Instructor Contact Policy**

We encourage you to use the Avenue2Learn discussion system to reach us, so that we will all see your messages, and respond according to our expertise. In general, we will try to respond to you within 24 hours – though we may take longer over the weekend.

If you want to discuss any aspect of the class – a particular assignment, or your work or grade – then you should come to office hours, or email one of us to make an appointment at a time that is convenient for both of us.

**Other Important Contacts**

* Lyons New Media Centre - <http://library.mcmaster.ca/lyons>
* Maps & Data - <http://library.mcmaster.ca/maps>
* Research/Special Collections - <http://library.mcmaster.ca/archives/>
* Sherman Centre for Digital Scholarship - <http://scds.ca>

**Weekly schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Topic | Class preparation | Due |
| January 7 | Introduction |  |  |
| January 14 | Technology orientation; group organization; searching archives |  |  |
| January 21 | Text corpora; copyright; Introduction to text analysis | Start reading Remarque |  |
| January 28 | Place names/toponyms; Geoparsing | Continue reading Remarque |  |
| February 4 | WWI narratives | Remarque done | Mental map |
| February 11 | Creating and using a text corpus | Find four texts for corpus before class (assignment sheet passed out on Feb 4) |  |
| READING WEEK | | | |
| February 25 | Introduction to GIS |  | Digging deeper into your text corpus assignment (due Tuesday, Feb 24, 12:30) |
| March 4 | Finding & using historical maps;  Basemaps/georeferencing |  |  |
| March 11 | ArcGIS; creating storymaps |  |  |
| March 18 | Finding/editing/creating other media |  |  |
| March 25 | Catch up day |  | Storymap Script |
| April 1 | Storymap script / storymap rough draft feedback period;  Open work time |  | Storymap rough draft |
| April 8 | Storymap presentations |  | Storymap; group work reflection (due April 10) |