

Assignment 1

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Digital Humanities: What is it?

Our first course project is a collaboratively authored document entitled, “A Student Project: What is Digital Humanities?” Each student’s individual contribution to this assignment will consist of the following parts: 1. Each student will offer a formal response to one or more of the readings during the first two weeks of the course. The response will consist of a 2- to 3-page (500–700 words) blog post, with a thesis that engages one or more of the following general topics: - digital humanities as a threat to literary studies (see Kirsch; also Marche). - digital humanities as a set of institutional sites of study and professional organizations (see Kirschenbaum) - digital humanities as building things, such as computer applications, models, and online projects (see Ramsay) - digital humanities as sharing, developing a community (see Sample) - digital humanities as productive unease, grappling with tension between ideas of technological progress and the recognition that humanities research materials resist modeling and processing (see Flanders) 2. Each blog post must have at least one formal citation of another piece of writing, either from list above or from another blog post or article. 3. By Monday of week 3, each student’s original blog post, which shall be written using Markdown language, will be posted on the class’s Markdown-enabled blog AND shared on the class’s GitHub repository. 4. By Wednesday of week 3, each student shall respond, at least twice, to two other students’ blog posts. Each response must refer to a specific passage or idea in the student’s post and compare or contrast with another idea from another student’s post or from the assigned reading (i.e., quote from and cite source). The response posts should be posted on the Markdown-enabled blog.

After initial posts are complete, the class shall be split into two 12-person teams, and each team shall be split into 4 3-person groups. Each team shall have the following four groups: 1) editorial working group, 2) print working group, 3) public blog working group, and 4) ebook working group. For all of the remainder of the work, you are encouraged to collaborate with other members of your team (inside your group and outside), and you are encouraged to collaborate with the

corresponding group on the other team to manage or troubleshoot any difficulties that you encounter. Whenever possible, please work together (in reserved library room, at same computer, with online collaboration tool) to achieve solutions to problems.

5. During week 3, the both editorial groups (one for each team) shall create a GitHub fork for its 12 team member's original blog posts. They shall, based on commentary received on the blog, recommend corrections and revisions to posts. Furthermore, the editorial group by end of week shall organize the student contributions (section headings and introductions, shared bibliography), and shall provided editorial approve of the final project for publication. When the other teams do their work during week 4, the editorial group shall remain responsive and accommodate revisions to GitHub repository documents to better serve needs of print, blog, or ebook team.
6. During week 4, both print working group shall use pandoc to convert blog posts from its team members to a printed LaTeX document (report or article in PDF format) that gathers all student contributions (including those by editorial team) and has a shared bibliography for all citations. The final product should be based on the most current and updated GitHub fork.
7. During week 4, both public blog working group shall develop an independent public blog of all group posts with keywords and citations. The final product should be based on the most current and updated GitHub fork.
8. During week 4, both ebook groups shall use Calibre to generate an ebook in ePub format and publish the book on Google Books. The final product should be based on the most current and updated GitHub fork.

At every stage, students are encouraged to raise the bar above minimal assignment requirements. Ask yourself, for example, would post or printed document benefit from a table of contents or index? Should blog posts have keywords? Should contributor notes be published also?

Final notes: I encourage an iterative process. Test things to see if they work. Try to do everything, but developed reasoned processes to scale back ambitions if it becomes overwhelming. The final step of the process will be a personal reflection on collaboration in the assignment (500 words), which will be posted on the course blog.

References

Flanders, Julia. "The Productive Unease of 21st-Century Digital Scholarship." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 3.3 (2009): n. pag. Web. 9 July 2014.

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Kirschenbaum, Matthew. "What Is Digital Humanities and What's It Doing in English Departments?" *ADE Bulletin* 150.2010 (2010): 1–7. Web. 27 Oct. 2013.

Marche, Stephen. "Literature Is Not Data: Against Digital Humanities." *The Los Angeles Review of Books* (2014): n. pag. Web. 9 July 2014.

Ramsay, Stephen. "On Building." *Stephen Ramsay* Jan. 2011. Web. 26 Oct. 2013.

Sample, Mark. "The Digital Humanities Is Not About Building, It's About Sharing." *Sample Reality* May 2011. Web. 26 Oct. 2013.