

CLS350 Computer Applications in the Humanities

Fall 2012

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Course Site: www.thinkingtogether.org/350

Office: 520 Main Hall

Ofc Hrs: MW 1:50-3 pm & Tues 1:45-4:15 & other times by appt

Phone is the *worst* way to reach me; email is *best*. I respond within a day, sometimes within minutes

Course Overview *CLS350: Computer Applications in the Humanities* This course is designed to provide an introduction to the computer and its applications in a number of humanistic disciplines (literature, history, and writing, but some attention also will be given to foreign languages, linguistics, music, and art).

Our course this semester provides an introductory grounding to the digital humanities. How do digital tools, methodologies, and environments affect our attempts to preserve, disseminate, and understand human culture? We'll look at familiar activities-- writing, reading, communicating-- along with some less familiar objects of study-- gaming, messaging, linking, searching-- to forge a 21st century perspective on thinking in the humanities.

This semester's CLS 350 course will investigate the ways in which new electronic media are influencing and affecting the reading, writing, and interpreting that lie at the heart of the field of English. From screen-reading on a variety of devices to the contributions of games to literate culture, it's easy to see the broad effects of new media. In addition to introducing and evaluating an array of new technologies in English studies, we'll also spend some time assessing the impact of electronic media: how ought these new media re-define basic assumptions such as what is an author, what is a text, and what really happens when readers read and writers write?

We'll spend quite a bit of time early in the semester reading and thinking about the role of the computer in the humanities, attending to the ways in which the digital frustrates, constrains, and facilitates humanistic inquiry. As we build a strong theoretical and practical basis for engaging in critique, we'll shift focus slightly in order to directly engage with a diverse array of specific applications and technologies in the digital humanities.

Your grade this semester will be based on in-class and out of class writing and participation (30%), two out-of-class exams (15% each = 30% total), two VERY short interpretive critiques (10% each = 20% total) and an annotated bibliography (20%).

There are no required books for this class; all of the class materials will be freely available on the course website.

Students with Disabilities If you have a disability that requires accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please present your letter of accommodations and meet with me as soon as possible. For more information, please contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD) at x3217.

Plagiarism Your finished work must be your own, as a result of the engagement of your mind with the thoughts of others in a way that reflects your perspective. Plagiarism is academic dishonesty, a theft that robs you of the chance to either succeed or fail. Most of all, plagiarism robs you of the chance to learn. It will result in at best an F on the assignment, and it risks university-level judicial sanctions. For questions regarding Academic Integrity, the No-Grade Policy, Sexual Harassment, or the Student Code of Conduct, students are encouraged to refer to the Department's Undergraduate Handbook, the Undergraduate Catalogue, the Ram's Eye View, and the University website.

Attendance Regular attendance is encouraged and required for this course; it's not possible to do well in a course that you do not attend. Participation is qualitatively and quantitatively assessed, and participation requires presence. However, there is no formal penalty for missing any class. In my experience, students who miss classes gradually lose touch with the pace of the course and inevitably fail for the term. In order to ensure your success, I recommend attending each of the class meetings.

Grades & Assignments

I follow the standard 100 point grading scale, using numbers and letters with a + or a -. I take grading to be an ethical contract: I demonstrate what the expectations are for each level, and you are confident as to where you stand as the semester progresses.

Writing & Participation 30%

Participation is a critical component of joint inquiry; this class requires you to take an active role in understanding the issues, the topics, the readings and the technologies of the semester. Your participation will occur in three primary ways: (a) informal class participation, which is a joint oral discussion of the materials under consideration; (b) asynchronous written participation to a class discussion forum, and (c) formal written contributions to a storehouse of consensus understanding of the texts and issues of the class. In order to facilitate your engagement with the materials and concepts of the class, I'll use D2L to host a rudimentary discussion board. I'll provide direct questions in order to model productive collaborative thought, but will expect you to participate robustly in the out of class discussion by both answering and asking relevant questions. I'll provide more formal at-home writing assignments (brief, no more than 250 words) in order to help equip you for the intellectual work of the semester. Along with in-class participation, these materials will comprise 30% of your final average.

Exams 30%

The midterm and final together will comprise 30% of your final average. The midterm and final function as synthetic moments that allow you to make connections between the disparate materials of the semester. I'll give you plenty of time to do your best, and ask the sorts of questions that respect your ability to think beyond the mere surface of the texts we read.

Interpretive Critiques: 10% + 10% = 20%

In each half of the semester you'll write a very short (approx. 2 pp) mixed-media critique of a specific computer application in the humanities, using the theoretical underpinnings of the semester to engage with real-world materials in your area of focus.

Annotated Bibliography: 20%

At the end of the semester, you will prepare an annotated bibliography that represents original research on a topic of central importance to the materials of the semester. I'll provide detailed guidelines far in advance of the assignment.

Tentative Schedule *(latest info on website)*

Pre Unit I: Introduction

Introduction to the Course
Wikipedia entry for Digital Humanities
Patricia Cohen's Humanities 2.0 series
(6 articles en total, Dec 2010- July 2011)