The Digital Black Atlantic

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Office: 220 Duncker Hall
ENGL 3525 | Time: T/TH
11:30am-12:50pm | Location: Eads 215 |
Spring 2023
Student Hours: By Appointment [Link]

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this course, we'll be bridging two interdisciplinary fields- the digital humanities and Black diaspora studies- in order to examine how technology has mediated new engagements with the Black Atlantic. Following the concept of "juxtaposition," what Kelly Baker Josephs and Roopika Risam see as the intersection "of disciplines, cultures, and methods" (*The Digital Black Atlantic* 2021), this course will consist of traditional class discussion, writing assignments, and lab days that bridge theory, method, and application. Ultimately, we will aim to discover how scholars utilize digital tools to engage with and better understand the cultures, histories, and literatures of the Black diaspora. We will examine a broad range of scholarship, such as Brittle Paper, an online literary magazine, "Digital Nollywood," "The Global Poetics Project," and "Archive of Languages and Oral Resources of Africa," which are digital archives and repositories, "Migration Stories: Africans in Midwestern Communities," a digital storytelling initiative, and the web series "Left of Black," which is a multimedia source. Throughout the semester, students will learn to work with DH tools like Voyant and Omeka, will conduct text analysis, develop maps and network models, and learn how to utilize and build databases. Readings and classwork will be supplemented by practicums, and a small-scale final DH project will serve as an entry-point into both the public and digital humanities. This course may fulfill the global or minority literatures requirement for students who declare an English major in the fall 2021 semester and beyond.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the historically shifting characteristics, debates, and terms behind key concepts of the course, especially Digital Humanities and the iterations of it in African DH and Black DH.
2. Analyze digital projects, media, and texts as well as develop a vocabulary for thinking about how new technologies and methodologies enable new ways of engaging these "texts."
3. Critically examine the relationship between digital technologies and the humanities, broadly conceived as an interdisciplinary field of study.
4. Develop evidence-based arguments and interpretations about and using digital technologies.
5. To consider how and when to use new methodologies for literary and cultural studies.
6. Practice research skills for critically engaging with, assessing, and intervening in theoretical arguments and scholarship for both academic and public audiences.

Optional Texts:
The Digital Black Atlantic, Roopika Risam and Kelly Baker Josephs

Assignments and Grading
All assignments should be submitted on time. If you need an extension, please reach out. If you hand in late work, your final grade will drop by a third of a letter grade for each day it is late. Please speak with me if you believe that you will have an issue meeting a deadline.

<u>Labs: 20%</u>
    Lab: 70%
    Canvas Post: 30%
<u>Annotated Bibliography: 10%</u>
<u>Final Paper: 20%</u>
<u>Digital Project: 50%</u>
    Project Pitch: 5%
    Project Proposal: 10%
    Work-in-progress presentations: 10%
    Final Presentation: 15%
    Digital Project: 60%

Grading Scale:	
97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-90	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
75-79	C+
70-74	C
60-69	D
59-Below	E

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance
This is a conversation class, which means a major part of the work of the class comes from our discussions. Attendance at all sessions is important! I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences, but you are permitted four absences. Any absences beyond that will lower your participation grade by a third of a grade point (i.e., a B+ becomes a B. a B- becomes a C+). If you are not in the classroom within 15 minutes of the start time, you will be considered tardy. Being tardy three times will count as one absence. It is good to be in class on time. If that's not possible on any particular day, it is better to be late than to not show up at all. If you are ill or need to quarantine, please stay at home and rest. Please make sure to email me so that I know you're ok and will be missing class. If you miss part/all of a lecture, assume that you have missed "important" information. Please get notes from a classmate. Afterward, if you still have questions, by all means, come see me.

Gizmos and Gadgets
Technology in the classroom has the tremendous potential to draw us deeper into a state of engagement by providing a way to efficiently take notes or look up information that can supplement the discussion. Technology can also, however, disrupt our engagement. You may use technology in the classroom to read assignments and to bring in your work, but please ask yourself if the technology is drawing you into class or pulling you away (i.e. with distractions such as checking your email, social media, or reading for another class). Please be judicious and conscientious in your use of technology.

Submissions

Submit a digital version of everything (.docx or .doc, not .pdf, .pages or google docs links) through email: amabemma@wustl.edu. Write our class number and the name of the assignment in the subject line. Bring short assignments to our meetings, either printed out or on a device, in case you want to share your writing with the class.

Extensions

During the semester, I will not accept work that is late by more than three days. In the case of the essay deadlines for the mid-semester or longer essays, this will not directly affect your grade because of the portfolio system; you simply lose that opportunity for me to read your work in draft form and provide you with feedback. So, it's always better to hand in something. For short, two-day extensions, ask before the day of. Labs and Canvas posts can't be submitted late.

Academic Integrity, Honesty, Collaboration, and Citation

All learning is inherently collaborative and interactive. We all discover our thoughts and refine our perspectives by coming into intimate contact with others' thoughts and perspectives. Because of this proximity with others' language and ideas, it is important that we all act consistently with the principles of academic honor. Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or writing without giving them proper credit. Please know that plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be understood as very serious offenses that may result in an F for the assignment. All suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be investigated and will result in a failing grade for the course. For more on the University policy on academic integrity, see ucollege.wustl.edu/faculty/academic_integrity

The Public Domain

All of the work that you produce for this class may be read by myself and anyone else in the class. I expect all students to treat every other student's written and spoken work with respect.

Email

I respond to emails on weekdays between 10am-5pm. Please allow 72 hours for a response. See https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/636/01/ for a guide on email etiquette. Please make sure to include the name of our class in the email messages. However, if your email implies a very long answer, please come and see me during office hours. I am typically also available in the classroom right before/after the lectures.

Student Hours

Some people may know this as "office hours." I use the term "student hours" for purposes of equity, diversity, and inclusion. You can read more about this rationale here https://twitter.com/amy_nusbaum/status/1100440431500775424?s=20&t=CjBnoIYVsvsaTsCAnmL60A and here https://twitter.com/hormiga/status/1101161420916441088?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1101161420916441088%7Ctwgr%5E020f179338f91d8ad50b136a18165e10873b416b%7Ctwcon%5Es1_c10&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fblogs.agu.org%2Fgeoedtrek%2F2020%2F07%2F30%2Foffice-hours%2F. I also use the term "student hours" for the simple fact that I don't always host these in an office (I might host via Zoom, outside, at a café, etc), but no matter the location, it's an hour for my students, aka you! Please use the appointment form to sign up to meet with me [link]. Email me if you would like to set up an appointment for a different time.

If you have any questions or problems, it is important to see me as soon as possible so we can appropriately address your questions. n.b. Many issues are much better dealt with in person, and I encourage you to come discuss with me directly.

Accommodations for Disabilities
If you have a disability or health concern that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require adjustments or accommodations, please visit Disability Services at students.wustl.edu/disabilityresources/. Accommodations may require early planning. Please contact them as soon as possible.

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence.

\- bell hooks

Course Schedule

Week 1
1/17 Introduction to Digital Humanities projects & the course [Canvas Post 0 and 1-Due: In Class Project]
Please come in prepared to discuss the pre-semester website links from "Week 0."

1/19 (Navigating the) Digital (as a No-Code, Low-Code, Minimal-Computing) Humanist
- "Navigating the Global Digital Humanities: Insights from Black Feminism," By Roopika Risam, pp. 359-367 [Link]
- "Micro DH: Digital Humanities at the Small Scale," Roopika Risam [Link]
- "Introduction: The Questions of Minimal Computing," Roopika Risam and Alex Gil [Link]
- "The User, the Learner and the Machines We Make," Alex Gil [Link]
- "Minimal Definitions," Jentery Sayers [Link]

Look up the terms "no-code," "low-code," and "minimal computing."

Week 2
1/24 Humanities Data and Metadata Part 1 [Canvas Post 2-Due]

- *Understanding Metadata What Is Metadata, And What Is It For?*, only pp.1-7, Jenn Riley [[Link](#)]
- "Going Meta on Metadata," Michael Kramer [[Link](#)]
- "Digital humanities projects and standards: Let's get this conversation started!," Michelle Urberg [[Link](#)]
- "Mukurtu CMS: An Indigenous Archive and Publishing Tool," [[Link](#)]

Explore these examples:
- https://plateauportal.libraries.wsu.edu/digital-heritage/root-gathering-bag-3
- https://plateauportal.libraries.wsu.edu/
- https://baltimoreuprising2015.org/ [site may still be offline]
- http://www.sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com/?ids=10000473&min_confidence=60&type=network
- https://www.zooniverse.org/

Optional (very interesting!):
- Slideshow: https://www.slideshare.net/getaneh/metadata-for-digital-humanities
- Alan Liu's essay "Toward a Diversity Stack: Digital Humanities and Diversity as Technical Problem" ; Excerpt from Abstract "technical methods for dealing with multilingualism, multimedia, unrepresentative corpora, geopolitical and temporal organizations of identity, and the theory of identity."

1/26 Humanities Data and Metadata Part 2 [Lab 1 Due: In Class Project]
- "Big? Smart? Clean? Messy? Data in the Humanities," Christof Schöch [[Link](#)]
- OpenRefine Guide [[Link](#)]
- Download: Open Refine [[Link](#)]. Please do this before class.

Review the following links:
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinemann_African_Writers_Series
- https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/73176.African_Writers_Series

[Lab 2 Due- 1/30]

Week 3
1/31 Network Analysis [Lab 3 Due-In Class Project]
- "Cheat Sheet: Social Network Analysis for Humanists," Marten Düring [[Link](#)]
- "Postcolonial Network Analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," Lestari Manggong and Mohamad Noor Rizal [[Link](#)]
- "On Poets and Prizes," Juliana Spahr and Stephanie Young [[Link](#)]
- "The Lost Network of Elizabeth Barton," Genelle Gertz and Pasquale Toscano [[Link](#)] [**Directions**: read this article for method and results. Grad Students: Read this to also see how scholars write about digital projects for peer-reviewed articles].

Explore the following visualizations:
- http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/

Not literature related, but look at this to see how Onodo works.
- https://onodo.org/visualizations/12069
- https://onodo.org/visualizations/11874

2/2 Digital Visualization: Maps, Charts, and Graphs
- "Finding the Right Tools for Mapping," Olivia Ildefonso [[Link](#)]
- "Visualizing Sovereignty," Yarimar Bonilla and Max Hantel [[Link](#)]

- "Dividing Lines. Mapping platforms like Google Earth have the legacies of colonialism programmed into them," Mayukh Sen [Link]
- "A Review of 'Two Plantations'," Jessica Marie Johnson [Link]

Explore the following visualization projects:
- Slave Revolt in Jamaica, 1760-1761 [Link]
- Mapping Inequality [Link]
- Renewing Inequality [Link]
- The Decolonial Atlas [Link]
- Two Plantations [Links]

[Lab 4 Due: Monday by 5 pm]

Week 4

2/7 Text Analysis Part 1
- "The Form of Black Lives Matter," Daniel Shore [Link]
- "The Experimental Turn," Katherine Coles [Link]
- "Race and Distant Reading," Richard Jean So and Edwin Roland [Link]

2/9 Text Analysis: Part 2 [Lab 5 Due]
- "Coding for the Many, Transforming Knowledge for All: Annotating Digital Documents," Elton Barker, Anna Foka and Kyriaki Konstantinidou [Link]
- "Text Analysis for Thought in the Black Atlantic," in the *Digital Black Atlantic*, Sayan Bhattacharyya [Link]
- "Austin Clarke's Digital Crossings," in the *Digital Black Atlantic*, Paul Barrett [Link]

Explore the following examples:
- Haiti: An Island Luminous [Link]
- Models of Modernism [Link]

Week 5

2/14 Digital Archives [Canvas Post 3]
- "Introduction: Beyond Digital Hype and Digital Anxiety," in *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation*, focus especially on the "Sixteen Guiding Digital Preservation Axioms" (pgs 4-9), Trevor Owens. [Link]
- "On Collections As Data Imperative," Library of Congress, Thomas Padilla [Link]
- "Generative Tensions: Building a Digital Project on Early African American Race Film," Miriam Posner and Marika Ciford [Link]
- "Colonial Violence and the Postcolonial Digital Archive" in *New Digital Worlds*, Roopika Risam [Link]

Explore the following examples:
- Early Caribbean Digital Archive [Link]
- The Colored Conventions Project [Link]
    - o Read/Watch: Introduction, Principles, The Colored Conventions Project in Three Videos (watch the 3 videos), Explore the Digital Records, Download and Explore the CCP Corpus, Explore Exhibits (select at least 1 exhibit to explore at depth or skim)

2/16 Digital Storytelling and Digital/ Social Media [Canvas Post 4–Due In Class]
- "Hulu: Your Attention Please," Tao Leigh Goffe
- "Media and Cultural Hybridity in the Digital Humanities," Élika Ortega [Link]
- "Digital Queer Witnessing: Testimony, Contested Virtual Heritage, and the Apartheid Archive in Soweto, Johannesburg," in *The Digital Black Atlantic*, Angel David Nieves [Link]
- "SHGIS Social Justice History Platform (Preview)," Angel David Nieves [Link]
- "Signifying Shade as We #RaceTogether Drinking Our #NewStarbucksDrink 'White Privilege Americana Extra Whip'," in *The Digital Black Atlantic,* Toniesha L. Taylor [Link]

Week 6
2/21: Meet in my office for 1-1 meetings. Meet with Professor. Adwetewa-Badu to discuss your potential project. We will work on fleshing out the idea, managing the scope, and discussing next steps. [Canvas Post 5]

2/23 (no class – Professor Adwetewa-Badu will be away.)
Assignment due the evening of the 23rd:
Part A: Read at least three of the Canvas Post 5 submissions written by your peers. Offer insights, suggestions, and examples (these can be pulled from what we've looked at this semester) that might help them think through their project a bit more. These posts should be about 250 words each.

Part B: After you have received guidance from your peers, use the suggestions they have given you to help you prepare your project pitch (guidance on how to put together the project pitch is on my webpage).

Week 7
2/28 Platforms, Hosting, Interfaces [Canvas Post 6]
3/2 Project Pitch

Due Friday 3/10 at 5:00 pm: Team/Individual Project Plan
Upload here: https://wustl.app.box.com/f/7544f890cd5148e282269d9256614a69
Directions: https://amabadu.com/proposal-guidelines

A note about weeks 8,10, and 14.
At the start of each class, be prepared to give an extremely brief and informal (1-minute) spiel about how the project is going, what your intentions are for that particular work session, and what forms of support you need (either from Prof. Adwetewa-Badu or your peers).

Week 8
3/7 co-working
3/9 co-working

Week 9
3/14 (no class)
3/16(no class)

Week 10

3/21 co-working→ Joined by Steve Pentecost from the Humanities Digital Workshop
3/23 co-working → Joined by Doug Knox from the Humanities Digital Workshop

Week 11
3/28 co-working
3/30 Presentation of projects in progress w/ cohorts

<mark>Due Monday 4/3 by 5:00 pm: Individual Annotated Bibliography</mark>

Week 12
4/4 Zoom Panel:
- Dr. Allie Martin, Dartmouth College, Department of Music [Learn more about Dr. Martin here]
- Caitlin Tyler-Richards, Michigan State University Press, Acquisitions Editor, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, African History [Learn more about Caitlin Tyler-Richards here and here]

Reading assignments:
- "Hearing Change in the Chocolate City: Computational Methods for Listening to Gentrification," Allie Martin [LINK]

4/6 Digital Prose in the Digital Humanities: Alternative ways of Thinking and Writing
- "break.dance," Marisa Praham [Link]
- "The Digital in the Humanities: An Interview with Marisa Parham," Melissa Dinsman [Link]
- "Breaking, dancing, making in the machine: notes on .break.dance," Marisa Parham [Link]

Week 13
4/11 project team meetings with me in my office/ co-working
4/13 project team meetings with me in my office/ co-working

Week 14
4/18 co-working
4/20 co-working

Week 15
4/25 final presentations
4/27 final presentations
<mark>Due 5/10 at 11:59 pm: Individual Final Paper</mark>