

## Introduction to Digital Public Humanities

### Black Digital Humanities

Wednesday, 5:30pm-8:10pm

Conklin Hall 448

#### Instructor Information:

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#### Description:

This course will introduce students to the emerging field of Black Digital Humanities. As scholar Kim Gallon writes, "the black digital humanities help to unmask the racialized systems of power at work in how we understand the digital humanities as a field."<sup>1</sup> What is the relationship between digital humanities and African American Studies? What can each field learn from each other? In addition to readings, in lab sessions students will learn digital technologies and skills. These may include blogging, social media, mapping, and digital archiving. Through these labs we will apply theory to praxis, improving both.

We will use and critically examine digital tools like Omeka, mapping software, content management systems, and social media. By the end of the semester, students will have conceptualized a black digital humanities project, written a grant application for potential funding, and built a prototype.

#### Course Website:

We will use the course website for blogging. The syllabus is also available there as well. The website is: <https://digitalpublichumanities.wordpress.com/>

#### Expectations:

- This course will expect you to engage deeply with readings on the history, theories, and methods of digital humanities, African American studies and cultural studies, while also applying those materials to work with digital tools on projects. Come to class having read the materials and prepared to discuss them.
- You are not expected to have any specific technical knowledge before coming to this class. You are expected, however, to be an independent learner who will attempt to solve problems.
- You will be expected to respond to emails from me in a timely manner. Because we only meet once per week, it will be necessary for me to communicate with you by email outside of class. I recommend strongly that you link your Rutgers email account (which is what is connected to Blackboard) to your personal email so that you are sure to get all the emails that I send.
- This class will require the use of either a laptop or tablet. If you do not have a laptop or tablet, you can borrow one from Dana library. Talk to the librarians at the circulation desk to find out how.

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<sup>1</sup> "Making the Case for the Black Digital Humanities," *Debates in the Digital Humanities*.  
<http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/55>

## Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will have:

- Become conversant with the literature in digital humanities, black digital humanities, African American studies and cultural studies, understanding the major issues, theories and methods of each;
- Learned new digital technologies, used them for digital projects, and critically analyzed them;
- Conceptualized a black digital humanities project, including developing a prototype;
- Written a grant proposal.

## Assignments:

- Blog Posts Reading Responses: Using the course website, you will be expected to write a response to readings and labs several times throughout the semester. These posts should engage with one or more of the readings or connect the lab work with readings. The goal of these posts is for you to show your critical grappling with the ideas in the reading and the class. These are not meant to simply be summaries of the readings. These are due by Wednesday at 12pm. You should also read your classmates' posts and comment on at least one each week prior to our class meeting. See Blog Post Guidelines at the end of this document for more information.
- Genealogies of Digital Humanities: Short paper analyzing two readings on the development of digital humanities. More information to be distributed later.
- Analysis of a Digital/Public Humanities Project: More information to be distributed later.
- Digital Projects for the Public Proposal: The cumulative project for the semester will be for you to conceptualize a digital public humanities project and write a grant proposal to fund it. We will use the NEH's digital projects for the public application as our guide. This project will be completed in several steps with peer review.

## Attendance and Participation:

You will be expected to attend class having completed readings and assignments and be prepared to actively participate. If you cannot attend class, please let me know at least 24 hours before class (except in the case of emergencies).

## Academic Integrity:

You will follow the University's Policy on Academic Integrity, which falls under the Code of Student Conduct. The policy and the consequences of violating it are outlined here:

<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/office-dean-student-affairs/academic-integrity-policy>.

I strictly follow the University's rules regarding plagiarism and other academic irregularities. Please consult me if you have any questions about what is and is not appropriate regarding the use of sources or citation.

## Grading:

- Participation and Attendance: 10%
- Blog Post Reading Responses: 20%
- Genealogies of Digital Humanities Short Paper: 10%
- Analysis of a Digital Public Humanities Project: 10%
- Analysis of Chicory Map: 10%
- Digital Projects for the Public Proposal: 30%
- Peer Review: 10%

## Late Assignments:

I expect assignments to be completed on the day they are due. Any late submissions without an approved excuse will lose a half-grade every day it is late.

## Required Texts:

There are three books you must buy or borrow for this course:

- Noble, Safiya. [\*Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism\*](#). (NY: NYU Press, 2018).
- Risam, Roopika. [\*New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis and Pedagogy\*](#). (Northwestern University Press, 2019).
- Tufekci, Zeynep. [\*Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest\*](#). (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).

We will also discuss readings from the open access digital book:

- Klein, Lauren F. and Matthew K. Gold. [\*Debates in the Digital Humanities\*](#). (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

If a reading is about a specific digital humanities project, be sure to look at the project as well.

Other readings are either linked below or available on the blackboard site for our class.

## Disability Statement

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact Kate Torres at (973) 353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting [odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu).

## Weekly Schedule:

# History and Theory of Digital Humanities

## January 22 - Week 1/ Introduction to the Class

How to publish a post on Wordpress: [https://codex.wordpress.org/Writing\\_Posts](https://codex.wordpress.org/Writing_Posts)

Search "Black Digital Humanities" online and, examining some of the results, write a couple sentences on what you think it means.

## January 29 - Week 2/ Intersections

- Combahee River Collective Statement (BB)
- Gallon, Kim. "Making a Case for Black Digital Humanities," *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/55>
- Bailey, Moya, Anne Cong-Huyen, Alexis Lothian, and Amanda Phillips. "Reflections on a Movement: #transformDH, Growing Up." *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/59>
- Janny Scott, "Who Gets to Tell a Black Story?" *New York Times*. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/national/race/061100scott-corner.html>

### Due: Blog Reading Response

→ Heads Up: NYC DH Week, a free series of workshops in digital humanities, happens February 3-7. For more info: <https://nycdh.org/>

## February 5 - Week 3/ Genealogies

- "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History," *Journal of American History* (2008). (BB)
- Susan Hockey, "History of Humanities Computing," *A Companion to Digital Humanities* (2004). <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/view?docId=blackwell/9781405103213/9781405103213.xml&chunk.id=ss1-2-1>
- Sharon Leon, "Complicating a 'Great Man' Narrative of Digital History in the United States," *Bodies of Information*. (BB)

### Due: Blog Reading Response

## February 12 - Week 4/ Genealogies

- Risam, Roopika, *New Digital Worlds*.

### Due: Blog Reading Response

### Due: Genealogies of Digital Humanities Short Paper

→ Heads Up: Marion Thompson Wright Lecture, February 15. Topic: Black Futures, Rutgers-Newark campus. <https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/news/save-date-feb-15-2020-marion-thompson-wright-mtw-lecture-series>

## February 19 - Week 5/ The Digital Humanities Project

- NEH, Digital Projects for the Public Guidelines. <https://www.neh.gov/files/grants/digital-projects-the-public-june-6-2018.pdf>
- Slavery in the North Website Proposal. [https://www.neh.gov/files/grants/historic\\_hudson\\_valley\\_slavery\\_in\\_the\\_north\\_website.pdf](https://www.neh.gov/files/grants/historic_hudson_valley_slavery_in_the_north_website.pdf)
- Miriam Posner, "How Did They Make That?" <http://miriamposner.com/blog/how-did-they-make-that-the-video/>
- Doran Larson, "Witness in the Era of Mass Incarceration," *American Quarterly*, Sept. 2018: 597-599
- Erin McElroy, "Countermapping Displacement," *American Quarterly*, Sept. 2018: 601-604.

Due: Project Abstracts – 1-2 paragraphs, including project topic, goal, significance and digital component by email to [mary.rizzo@rutgers.edu](mailto:mary.rizzo@rutgers.edu)

## February 26 - Week 6/ Critical Engagements with Technology and Culture

- Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*.

Due: Blog Reading Response

## Practicing the Digital Humanities

### March 4 - Week 7/ African American Spatialization

- Saidiya Hartman, "An Atlas of the Wayward," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (BB)
- Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons and a Black Sense of Place," *Social and Cultural Geography*, v 12, no. 8, December 2011
- Stephen Robertson, "Putting Harlem on the Map," *Writing History in the Digital Age*. <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/dh/12230987.0001.001/1:8/--writing-history-in-the-digital-age?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=fulltext;xc=1#8.2>

Due: Blog Reading Response

### March 11 - Week 8/ Mapping (Lab)

Guest Presentation by Francesca Giannetti, Digital Humanities Librarian, New Brunswick Libraries

- Howard Ramsby, "Geo-coding Black Short Stories," <http://www.culturalfront.org/2016/04/geo-coding-black-short-stories.html>
- Howard Ramsby, "Place in the Writing of Edward P. Jones," <http://www.culturalfront.org/2016/10/place-in-writings-of-edward-p-jones.html>
- Howard Ramsby, "Lost Southern Voices: Mapping Edward P. Jones' D.C.," <http://www.culturalfront.org/2018/04/lost-southern-voices-mapping-edward-p.html>
- Mapping Marronage, <http://mapping-marronage.rll.lsa.umich.edu/about>, read About and play around with the site
- Mapping Decadence, <http://mappingdecadence.org/>, read homepage, About and play around with the site

Due: Analysis of a Digital Public Humanities Project

**MARCH 18 – NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK.**

### March 25 - Week 9/ Metadata

- Lauren F. Klein, "The Image of Absence: Archival Silence, Data Visualization, and James Hemings," *American Literature*. V 85 (4) December 2013. (BB)
- Sarah Whitcomb Laiola, "Markup as Behavior toward Risk," *American Quarterly*, v. 70, no. 3, September 2018: 561-587.
- Amy Earhart, "Can Information Be Unfettered?: Race and the Digital Humanities Canon," *Debates in the Digital Humanities*. <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/16>

Due: Blog Reading Response

### April 1 - Week 10/ Metadata, Categorization, and Omeka (LAB)

- Up and Running with Omeka.net, <https://programminghistorian.org/en/lessons/up-and-running-with-omeka>

**Due: Mapping Chicory Locations Short Paper**

**April 8 - Week 11/ TBD**

**April 15 - Week 12/ Peer Review**

**Peer Review of Proposals: Draft of Humanities Content, Creative Approach, and Audience, Distribution and Evaluation**

**April 22 - Week 12/ Social Media and Social Movements**

- Zeynep Tufekci, *Twitter and Tear Gas*

**Due: Blog Reading Response**

**April 29 - Week 13/ Peer Review of Complete Project Proposals**

- Miriam Posner, "What's Next? The Radical, Unrealized Potential of the Digital Humanities," <http://miriamposner.com/blog/whats-next-the-radical-unrealized-potential-of-digital-humanities/>

**Final Proposals DUE: TBD**

**Due: Post your project abstracts to the course blog**

### **Blog Post Reading Response Guidelines**

On the syllabus, several weeks are marked with "blog post." For these weeks, you will write a blog post analyzing and responding to one or more of the readings for that week.

Requirements:

- Summarize the argument of each reading you discuss
- Respond to one or more ideas in the reading(s), connecting them to current events, other readings, your research interests, etc..
- A creative title
- Images, gifs, or videos with captions to illuminate ideas
- Length can vary, but 250-500 words is a good ballpark
- You are also required to comment on at least one other student's post each week.

The writing doesn't have to be as academically formal as a paper. In fact, blogs are most engaging when they capture the voice of the author, so have fun with it. Because you will be posting this on a publicly available website, please be generous in your critiques of the readings.

**If there is any reason why you cannot publish these posts under your own name, please let me know.**

**Due: blog posted by 12pm on Wednesday; comment posted by class time on Wednesday**