Syllabus: **Digital Methodologies: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Multi-Media Research**

{Upper division undergraduate course (20-40 students), 4 units, quarter system}

**Course overview:** The purpose of this course is to provide students with hands-on experience designing, conducting, and communicating digital research. In this course, we will integrate new digital media forms into research practice. By taking this course, students should develop a fluency in the theory and practice of digital methodologies, which will allow them to critically discuss and engage with digital humanities scholarship. As an emerging area of scholarship, students are encouraged to question and think critically about digital humanities and research practice.

Students will explore how researchers have utilized digital and computational modes in the past, investigate contemporary forms of digital engagement, and imagine future modes of digital scholarship. Through assignments and a final collaborative group project, students will examine multiple ways in which digital media are integrated into humanities research methodologies in general, and how this digital data may be transformed into new- and hyper-media research presentations.

In this course, the quarter is roughly divided into three parts. During the first three weeks we will familiarize ourselves with digital humanities. We will track the evolution of digital humanities scholarship, focusing on key moments and technologies that have influenced this development. In weeks 4-7 we will explore and critique digital research methodologies more specifically. As we discuss these various methodologies, students will begin conducting their own research, which will culminate in a final group project. Weeks 8-10 will focus on production and presentation of various types of digital humanities research. Working in groups, students will develop their own digital scholarship (or a designed concept for a digital product) based on their own primary research.

**Week 1:** Introduction of course, and overview of Digital Humanities
Questions to consider: What makes a project a digital project? What kinds of projects lend themselves to digital inquiry? Should there be a distinction between digital and traditional humanities? How useful is this distinction? In what ways does this create limitations?

**Assignment #1:** Case Study Summary
Please read the case study, *Digital Humanities at the Crossroads: The University of Virginia* ([http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ers0605/cs/ecs0506.pdf](http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ers0605/cs/ecs0506.pdf)), and write a 500-word analytical summary. (A few questions to consider, but certainly not to limit yourself to: How are the digital humanities defined? What are some of the challenges facing scholars working in digital humanities? What are the institutional challenges facing digital humanities? Where do you see digital humanities scholarship ten years from now?)
**Assignment #2: Comparison of Digital Humanities Initiatives**

In 500 words or more compare and contrast at least two Digital Humanities initiatives. In your comparison, it may be helpful to consider the following questions:

1. What is the function/purpose/goal/aim of each initiative?
2. How does the institution, or individual(s), define “Digital Humanities?”
3. How does the initiative describe itself?
4. What kinds of questions are being asked in each initiative?
5. How does the initiative define its “mission?”
6. How are technologies discussed in relation to each initiative?
7. What are some of the challenges facing these initiatives? Are these challenges addressed in the descriptions?

**Initiatives:**

- Project Bamboo
  [http://projectbamboo.org/](http://projectbamboo.org/)
- University of California—Davis, Davis Humanities Institute, Digital Humanities Initiative
- State University of New York—Buffalo, Digital Humanities Initiative at Buffalo
  [http://digitalhumanities.buffalo.edu/](http://digitalhumanities.buffalo.edu/)
- Harvard University, The Digital Humanities Initiative
  [http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k15573&pageid=icb.page73873](http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k15573&pageid=icb.page73873)
- National Endowment for the Humanities, Office of Digital Humanities
- University of Nebraska—Lincoln, Center for Digital Research in the Humanities
  [http://cdrh.unl.edu/](http://cdrh.unl.edu/)

**Week 3: Developing a common vocabulary. What do we mean by “Digital Humanities?”**

**Readings:**


**Assignment:** Write your own working definition of digital humanities, and share with the class. What other concepts need definition?
Week 4: Collaboration in Digital Humanities Research and Introduction of final project assignment.

Digital humanities research will require new kinds of research collaborations. Participation in digital scholarship requires some sort of technological literacy, whether in software programming, web design, graphic design, filmmaking, database management, photography, audio recording, digitizing, or other more disciplinary specific technologies (such as Geographic Information Systems, Body Scanning technologies, to name a few). The diversity of these technologies will necessitate some form of collaboration in order to engage in meaningful research, and ultimately, to articulate research findings. This week, we will discuss research collaboration, and this discussion will serve as a springboard into organizing the final project.

Assignment #3: What are your strengths? Please come to class prepared to share your technological literacies. For example: Do you know how to make a website? Do you enjoy designing research projects? Are you a photographer? Do you know how to edit films? Are you artistic, or enjoy design work? What technologies are you familiar with? Which ones would you like to learn?

Final Project: Groups of 4-5 will conduct a collaborative research project. Groups will be organized based on the strengths of their respective classmates. Once you have a group, you will decide on a topic of interest, or a research question. Using various methodologies, you will interrogate your research topic utilizing digital forms. As a group, you will present your research in digital form as well (i.e. hypertext, film, blog, database, etc. etc.). Please consider previous lectures, readings and assignment as you ask yourself and your group the following:
-What kinds of research projects lend themselves to digital inquiry?
-How might a digital approach help us to ask new and different types of research questions?
-How might scholars conduct research digitally?
-How will computational, digital, and other media forms be integrated into research practice?
-What new considerations arise through the inclusion of new media in research methodologies?
-What new forms of collaboration must arise as a result?

Week 5: Data & the Database

Assignment #3: Data, Databases, and Navigation.
Go online and look for at least two databases that relate to your research topic or question. For example, a group interested in the evolution of California clothing fashions may explore the California State Archive Online: http://www.oac.cdlib.org/search.image.html, as well as an ethnographic costume collection, such as the Cornell Costume & Textile Collection online database: http://costume.cornell.edu/greetingdb.htm. In 500 words or more, compare at least two found databases. What databases are accessible? Which ones are not? In what ways are the databases similar and different?
How is the data organized? How did you navigate through these databases? How did this navigation change across different databases? What were some of the challenges in navigation? What useful information did you discover about your topic? What information is left out of the database?

Further reading:


Week 6: From 3-Dimensions to Digital-Dimensions
- Image making
- Graphics
- Photography
- Material representations

Digital scholarship will require us to think critically and creatively about new forms of representation. How will we deal with material analysis in the digital realm? How do we represent and engage with materiality through computers?

**Digital work to engage with:**
http://vectors.usc.edu/index.php?page=7&projectId=65

**Assignment:** Experiment with image-making for your group’s research project. Will you collect/take/produce images as part of your data gathering? Will you collect or analyze materials in your project, and if so, how will you represent these materials? Will you use graphics in the presentation of your research? Do you anticipate using images in your research process (i.e. photo elicitation interviews, sensory ethnography, etc.)?

Week 7: Interviewing and incorporation of audio.

**Assignment:** Conduct and audio record at least 2 semi-structured interviews that relate to your research project topic. Bring together all audio interviews as a group, and brainstorm different ways of organizing and presenting these audio interviews.

**Digital work to engage with:**
http://vectors.usc.edu/index.php?page=7&projectId=57
**Week 7:** Incorporation of film and video.
In week 7 we will explore how researchers have used film as a means of gathering data and presenting research. We will focus on films that complicate traditional documentary modes.

**Films to be screened and discussed in class:**
*What Farocki Taught* (Jill Godmilow, 1997, 30 minutes)
  Background: [http://www.nd.edu/~jgodmilo/farocki.html](http://www.nd.edu/~jgodmilo/farocki.html)

*Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* (Trinh T. Minh-ha, 1989, 108 minutes)
  Background: [http://arch.ced.berkeley.edu/people/faculty/bourdier/trinh/TTMHFilmSV.htm](http://arch.ced.berkeley.edu/people/faculty/bourdier/trinh/TTMHFilmSV.htm)

*The Apple* (Samira Makhmalbaf, 1998, 86 minutes)

**Readings:**


**Week 8:** Create your database.
Assignment: Consider constructing a database to house your project data. What does your raw data look like? How might you organize it? Would you make your database accessible to others?

**Readings:**

**Week 9:** Multi-Modal Scholarship: Examination and critique of digital humanities scholarship.


**Week 10:** Research Presentations