

ENGL7888 / HIST7888: Graduate Colloquium: Digital Humanities  
Eric Weiskott  
Fall 2023, T 2:00–4:25pm  
Office hours: T 10:00–11:00am (Stokes S407) or by appointment

Foundational course for the use of digital scholarship in the humanities. By the end of the course, students will have a grounding in what digital scholarship is as well as an arsenal of techniques for utilizing DS in their own work.

Note: I am not a coder. I will be running this version of the introductory digital humanities colloquium as a methods course punctuated by a speaker series. I have won an internal teaching grant to invite (and remunerate) scholars and librarians with digital and subject-area expertise to speak with us and lead in-class workshops. Topics of interest within our respective disciplines will arise from our readings in scholarship about ‘the digital humanities’; from our careful examination of some existing digital projects and ongoing controversies relating to the use of digital research methods; and from our conversations with guest speakers.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (available at the BC Bookstore)

Arden of Faversham, ed. Catherine Richardson (Bloomsbury, 2022) (to accompany the stylometry unit; this play is absolutely bonkers)

Martin Paul Eve, *The Digital Humanities and Literary Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2022) (only the introduction and conclusion are assigned, but students in English may find it helpful to refer to individual chapters during the course of the semester; the digital version is open-access and available through BC Libraries)

SCHEDULE

**Analog hangovers: Genealogies and politics of digital scholarship**

- Aug 29      Brennan, “The Digital-Humanities Bust”  
                    (chronicle.com/article/the-digital-humanities-bust)  
                    Liu, “Where Is Cultural Criticism in the Digital Humanities?”  
                    Weiskott, “There Is No Such Thing as ‘the Digital Humanities’” [answers Brennan]  
                    (chronicle.com/article/there-is-no-such-thing-as-the-digital-humanities)
- (Sept 1)      \*Discussion post 1 due on Canvas
- Sept 5      Allington, Brouillette, and Golumbia, “Neoliberal Tools (and Archives)”  
                    (lareviewofbooks.org/article/neoliberal-tools-archives-political-history-digital-humanities) [copy and paste the whole link]  
                    Eve, *Digital Humanities and Literary Studies*, introduction  
                    Kim, “Digital Humanities and/as White Supremacy” [interview with Golumbia]  
                    Kim, “Media Histories, Media Archaeologies, and the Politics and Genealogies of the Digital Humanities” [extends Allington, Brouillette, and Golumbia]
- Sept 7      Dr. Dorothy Kim (Brandeis, English) visit (10:00am, Stokes S376)

**Case study: Early English drama and literary stylometry**

- (Sept 11)      \*Discussion post 2 due on Canvas

- Sept 12 Posner, "How Did They Make That?"  
(miriamposner.com/blog/how-did-they-make-that)  
Taylor, "Finding 'Anonymous' in the Digital Archives"  
Vickers, "*Arden of Faversham*, the Authorship Problem" [answers Taylor]  
[recommended: *Arden of Faversham*]
- (Sept 18) \*Report on one of the projects featured in Posner, "How Did They Make That?" (2 pp.)
- Sept 19 Da, "The Computational Case against Computational Literary Studies"  
Da, "The Digital Humanities Debacle"  
(chronicle.com/article/the-digital-humanities-debacle) [public-audience version of "Computational Case"]  
Da, "On EDA, Complexity, and Redundancy" [riposte to Underwood]  
Underwood, "The Theoretical Divide Driving Debates about Computation"  
[answers Da, "Computational Case"]

### **Workshop: ArcGIS and 3D printing**

- Sept 26 Complete makerspace safety orientation (20 minutes)  
(design-innovation.bc.edu/trainings)  
Visit GIS lab, 245 Beacon 231, guided by Dr. Kate Willis (Boston College, geography)  
Visit makerspace ("The Hatchery") on the third floor of 245 Beacon, guided by Lucas Ewing (Boston College, engineering)

### **Case study: Spatial history and the nineteenth century**

- (Oct 2) \*Discussion post 3 due on Canvas
- Oct 3 Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, pp. 1-64  
White, "What Is Spatial History?"  
Lightning talks based on reports  
Antonio LoPiano (Boston College, library science / classics) and Ashlyn Stewart (Boston College, library science / English) visit
- Oct 10 MONDAY SCHEDULE: NO CLASS  
\*Short assignment due (2-5 pp. or digital equivalent)
- Oct 17 Downs and Nesbitt, "Zones of Occupation"  
Picone, "Legitimizing and Resisting Spatial Violence in Southern Chile (1890s-1910s)"  
Underwood and So, "Can We Map Culture?"  
Lightning talks, cont'd  
Dr. María de los Ángeles (Angie) Picone (Boston College, history) visit

### **Workshop: 3D modeling**

- Oct 24 Maiwald et al., "Photogrammetric Analysis of Historical Image Repositories for Virtual Reconstruction in the Field of Digital Humanities"  
Visit McMullen Museum, guided by Dr. Rachel Chamberlain (Boston College, education), 3:00pm

**Case study: Multispectral imaging of premodern European manuscripts**

- Oct 31 Endres, *Digitizing Medieval Manuscripts*, introduction and ch. 1  
 Shailor, "The Yale Gower Manuscript, Beinecke Osborn MS fa.1"  
 prospectus for Yale Mellon project "Creating English Literature, ca. 1385–ca. 1425:  
 Inks, Pigments and the Textual Canon"  
 browse "Digitally Enabled Scholarship with Medieval Manuscripts"  
 (desmm.yale.edu)  
 view New Haven, Beinecke Library, MS Osborn fa.1 online  
 (collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2077096)  
 [recommended: Manuscripts  
 (mediakron.bc.edu/alliterativepoetry/manuscript-guide)]
- Nov 7 Bahr, "Compulsory Figures" (excerpt)  
 Easton and Noel, "Infinite Possibilities"  
 McGillivray and Duffy, "New Light on the *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*  
 Manuscript"  
 watch Noel, "Revealing the Lost Codex of Archimedes"  
 (youtube.com/watch?v=VqtEppZmjfw)  
 [TED Talk version of Easton and Noel, "Infinite Possibilities"]  
 view London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero A.x (*Gawain* Manuscript) online  
 (bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton\_ms\_nero\_a\_x!2\_fs001r)  
 Dr. Arthur Bahr (MIT, English) visit

**Workshop: Digitization**

- Nov 14 Bülow and Ahmon, *Preparing Collections for Digitization*, introduction and chs. 1–2  
 Visit Burns Library, guided by Amanda Ferrara (Boston College), 3:00pm

**Case study: The digital Black Atlantic**

- Nov 21 *The Digital Black Atlantic*, ed. Risam and Josephs, introduction [extends Gilroy]  
 Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, preface and ch. 1
- Nov 28 Alkalimat, "The Sankofa Principle"  
 Pewu, "Digital Reconnaissance"  
 Risam, "Colonial Violence and the Postcolonial Digital Archive"  
 Smucker, "Access and Empowerment"  
 Dr. Roopika Risam (Dartmouth College, English) visit

**Workshop: Teaching with digital technology**

- Dec 5 Eve, *Digital Humanities and Literary Studies*, conclusion  
 Licastro, Nieves, and Szabo, "The Potential of Extended Reality"  
 (jitp.commonsgc.cuny.edu/2020/05/20)  
 Weiskott, "Teaching with Collaborative Digital Textbooks"  
 (insidehighered.com/digital-learning/views/2017/06/14/collaborative-  
 digital-textbooks) [copy and paste the whole link]
- Dec 13 \*Final paper or project due (15–25 pp. or digital equivalent)

### GRADING

Discussion posts and report on a digital project, 2 pp. 20%

Final paper or project, 15–25 pp. or digital equivalent 50%

Participation, including lightning talk 10%

Short assignment, 2–5 pp. or digital equivalent 20%

### OBJECTIVES

Through the case studies, you will become acquainted with digital research methods in humanistic disciplines, principally English studies and history, with focus on scholarship published since about 2017. Through the workshops, you will practice using digital tools and methods.

### ASSIGNMENTS

The Discussion posts, due on Mondays (or the previous Friday when Monday is a university holiday), should reflect your initial reactions to the material from the first half of the semester. The report, submitted in written form and presented as a lightning talk of five minutes with up to one slide, investigates an existing digital project. The report is graded with the Discussion posts; the lightning talk is folded into the participation grade. The short assignment takes one of the following four forms: (1) a topic study: an introductory essay on a problem, topic, or research or teaching question arising from the course material; (2) a book review: a descriptive and evaluative review of a recent (past 1–2 years) scholarly monograph in your field or related to the course material; (3) a public writing essay: a short article with no jargon, suitable for general-interest magazines like *The Atlantic*, drawing contemporary relevance out of the course material or your area of expertise; or (4) a small-scale digital project. The paper is an article-length research project that engages with prior scholarship and argues for its point of view in detail. Alternatively, you may complete a substantial digital project arising from the course material, accompanied by a one- to two-page statement of purpose. For past examples, see [dhprojects.bc.edu/s/bcdh/page/projectpages](https://dhprojects.bc.edu/s/bcdh/page/projectpages) (spring 2023), [dhprojects.bc.edu/s/exploringdigitalhumanities/page/projectpages](https://dhprojects.bc.edu/s/exploringdigitalhumanities/page/projectpages) (fall 2022), and [ds.bc.edu/project-portfolio](https://ds.bc.edu/project-portfolio) (2016–). For a checklist of on-campus resources for digital scholarship as of November 2022, see Lehman, “Support for Digital Techniques and Tools” ([library.bc.edu/newsletter/?p=2436](https://library.bc.edu/newsletter/?p=2436)).

### PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend each class having completed the assigned reading. Students should come to class prepared to actively discuss the arguments, ideas, and methodological implications of the assigned texts. This is a discussion-based class, and you typically will not need laptops or smart phones. In particular, the course doubles as a speaker series. We will welcome guests by giving them our full attention during classtime.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Boston College places great value on academic integrity ([bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/political-science/undergraduate/academic-integrity.html](https://bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/political-science/undergraduate/academic-integrity.html)). I have

a zero tolerance policy for intentional plagiarism. All quotations or paraphrases of sources must be cited parenthetically or in a footnote (examples: [libguides.bc.edu/c.php?g=44446&p=281300](http://libguides.bc.edu/c.php?g=44446&p=281300)).

### ACCESSIBILITY

If you are a student with a disability seeking accommodations in this course, please contact Kathy Duggan, (617) 552-8093, at the Connors Family Learning Center regarding learning disabilities, or Paulette Durrett, (617) 552-3470, in the Disability Services Office regarding all other types of disabilities.

### TITLE IX MANDATORY REPORTING

Please be aware that as a Boston College faculty member, I am obligated to report to the Student Affairs Title IX Coordinator any case of sexual misconduct that any student discloses to me.