Introduction to Digital Public Humanities

Black Digital Humanities
26:050:533
26:510:533
Tuesday, 5:30pm-8:10pm
Conklin Hall 445

Instructor Information:

Mary Rizzo
Associate Professor
History Department
Office: 247A Conklin Hall
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: mary.rizzo@rutgers.edu

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."\(^1\) 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 timelines, mapping, and metadata. Through these labs we will apply theory to praxis, improving both.

We will use and critically examine digital tools like social media, mapping platforms, content management systems, and other digital technologies. 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.

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 Canvas) to your personal email so that you are sure to get all the emails that I send. You can also send me emails through the Canvas interface.
- 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.

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:

• Canvas Reading Responses: Using Canvas, 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. You should also read your classmates’ posts and comment on at least one each week prior to our class meeting. See Reading Response Guidelines at the end of this document for more information.
• Comparative Paper: 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%
• Reading Responses: 20%
• Comparative Paper: 15%
• Analysis of a Digital Public Humanities Project: 15%
• Digital Projects for the Public Proposal: 30%
• Peer Review: 10%

Grading Scale:

• A = 90-100
• B+ = 85-89
• B = 80-84
• C+ = 75-79
• C = 70-74
• D = 59-69
• F = 0-58

Late Assignments:

I expect assignments to be completed on the day they are due. If there are circumstances that prevent you from doing so, please contact me as soon as possible. Knowing when to expect papers to be submitted allows me to manage my time and be responsive to you. Any late submissions without an approved excuse will lose a half-grade every day it is late.

Required Texts:

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


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


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 Canvas.

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.

Weekly Schedule:
History and Theory of Digital Humanities

January 16 - Week 1/ Introduction to the Class

January 23 - Week 2/Genealogies of the Digital Humanities

- Sharon Leon, “Complicating a ‘Great Man’ Narrative of Digital History in the United States,” Bodies of Information.

Due: Canvas Reading Response

January 30 - Week 3/Genealogies of Black Digital Humanities

- Safiya Noble, “Towards a Critical Black DH.” [https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-f2ac772c-a469-49d8-be35-6f9ac1e3a60/section/5aaf7ef6-db7e-4ec1-935f-09d8028a2687](https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-f2ac772c-a469-49d8-be35-6f9ac1e3a6a0/section/5aaf7ef6-db7e-4ec1-935f-09d8028a2687)
- Black is not the absence of light. [https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/f3f87448-138c-4d19-8f8b06acf40ddd1/section/903016db-f92f-40da-8394-3ea3fccc7ce59#ch09](https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/f3f87448-138c-4d19-8f8b06acf40ddd1/section/903016db-f92f-40da-8394-3ea3fccc7ce59#ch09)

Due: Canvas Reading Response

Digital Structural Racism and Resistance

February 6 – Week 4/Algorithms and Search

- Noble, Algorithms of Oppression.

Due: Canvas Reading Response

February 13 – Week 5/Technologies of Race

- Benjamin, Race After Technology

Due: Comparative Paper

February 20 – Week 6/Black Women and Digital Resistance

- Bailey, Misogynoir Transformed

Due: Canvas Reading Response

February 27 – Week 7/To Be Decided

Due: Canvas Reading Response
Practicing the Digital Humanities

March 5 - Week 7/ The Digital Humanities Project


MARCH 12 – NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK.

March 19 – Week 8/ Visualizing Time

- Johanna Drucker, “Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display”
- Readings TBD
- In-Class: Workshop on TimelineJS

Due: Analysis of a Digital Public Humanities Project

March 26 - Week 9/ Mapping 1

- Readings TBD
- In-Class: Workshop on basic mapping

Due: Final Project Topic Proposal

April 2 – Week 10/ Mapping 2

- Readings TBD
- In-Class: Workshop on story mapping

April 9 - Week 11/ Metadata 1

- Readings TBD
- In-Class: Workshop on metadata

April 16 - Week 12/ Metadata 2

- Readings TBD
- In-Class: Workshop on metadata

April 23 - Week 13/ Peer Review of Project Proposals
Peer Review of Proposals: Draft of Humanities Content, Creative Approach, and Audience, Distribution and Evaluation


Final Proposals DUE: TBD

Canvas Reading Response Guidelines

On the syllabus, several weeks are marked with Canvas Reading Response. For these weeks, you will write a short post on the Canvas discussion board for our class 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, these posts are most engaging when they capture the voice of the author, so have fun with it.

Due: Posted by 12pm on Tuesday; comment posted by class time on Wednesday