

School of Arts & Sciences Prospectus Fall 2024

Course ID: ENGL 1650

Introduction to Digital Humanities

Artificial intelligence, big data, and the internet of things are changing every aspect of our lives. The methods and questions of the humanities are critical to understanding these shifts. Run in part like a workshop, this course will explore various sites at Penn and around Philadelphia where humanists and artists are collaborating with scientists and engineers to solve the big problems facing our planet and our species. We'll visit museums and special collections in search of the future of past. We'll learn how scholars of race and gender are combating algorithmic bias in our search engines. And we'll collaborate across disciplines to develop research questions in digital humanities. Students will acquire basic facility and literacy with key digital tools and platforms while gaining a critical, historical framework for understanding technology's impact on our lives. No prior coding experience is required. Coursework will involve regular 4-6 short design exercises in and out of class and a portfolio of digital work.

Class Structure for Fall 2024

This class will meet in person. Some days it will be run more like a seminar, focused primarily on discussion of big ideas, topics, and readings. Other days, it will be run more like a workshop where we tinker and play with new technologies together. We will also visit several sites on campus and possibly around Philadelphia, virtually and in person, where digital humanities work is done.

Out of class, you will be expected to read articles and chapters, watch videos, and work through several design and coding exercises, to be posted to your own website. The last third of the course will involve developing a web portfolio of your work throughout the semester.

Outline of Assignments & Assessments

There are three main assignments for the course:

- Low stakes (~60% distributed over weekly assignments): design exercises
- Portfolio (~30%): a digital portfolio of your design exercises and other class work
- Participation and attendance (~10%)

Essential Course Policies

There are no required books for this course. You will need access to a working computer, ideally one that you can bring to class.

If you are unable to regularly attend class, then this is not the class for you. Most of our work happens together in the classroom and attendance is graded.