

Preliminary Web Course Description

*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

School of English and Theatre Studies

Course Code: ENGL3860	Course Title: Topics in Literary and Cultural Studies: Close and Distant Reading with Machines	Date of Offering: FALL 2017
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Course Instructor: S. Brown	Course Format: Lecture
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Brief Course Synopsis:

What difference does it make to read a text that is stored in bits on your computer and displayed in pixels on a screen rather than in ink on paper? Can reading texts in digital form advance our ability to engage with them, understand them, and do things with them that are not possible with print? How can we go beyond Google when we search? Can computers help us to “read” thousands of books? Do interfaces affect how we read? Can the meaning of texts change with a change of medium?

This course is about using digital technologies to complement and enhance established methods of studying writing, such as close reading, critical analysis, and theoretical inquiry.

Machine-enabled modes of engagement can make accessible different readings, questions, interpretations, and arguments. Thinking about digital textuality provides an opportunity to reflect on what reading involves and on different types of reading. Engagement with digital texts will help to sharpen student’s understanding of the importance of materiality and design to considerations of texts, including printed ones.

Students will:

- Learn some techniques and tools that are useful in the analysis of digital texts.
- Learn to incorporate evidence created using digital methods into their work
- Gain an understanding of the principles and applications of semantic text markup, a fundamental component of contemporary web technologies, and some practical experience in working with markup.
- Produce at least one assignment in digital form that could become part of an e-portfolio

This is not a course in e-literature, but rather an exploration of text technologies, and in particular of how digital formats and tools allow us to read differently. We will engage with

several texts in a variety of genres and formats, applying digital tools to the process of reading. There will be one long novel and a range of shorter texts in poetry, prose, and drama.

The format will be a blend of lecture, discussion, presentations, and hands-on activities. Students will require a laptop with wireless capabilities for use in class.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

Close Reading 20% (750 words)
Distant Reading 20% (1000 words)
Twine Reflection 15% (750 words)
Engagement postings 10%
Midterm test: 15%
Final exam: 20%

Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)

Required Texts (provisional):
Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Oxford University Press)
Johanna Drucker. *Intro to Digital Humanities*. UCLA Online courseware. <http://dh101.humanities.ucla.edu/>
Other readings in digital form.
A laptop computer with wireless capability that you can bring to class.

Other information that you wish share about the course (optional):

List the distribution requirements that this course fulfills:

This course can count towards the new media studies minor.