

**ENG 695 — Special Topics: The Digital Environmental Humanities —FALL/SPRING
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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

Section 50 Thursday 9:30am-12:15pm

Ashe 427

Raul Martin IV (he/him/his)

4th Floor Ashe Lecturer Room

Tuesdays 11:00 am-noon and by appointment (zoom / office)

Description:

This course investigates the nexus of ecological concerns and the digital world engaging theory through a study of how the digital space might archive and reflect upon environmental change. Drawing from environmental and digital humanities scholarship, we ask *what does it mean to practice digital environmental humanities?* Core texts include selected chapter readings from several volumes of *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, selections from the *Routledge Handbook of Digital Environmental Humanities*, and *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, as well as contemporary theoretical works from environmental humanities scholars such as Anna Tsing, Amitav Ghosh, Rob Nixon, Camile T. Dungy, Alexis Shotwell, Timothy Morton, and Malcolm Ferdinand. Where possible readings will be paired with digital projects pertinent to the theories presented in the scholarship.

Graduate students will engage in readings and review digital projects that when put together integrate the digital humanities and the lived environment. Throughout the course, students will also lead discussions based on reviews of digital web projects and/or environmental humanities texts with an aim to articulate the nexus of technology, culture, and nature through DEH axioms. By the end of the course, graduate students will prepare a digital project proposal or a traditional seminar paper. The overall aim of this course is to engage our shared ecology through contemporary theory while also demonstrating a pragmatic means to archiving and thinking through quantitative and qualitative data about the environment using digital humanities tools and methods.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will:

1. Articulate the nexus of technology, culture and nature through DEH axioms.
2. Evaluate a live digital humanities project based on [MLA Guidelines and Standards](#).
3. Arrange a project proposal or seminar research paper aligned to a rhetorical situation.

Requirements:

- **Weekly Field Journal (average of your completed entries is worth 25% of your final grade)**
 - Keep a weekly field journal of your observations and reflections on South Florida environmental (not necessarily focused on the ‘natural world.’). Each

entry is worth 5-pts. Submit to me for feedback two or three times during the semester. I will create a space on our LMS where you may discuss and/or share your experiences with keeping field notes. The format of the journal and the place(s) where you make your initial observations are up to you. Here are some tips for field journaling from the science side of things:

<https://www.amnh.org/learn-teach/curriculum-collections/biodiversity-counts/what-is-biodiversity/keeping-a-field-journal-1-eleanor-sterling>.

- Try to capture sounds while writing your field journal observations. By the end of the semester, select at least one 1-minute soundscape/video to submit to the [LSF](#) project archive.
- **500-word Project Review/Scholarly Article Summary, 3 Total (average of these three are worth 25% of your final grade)**
 - **Either:**
 - A) Write a 500-word review for a live or discovered DH project using [MLA Guidelines and Standards](#) or [reviewsindh](#) guidelines.
 - B) Write a 500-word Article Summary.
- **Lead Class Discussion (25% of your final grade)**
 - Lead class discussion at least once over the course of the semester. Discussions can be in the form of guiding the class through a reading you summarized, presenting your review of a digital project, or sharing a connection across one of the texts we've read and field notes you made throughout the semester.
 - Before leading class discussion, please submit and share an accompanying project review/scholarly article summary and questions, or field note findings and connections to readings.
- **Final Project (25% of your final grade)**
 - **Either:**
 - A) Preliminary digital project proposal (4000-words): The proposal is designed to be preliminary, as a kind of "thinking toward" a future digital project. The proposal must include a project abstract, environmental scan, rationale for chosen tool(s) and platform, work plan, dissemination plan, and contribution to the wider field(s). You will present your work in progress on our final class day.

- B) Research Paper (4000 words): The topic of this paper is up to you and your interests. Papers may showcase interdisciplinary strengths, aspire to reach external audiences or publications, prioritize community impact, and/or underscore environmental advocacy through the digital. You will present your work in progress on our final class day.

Required Texts

All texts for this course will live in your Blackboard course shell as accessible live links or PDF documents.

Course Schedule

Week 1, Thursday: Introductions

- Syllabus review
- Detail course expectations
- Activities:
 - Write introductions and major descriptions using emojis.
 - Share introductions and major descriptions with the class.
 - Class to Review Project: [Laughing Online by Russell Samora, Kishan Sheth, Caitlyn Ralph, and Jan Diehm.](#)
 - Sign up for your day to lead class discussion.
- *To complete before next class*, Course: [Alberto Cairo's Open Visualization Academy, "Introduction to Information Design and Data Visualization"](#)

Week 2, Thursday: *Why digital humanities now?*

- Student Led Discussion 1.
- Reading: ["Burning Chrome" by William Gibson, 2000.](#)
- Reading: ["The Emergence of the Digital Humanities \(as the Network is Everting\)" by Steven E. Jones.](#)
 - Project: [Sci-Fi Worlds](#)

Week 3, Thursday: *Why digital humanities then?*

- Student Led Discussion 2.
- Reading: ["The History of Humanities Computing" by Susan Hockey, 2004.](#)
- Reading: ["The Gates of Hell: History and Definition of Digital | Humanities | Computing" by Vanhoutte, Edward in *Defining Digital Humanities: A Reader*, 2013.](#)
 - Tool: [Voyant, see through your text.](#)

Week 4, Thursday: *What are environmental humanities?*

- Student Led Discussion 3.
- Reading: [“All Writing is Environmental Writing” by Camille T. Dungy](#)
- Reading: [Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, “Arts of Noticing” from The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins, 2015.](#)
 - Project: [Feral Atlas](#)
- Reading: [Alexis Shotwell, from Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times](#)
 - Project: [Climate Zones by Derek Taylor](#)

Week 5, Thursday: *What are digital environmental humanities?*

- Student Led Discussion 4.
- Reading: [Introduction in Routledge Digital Environmental Humanities Handbook edited by Charles Travis et. al, 2023.](#)
 - Project: [Smart Forests Atlas, University of Cambridge](#)
- Reading: [Ryan, John, Lydia Hearn and Paul Longley Arthur. “The Digital Environmental Humanities \(DEH\) in the Anthropocene: Challenges and Opportunities in an Era of Ecological Precarity.” *DHQ*, 2023.](#)
 - Project: [Dear Body of Water, Gretchen Ernster Henderson](#)
 - Project: [Heat Records](#)
- Reading: Jørgensen, Finn Arne. [“The Armchair Traveler’s Guide to Digital Environmental Humanities.” *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 4, 2014, pp. 95-112.](#)
 - Project: [Mirement/Towering Genevieve Chevalier.](#)

Week 6, Thursday: *Last Decade of Debates in Digital Humanities*

- Student Led Discussion 5.
- Reading: [Linley, Margaret. “Ecological Entanglements of Digital Humanities.” *DDH*, 2016.](#)
- Reading: [Ortega, Élika. “Zonas de Contacto: A Digital Humanities Ecology of Knowledges.” *DDH*, 2019.](#)
- Reading: [Guldi, Jo. “Addressing the Emergency: The ‘Pragmatic Tilt’ Required of Scholarship, Data, and Design by the Climate Crisis. *DDH*2023.](#)

Week 7, Thursday: *AI Debates in Digital Humanities, and Praxis*

- Student Led Discussion 6.
- Reading: Sullivan, James. [“Digital Humanities in the Age of Generative Artificial Intelligence.” *DDH*2028.](#)
- Reading: [Rethinking AI’s Environmental Impacts: Beyond Energy Metrics](#) by Tamara Kneese, Jess Reia, and Mar Hicks, *DDH*2028.
- Reading: [Elemental computation: from nonhuman media to more-than digital information systems” by Bronislaw Szersynski and Nigel Clark in *Routledge Handbook of the Digital Environmental Humanities*, 2023.](#)

- Project: [Can an AI make a data-driven, visual story?](#)

Week 8, Thursday: Animal Studies and the Digital

- Student Led Discussion 7.
- Reading: “Why Look at Animals?” by John Berger
 - Project: [Insta-dog: Computing Instagram’s Companion Species](#) by Karli Brittz.
 - Project: [Why do cats & dogs...? By Nadieh Bremer](#)
- Reading: [“Trial of Blood: The Movement of San Francisco’s Butchertown and the Spatial Transformation of Meat Production, 1848-1901”](#) by Andrew Robichaud & Erik Steiner.
 - Project: [Mapping the Law: The Evolution of Slaughterhouse Space, 1852-1870.](#)
- Reading: “Images of Nature through Platforms: Practices and Relationships as a Research Field and an Epistemic Vantage Point of DEH” by Paolo Giardullo in *Routledge Handbook of the Digital Environmental Humanities*, 2023.
 - Project: [Cloud Zoo](#)
 - Project: [Where the Wild Things Were](#)

Week 9, Thursday: Sound Studies and the Digital

- Student Led Discussion 8.
- Reading: [Introduction to *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies* edited by Michael Bull, 2018](#)
 - Project: [Sounds of CDMX](#)
 - Project: [Animal Sounds by Vivian Li](#)
- Reading: “The Sound of Environmental Crisis: Silence as/and (Eco)Horror in *A Quiet Place*” by Tatiana Prorokova-Konrad in *Routledge Handbook of the Digital Environmental Humanities*, 2023.
 - Project: [Listening in/to South Florida by Raul Martin IV, Elizabeth Cornick, Prishanti Pathak, and Kathy Rubio.](#)

Week 10, Thursday: Game Studies, the Environment, and the Digital

- Student Led Discussion 9.
- Reading: [Coltrain, James, and Stephen Ramsay. “Can Video Games Be Humanities Scholarship?” DDH, 2019.](#)
- Reading: [Salter, Anastasia and Mel Stanfill. “Game Studies, Endgame?” DDH, 2023.](#)
 - Project: [“Walden: A Game” by USC Game Innovation Lab.](#)

Week 11, Thursday: Hiking, ArcGIS, and Mapping Space, Time, Ideas

- Activity: Walk about UM’s campus. Complete Field Note(s) during class time.
 - Project: [Walkachusetts](#)

- Reading: "Thick Mapping" for Environmental Justice: EJScreen, ArcGIS, and Contemporary Literature by Parker Krieg and Matt Hannah in *Routledge Handbook of the Digital Environmental Humanities*, 2023.

Week 12, Thursday: Hiking, ArcGIS, and Mapping Space, Time Ideas cont.

- Activity: Walk about UM's campus. Complete Field Note(s) during class time.
 - Reading: "One Map Closer to the End of the World (As We Know It): Thinking Digital Cartographic Humanities with the Anthropocene" by Laura Lo Presti in *Routledge Handbook of the Digital Environmental Humanities*, 2023.
 - Project: [The John Muir Trail: A History and Survey by NPS Historic American Landscape Survey](#)
 - Project: [Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks by NPS](#)
- Reading: "[Maps as Data.](#)" Katherine McDonough, *Computational Humanities*, 2024.

Week 13, Thursday: Final Project Presentations

- Sign up for your time slot before class meeting time.

Week 14, Thursday: Final Project Presentations (final class meeting)

- Sign up for your time slot before class meeting time.

Holiday Break

12/1, Monday – Submit Final Project by end of final period.

Position on AI (language directly from ([PETAL](#)))

We will explore use of AI tools in this course for activities such as generating and automating code, outlining data models, and debugging code. Our primary platforms will be Google Gemini/Collab and Adobe Firefly, both officially supported by the University of Miami. You are expected to engage with AI critically and transparently, documenting how you use it to support your work. Some practical uses of AI for digital humanities work include generating and automating code, outlining data models, and debugging code. These processes may be reverse engineered to study how they were done and why they work, which is where AI as reverse-instruction comes into play.