

Carleton University
Winter 2026 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English Language and Literature
College of Humanities

DIGH 2002A / ENGL 2401A

**THEORY AND METHOD:
MEDITATIONS ON THE DIGITAL**

Monday and Wednesday

**10:05am-11:25am
Online Synchronous**

**Prerequisites:
Second-year standing or permission of the College of Humanities**

**Instructor: Dr. Chris Eaket
Office Location: 1913 Dunton Tower
Office Hours: By Appointment
TA: TBD**

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(Note: Please include DIGH 2001 or ENGL 2400 in the subject line of all emails)

***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change.
A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class in the sequence of Digital Humanities classes builds on the theoretical concepts learned in prior semesters while focusing more strongly on comparing analog & digital media, learning to use digital tools, comparing different forms of mediality, and the creation of research-based projects.

What makes the digital ... digital? In this course, we look at the history of media from oral storytelling to hypertext. Part of the goal is to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each media form relative to others. As well, the class has a tick-and-tock format, where we first look at the analog form of a medium, then try to determine how the jump to digital changes the affordances, audiences, techniques, and content of the medium. For example, we might look at how traditional painting depends on the types of paints, the brushes used, and the singular materiality of the medium to create certain content: landscapes, portraits, abstract art, etc.; we then compare this to newer tools like Photoshop, Canva, or Stable Diffusion -- tools which radically alter what can be done, how it gets done, the type of content, and the intended audience for such media. We will look at both fiction and theoretical works; explore several digital tools and best practices for their usage; reflect critically on (inter)mediality; and create works using some of these tools.

Overall, the class is designed to help scholars think about what the digital means and how it changes our

workflow (and our world). Part of this is by historicizing and comparing these media, and part of this is by using these media to create new digital artefacts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will gain an appreciation for media theory and skills in media practice. They will teach others to use digital tools, as well as using tools to create various digital projects. People will reflect critically on mediality, user experience, content, design-for-reuse, and accessibility. The goal is to give people an idea of what tools are out there, and which ones might be most applicable to their own field (or "flavour") of DH. We also place these tools in historical context, and study them comparatively alongside their analog brethren.

TEXTBOOKS

All readings will be available on Brightspace. *No purchased textbooks are necessary.*

ASSIGNMENTS:

Reflections on Technology: 4x5%= 20%

These are monthly entries on how one uses particular technologies, or how new technologies have changed your work, art, or projects. For example: How do you use a word processor differently than a pen? What does it allow you to do that you couldn't do otherwise? How does it fit into your workflow when researching, brainstorming, and writing papers? These are reflections on the technology itself as well as process, noting how these tools change how we do things.

Tool Tutorial: 15%

A short (10-15 min) presentation in class regarding one of the tools we will be using: where it comes from, what it's best used for, a short walkthrough, and any best practices for users. The idea is that students come out of the class well-versed in several digital tools. Grades are based on comprehensiveness, clarity, & utility for end users.

Midterm Paper (6-8p): 25%

This is a thesis-based research paper that looks at the medial and historical impact of a particular technology. For example, one could look at the impact of the printing press on the politics of early America, the impact of Stable Diffusion and deepfakes on contemporary politics, or how digital film changes the economics of production & distribution. The idea is to choose an analog or digital medium, a time period, and an impact on a specific sphere to show how a particular medium changed (for example) power dynamics, how work got done, or people's cognition along the way. More details on Brightspace.

Capstone Project & Reflection (4-5p): 30%

This is a final project using any of the digital tools that we've discussed in class. The idea is to produce a creative work that self-consciously highlights the strengths of the medium. It should play to your strengths while also allowing you to explore "what the medium can do". So one might produce a horror podcast, create a digital collection of artefacts, make a hypertext fiction, or come up with a digital newspaper. One is NOT allowed to duplicate work done in other classes (though some of the skillsets might carry over). The reflection is a brief 3-4 paper explaining your rationale for the project, a justification of your choices, and how the work highlights the affordances of the medium. More details to be provided on Brightspace.

Participation: 10%**(ONGOING)**

Based on attendance in class, a willingness to participate in discussions, and constructive feedback to other presenters and their work.

“Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.”

PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT).
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment.
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement.
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

MENTAL HEALTH

As a University student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you.

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

Carleton Resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

You should provide any **additional information** on your requirements for short-term informal accommodations.

- If you require supporting documentation for short-term considerations, you may only request the [Academic Consideration for Coursework form](#). You may **not** request medical notes or documentation.
- Consult the [Academic Consideration Policy for instructors](#) information page for more details.

DIGH 2002 / ENGL 2401:
Theory and Method

(Note: Some materials may be subject to change. When in doubt, consult Brightspace.)

January

- 05 *Introduction to the class*
 "Media, Mediation, Mediality"; "Digital Humanities and Distributed Cognition"
- 07 *Orality and Storytelling*
 "Narrative"; "Storytelling is Not Just Entertainment"; "The Narrative Paradigm"
 This American Life
- 12 *Orality and Storytelling*
 "The Peculiarities of Oral Storytelling"; Digital Storytelling vs. Oral Storytelling
 Storycorps; Terrastory; Anchor
- 14 *Painting*
 Ways of Seeing; "What are the Elements of Art?"
- 19 *Painting*
 "Digital Technologies as Tool"; "Walter Benjamin: Art, Aura and Authenticity"
 DALL-E3; Stable Diffusion; Canva AI
- 21 *Written Language*
 Orality and Literacy; Understanding Media; The Bias of Communication
 The Book of Portraiture (Chapter One)
- 26 *Written Language*
 "How Word Processors Have Changed the Writing Process"; "Writing with Scrivener"; "How Technology Has Changed the Way Authors Write"
 Scrivener; Focuswriter; Notion
- 28 *Books & Typography*
 Gramophone, Film, Typewriter, Gutenberg Galaxy; Gutenberg Parenthesis,
 "Library of Babel"

February

02 *Books & Typography*

The Case for Books; The End of Books or Books Without End?;

Scalar; LaTeX, Sigil E-Book Writer

04 *Wunderkammer*

"The Aleph"; "The Art of the Archive"; "The Pedagogical Value of Special Collections"

09 *Wunderkammer*

"Database as Symbolic Form"; *Everything is Miscellaneous*

Omeka; CollectionBuilder; Neo4j Knowledge Graph Builder

11 *Newspapers*

Imagined Communities; "Newspapers in the Gilded Age"; "A Newspaper Story"

16-20 WINTER BREAK

23 *Newspapers*

Newspaper Designer's Handbook; "Digital Journalism: The Shape of Things";

"Software Is Eating Your Favorite News Site"

Sketch; CorelDraw; InDesign/Scribus;

25 *Film*

"A Very Short History of Cinema"; "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form"; "Apparatus Theory, Plain and Simple"

The Truman Show

March

02 *Film*

"New Mode of Cinema: How Digital Technologies are Changing Aesthetics and Style"; "The Impact of Technology on Cinematic Storytelling"; *Cinema in the Digital Age*

Shotcut; Kdenlive; OpenShot

- 04 *Radio*
- The Shadow*; "Cognitive Mapping and Radio Drama"; "Nostalgia and Radio Sound"
- 09 *Radio*
- "What is a Podcast?"; "Four steps in innovative radio broadcasting: From QuickTime to podcasting"; "How podcasting is changing the audio storytelling genre"
- Audiotool; Audacity; BUTT
- 11 *Comics*
- readcomiconline.li; *xkcd*; *Understanding Comics*; *The Comic Book History of Comics*; *The Graphic Novel: An Introduction*
- 16 *Comics*
- Reinventing Comics*; "The Digital Renaissance: Exploring the World of Webcomics and Digital Comics";
- Bubblr; ComicsMaker.ai; Adobe Express
- 18 *Magazines*
- Crimethinc/POC Zine/Queer Zine Archive*; "Types of Fanzines"; "A Short History of Zines"; "From Fandom to Feminism: An Analysis of the Zine Press"
- 23 *Magazines*
- "A historical overview of the effects of new mass media"; "Global Magazines in a Digital Age"
- Electric Zine Maker; Scribus; Yumpu;
- 25 *Hypertext*
- "The Garden of Forking Paths"; CYOA Collection; These Maps Reveal the Hidden Structures of CYOA Novels; *Hypercard Simulator*, itch.io, *Deja Vu*;
- "Digital Fiction, Empirical Research, and Medial Reading"; "Hypertext and the Remediation of Print"
- 30 *Hypertext*
- Memory Machines*; "Hypertext Theory: Rethinking and Reformulating What We Know"; "The Web Shatters Focus"
- Twine; Carrd; Pulsar Editor

April

- 02 Overflow + Special Topics
- 04 Summary & Final Thoughts