**DIGH 4002A / ENGL 4125A: Digital Culture & the Text I – “Fictional Media”**

Brian Greenspan

The potential of digital media to distort reality raises anew long-standing debates over the role of lies and artifice in literary fictions. As social media, conspiracy theories, and fake news threaten to alter our consensus reality, fictional media also grow more suspect by association—and more powerful. How do fictions differ from fibs, fakes, libels, disinformation, simulations, or virtual realities? What role do digital media play in stretching, fabricating, undermining, or authenticating cultural truths?

                In this seminar, we will examine the meaning of the fictional in the digital age through a survey of contemporary fictions in various media and genres, including alt-history, science fiction, urban fantasy, comics, games, transmedia, autofiction, metafiction, and hyperfiction. We will read these select fictions alongside recent theories of fictionality, narrative, new media, and (post-)postmodernism to better understand the signposts and contexts of fictional discourse in a “post-truth” era.

                We will also attempt as a class to distinguish fakes from fictions using new digital tools and methods. Our approach will be purely exploratory, experimental, and collaborative; no prior programming or special computer skills are required.