

Appendix 11.1

Cultural Diversity and the Digital Humanities Syllabus

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Cultural Diversity and the Digital Humanities is one of the first digital humanities (DH) courses to be taught at the University of Pennsylvania under the auspices of the new Price Lab for the Digital Humanities. This class will bridge the divide between theory and praxis, the crux of DH. Our primary focus will be on the interactive, database-driven archives that constitute some of the finest work produced by DH scholars (e.g., *The Valley of the Shadow* project, the *Rosetti Archive*, and *Vectors Journal of Culture and Technology*). On the theoretical level, we will be studying the relationship between culture and technology. Some of the questions we will consider include the following: Why do so many of the DH archive projects focus on dominant white society? Can we design archives that more accurately reflect, visually and intellectually, the culture they encode? What are the cultural limitations of existing metadata standards and design tools like Omeka? We will be using Omeka to design two class projects.

On the level of praxis, the class is designed to provide a hands-on tutorial of how to create an interactive timeline and an interactive map of Indigenous history that reflects the spiritual and cultural traditions of the tribes being studied. More specifically, we will be designing an interactive timeline of Haudenosaunee or Iroquois history that integrates the creation stories told by the Iroquois themselves with the chronological history of “discovery” that traditionally characterizes non-Native histories of Indigenous peoples. The second project will be to design an interactive map of the “cultural landscape” of four Anishinaabe or Ojibwe First Nations in a very remote region of central Canada. This second project is part of a much larger project that resulted in the first UNESCO World Heritage Site proposal ever submitted by the Canadian government on behalf of Indigenous people. In this sense, we will be learning not just how to design using digital technology, but also how to situate the project in relation to writing grants, working with Indigenous communities, safeguarding culturally sensitive materials, and repatriating digitized

materials to the Indigenous communities where those materials originated.

Students will have a wealth of resources to draw upon. We will be utilizing digital collections from the Penn Museum and the American Philosophical Society as well as materials provided to us by both the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe communities, with whom we will be working in partnership. Students will learn about designing projects using Omeka software, coding in TEI, digital repatriation protocols for working with Indigenous communities, intellectual property rights, and theories of nonlinear historiography.

No previous experience with digital technology is assumed. We will receive a great deal of help with creating projects in Omeka, coding in TEI, creating metadata, and accessing archival materials. It is the rare course where there will be more teachers than students. The point of this cross-campus effort, in keeping with one of the fundamental tenets of DH scholarship, is to learn to work collaboratively using research methods that redefine humanities scholarship.

Students will be evaluated on the basis of five assignments: (1) a review of a digital archive featuring Indigenous materials; (2) an interactive timeline project designed in Omeka; (3) an interactive map project designed in Omeka; (4) an annotated bibliography critiquing new mapping techniques; (5) a final paper and/or digital project.