Knowing and Doing: Understanding the Digital Humanities Curriculum

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NITLE Labs

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Terras, Humanities Computing's "Hidden Curriculum"

- What implicit messages about humanities computing are passed on through courses?

- Looked at 4 humanities computing courses (in library & information science, English & HC)

- General characteristics:
  - Focus on text (analysis, encoding, etc)
  - Lots of group work
  - Assessment through project work

Terras, Melissa. "Disciplined: Using Educational Studies to Analyse 'Humanities Computing'." *Lit Linguist Computing* 21.2 (2006): 229-246.

Terras on Some Issues in Humanities Computing

- Should engage more with computer science, less with specific technologies
- Lack of links with humanities departments
- Students need to be technically adept in advance

Key Questions about Digital Humanities Education

What is the shape of digital humanities education today?

- What view of the digital humanities is advanced in syllabi?

- What are common course goals?

- What are typical assignments?

- What kinds of readings are given?

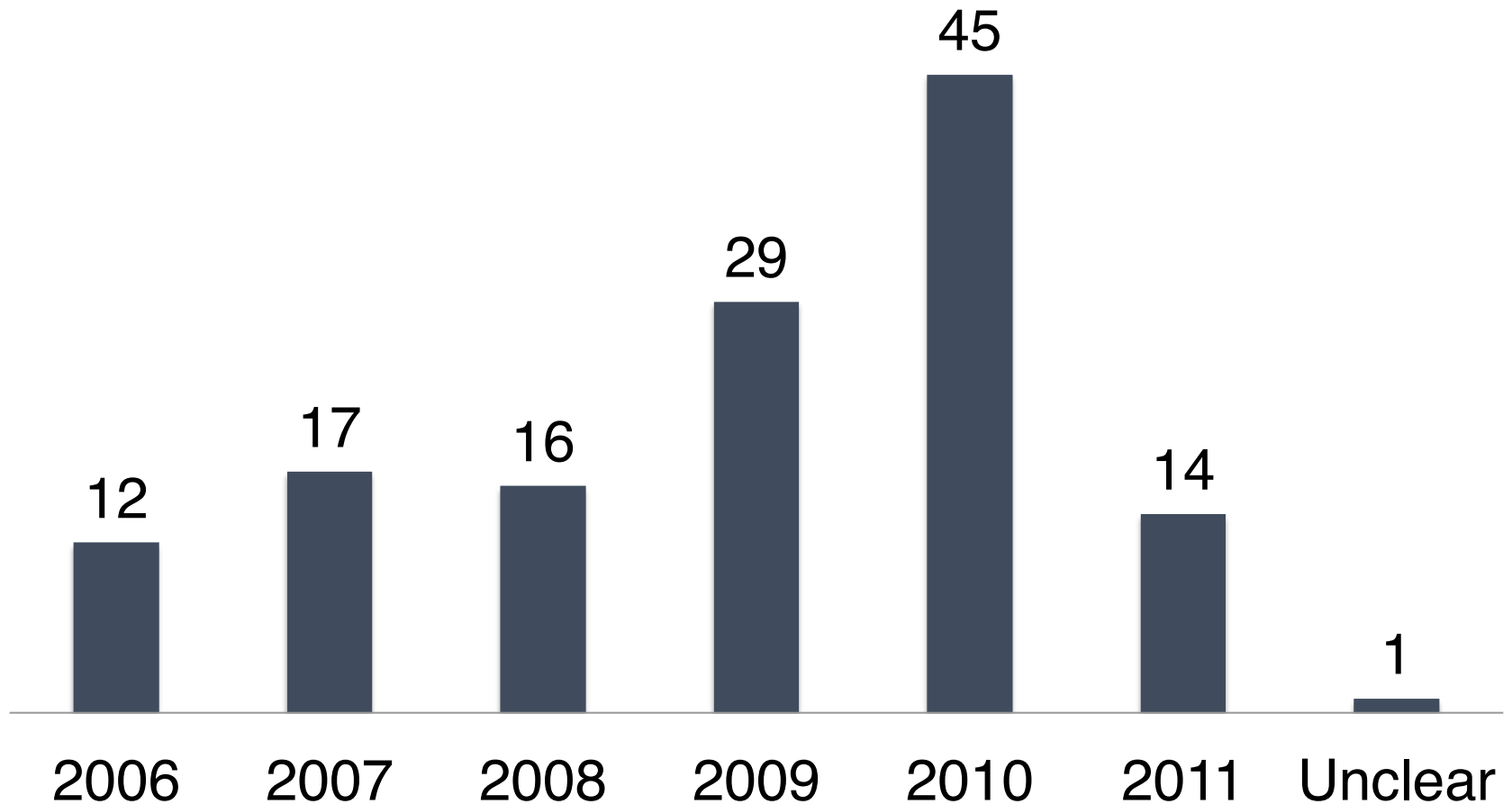- What concepts, methods and tools are covered?

Methods

- Build Zotero collection of 134 syllabi
  [Digital Humanities Education Zotero Group](#)
  (please put new syllabi in "Contributed Syllabi" folder)

- Tag assignments & topics in syllabi

- Link about 1/3 of courses to readings

- Make the [syllabi](#) & [reading list](#) available through Citeline

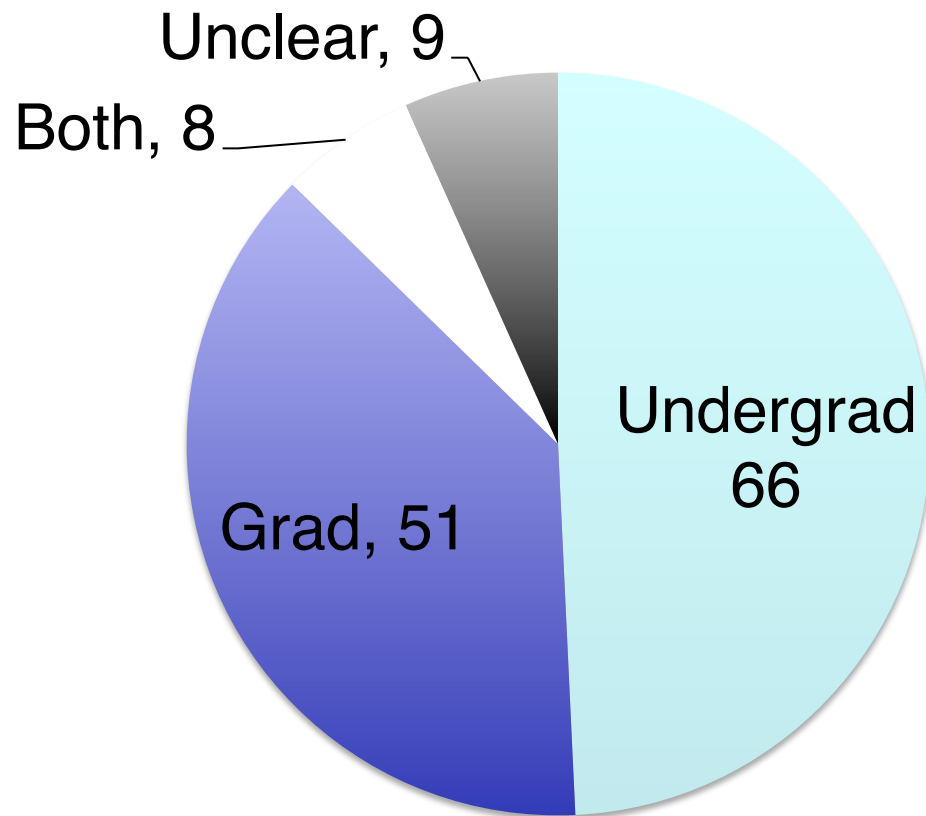- Use Voyeur and SEASR to explore patterns

Criteria for Inclusion

- Relevant to DH, big tent view (literature, media studies, history, rhetoric, humanistic comp sci, etc.)

- Taught after 2005

- (Nearly) complete syllabus, with description, schedule, etc.

  - exception: some Kings College DH courses

- Syllabus still available online

- Syllabus written in English (most from US, but also Canada, Great Britain, New Zealand & Belgium)
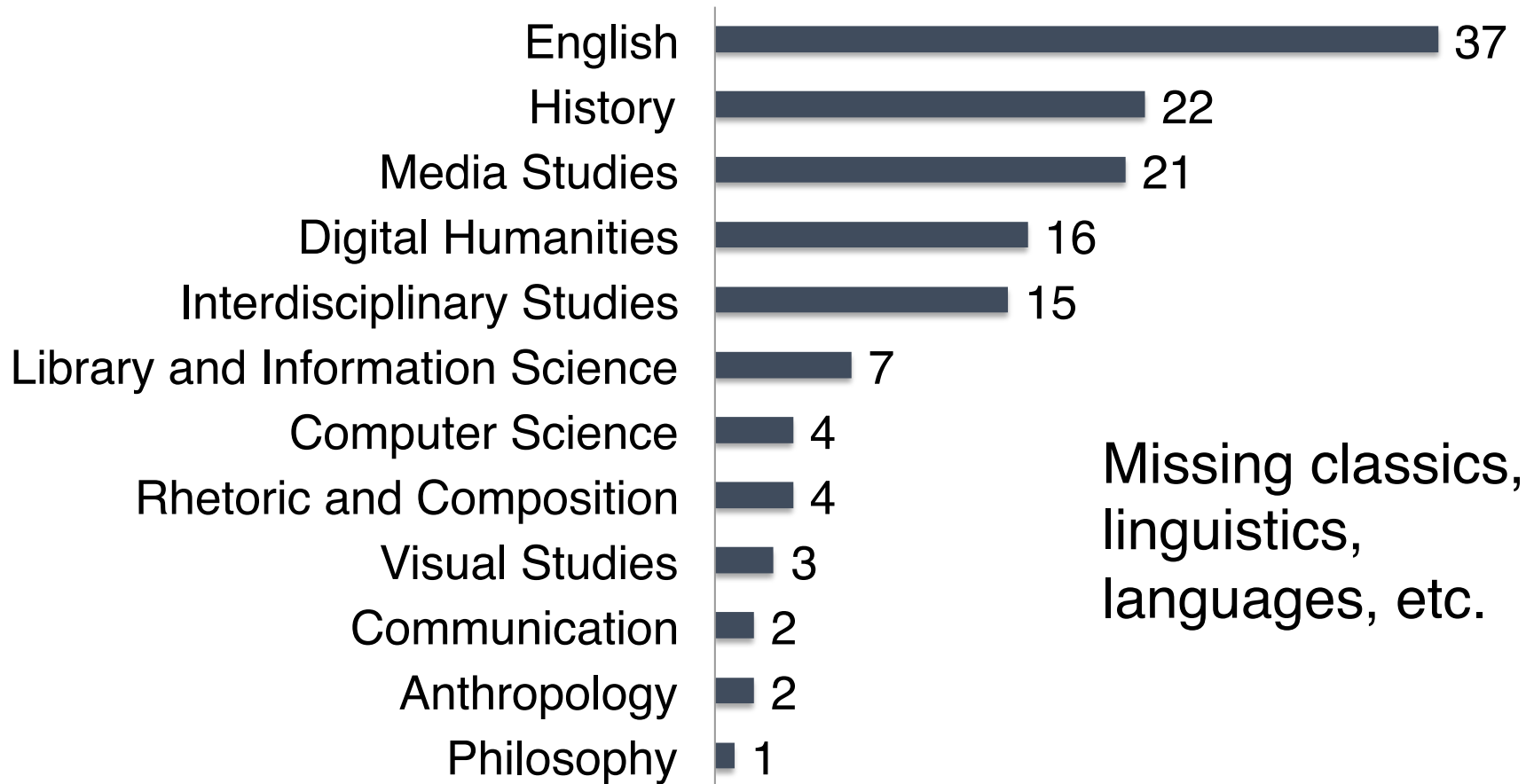
# Number of DH Syllabi, by Year

Level of Studies

Disciplines Represented

English — 37
History — 22
Media Studies — 21
Digital Humanities — 16
Interdisciplinary Studies — 15
Library and Information Science — 7
Computer Science — 4
Rhetoric and Composition — 4
Visual Studies — 3
Communication — 2
Anthropology — 2
Philosophy — 1

Missing classics, linguistics, languages, etc.

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Caveats

- Selection of corpus contents key
- Focus of syllabus depends on discipline, topic, level, etc.
- Syllabi vary in level of detail
- Some data is not clean (HTML code, PDF conversion problems)
- Words have different meaning depending on context
  - "open" = open access, open education, open class discussion, open library, open to MLIS students,

Overview of Syllabi: SEASR ngrams

Overview of Syllabi: Voyeur Tag Cloud
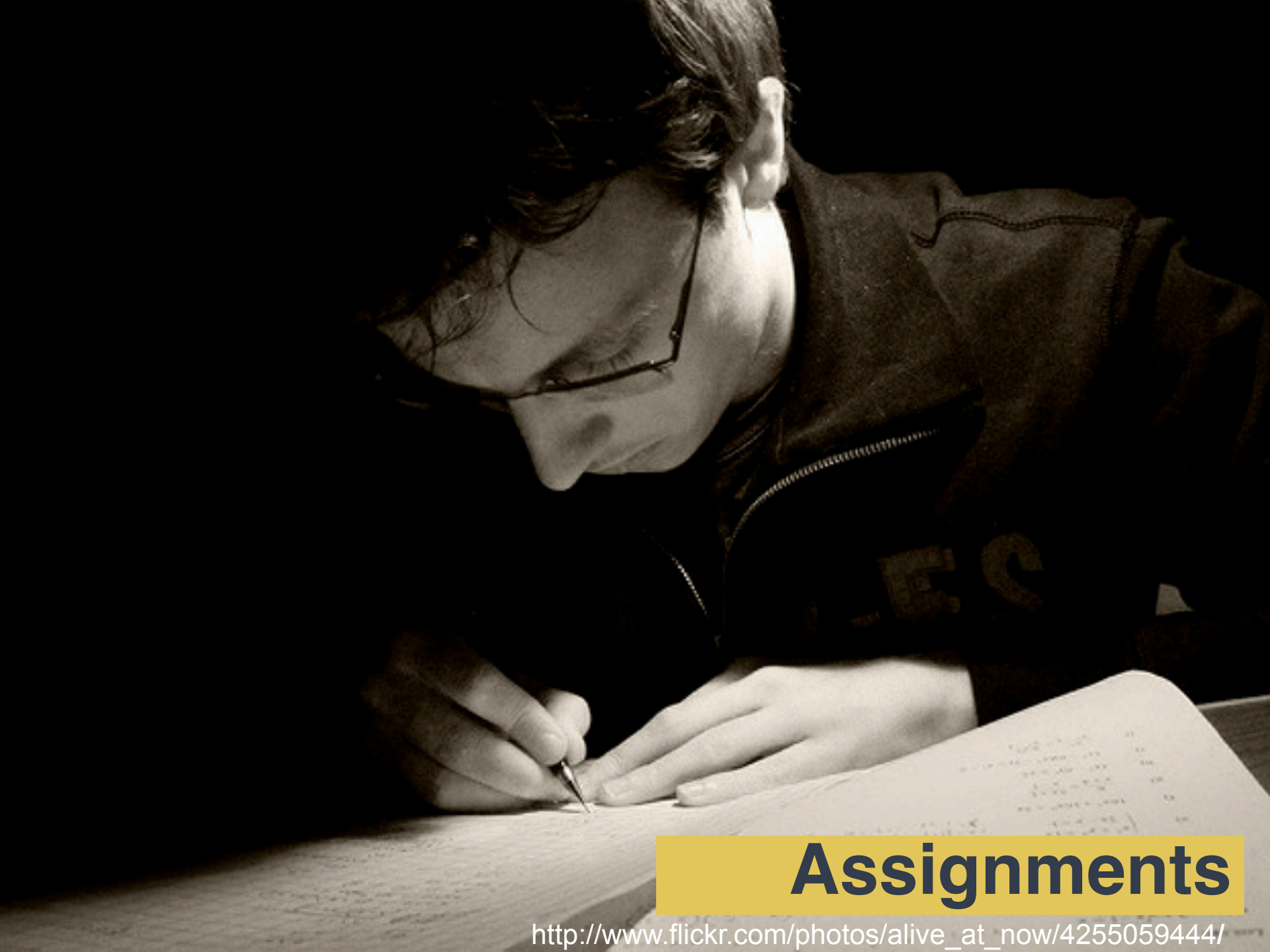
Assignments

Assignments/ Assessment (Tags)

Tag	#of times used
participation	69
paper	59
blogging	49
presentation	46
project	32
groupproject	24
exam	17
exercise	17
projectplan	12

Significance of Projects

	count	trend
☑ project	907	
☐ projects	337	

- 6th most common term (non-stop word)
- At least 80 courses include a project, including:

    - Research paper
    - Video
    - Digital history resource
    - Collaborative multimedia
    - Grant proposal

Strategies for Assigning Projects

- Devote last two weeks of class to project studio; teams demo & discuss projects each session (Urban, "LIS 310 Computing in the Humanities")

- Phase the project:
  - Consult w/ instructors on project
  - Present project proposal
  - Present project to invited guests
  - Submit final project

  (Smulyan, "Digital Scholarship")

Many Courses Include Hands-On Learning

☐	lab	187	
☑	practicum	46	

- "Lab: Second Life introduced" (Willis, "The Languages of New Media")
- "Practicum: Illustrator & Cartography" (Petrick, History & Cartography)

At least 24 course descriptions include "hands-on," while 19 explore "practice" (often in tandem with theory).

DH Classes Tend to Focus on Group Work

group	358	
groups	74	

- Group discussion leading
- Group projects
- Group presentations
- Group peer review

Collaboration is an explicit learning outcome/ goal for about 15 courses.

Many DH Classes Require Blogging

49 courses (37%) require blogging [manual tagging]

- "Compose new media (e.g., digital video, webtexts, blogs, Flash animation, and interactive maps) as a form of scholarship." (Sayers, "HS 208: Designing Literature")

- "Some of the writing you do on your blog will be required or prompted" (Gold, "Looking for Whitman")

A Few Classes Use Wikis

☑	wiki	118	
☐	wikipedia	88	

At least 8 classes have wiki assignments & 2 have Wikipedia assignments; others use wikis to share class info

- "Post a favorite website to the wiki" (Hollis, "Composing with Words, Images, and Sound")

- Assignment: "Wikipedia Entry" (Razlogova, "History and Digital Media")

Twitter Makes a Showing

6 classes require students to use Twitter

6 others may use/recommend it;

- "Please create an account and friend the class in the following programs: Twitter" (Guldi, "Digital History")

- "Iran and "The Twitter revolution" (Miller, "Writing about Media Change")

Reading (Watching, Exploring) Lists

Frequently Assigned Content

- Analyzed reading lists of 51 courses and built Zotero collection of assigned readings
  - Not all courses ended up in my syllabus corpus
  - Zotero collection a little messy
- DHAssignedReadings has 1100+ "readings":
  - Books
  - Articles & blog posts
  - Videos
  - Tools (e.g. Zotero, ManyEyes)
  - Web sites

Work	# Times Cited
Companion to Digital Humanities	17
The Language of New Media	8
Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web	7
A Companion to Digital Literary Studies	7
Here Comes Everybody	6
Remediation: Understanding New Media	6
As We May Think	6
A Rape in Cyberspace	6
The Promise of Digital History	5
Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution	5
Can History be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past	5

Observations re. Course Readings

- Many courses have packed syllabi, with a number of readings

- Many of the readings are freely available online

- Many recent (post 2000s) readings

digital **multimedia** chapman & chapman

Middlesex University Teaching Resources 2004 - 2005

DUST OR MAGIC Secrets of Successful Multimedia Design Hughes

Daniel Cunliffe and Geoff Elliott **MULTIMEDIA COMPUTING**

Interactivity by design Kristof & Satran

<preparing web graphics> Lynda Weinman

MULTIMEDIA DEMYSTIFIED
A GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF MULTIMEDIA FROM APPLE COMPUTER, INC.

Designing Web Audio BEGGS & THEDE

Learning

Media Focus

Many DH Classes Focus on Text

		count	trend
☐	text	395	
☐	texts	287	

- "This course teaches computer programming as a vehicle to explore poems and other texts that are now available online." (LeBlanc, Computing for Poets)

- "Introduction to text-encoding: history and basic issues." (Siemens, Literary Computing)

- "What is a "text?"" (Harris, Digital Literature)

But Other Forms of Media Are Also Significant: Video

☐ video	238	‹‹‹‹‹‹‹‹‹‹

- READINGS AND PRACTICUM IN HISTORICAL FILM AND VIDEO DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION (Zahavi)

- "Contextualizing a YouTube video." (Jenkins, Introduction to Communications Technologies)

Audio

- "I will also facilitate workshops on some…of the following: **Audacity**, an editor for recording and mixing digital audio" (Sayers, "Do-It Yourself Music Cultures")

- "**HISTORY 404:** Readings and Practicum in Aural History and Historical Audio Documentary Production" (Zahavi)

Images

- "Image formation, natural & linear perspective, pinholes and lenses," (Levoy, "Digital Photography")

- "Image Gloss" (Gold, "Looking For Whitman")

- "Theory and Practice of Digital Rhetoric: Composing with Words, Images, and Sound" (Hollis)

Games

☑	game	146	
☐	games	116	
☐	videogames	9	

- "Week 11 (March 18): Gaming and Electronic Narrative, 1" (Siemens, "Literary Computing")

- "Reading Video Games: Interactivity and Action" (April 6) (Owens, "Digital History")

- "What is a game? What is play" (Robison, "Videogame Theory and Analysis")

Maps

☑	maps	103	
☐	map	75	
☐	mapping	62	

- "Collaboratively construct a geographical map (of the UW, Seattle campus)" (Sayers, "Mapping the Digital Humanities")

- "Internet Visits: Mapping Ideas & Dreams" (Petrick, "History & Cartography")

- "Mapping, Markup, File Transfer" (Muri, "The Geography of London's Imaginary Spaces in the 18th Century")
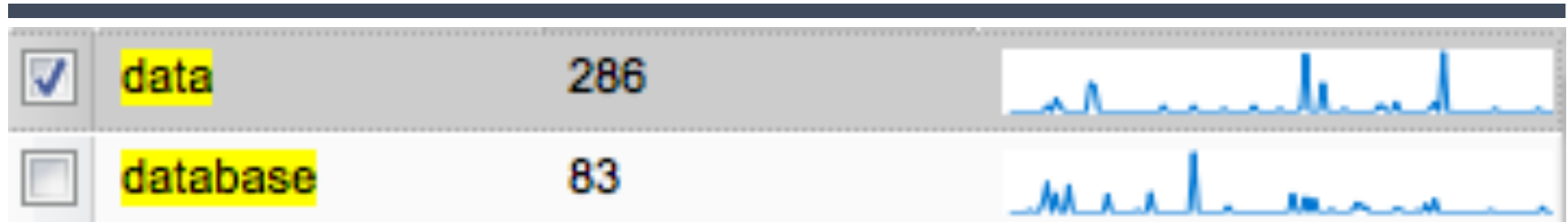
And Other Forms

"**Simulation** as Scholarship" (Kirschenbaum, "Simulations")

"the application of **3D modeling** and virtual reality to cultural heritage" (Jessop, "Digital Visualization")

Topics/ Concepts

Key Concept: Data and Database

☑	data	286	
☐	database	83	

- "Ability to assess digital data for preservability" (Salo, "Digital curation")

- "Our goal in this course is to build a database-driven website" (Quamen, "Technical Approaches & Concepts")

- "We believe that a systematic use of large-scale analysis and interactive visualization of cultural data will become a major trend in humanities research in the coming decades." (Manovich, "Theories of Media and New Media")

Key Concept: Openness & Copyright

Frequencies	Count ▾	Trend
☑ open	163	
☐ openness	27	

- "Openness as Innovation: distributed cooperation (what can't be coordinated?)" (Kelty, "Introduction to Openness"

- "How does interactive, do-it-yourself open source remix potential change what constitutes intellectual property? " (Davidson, "21st Century Literacies")

- "R. Rosenzweig, "Can History be Open Source?" (Price, "Hacking History"

Key Concept: Network

☐	network	76	
☐	networks	53	
☐	networking	45	

- "The course will survey the digital humanities, internet history, network society…" (Tullos and Myers, "Seminar in Digital Scholarship and Media Studies")

- "Tuesday, October 26 (Networks)" (Rheingold, "Virtual Community/Social Media")

- Apr 22: The Networked Book (Fitzpatrick, "digital media theory")

Key Concept: Interaction

- "History 9832B is a studio course on interactive exhibit design for public historians." (Turkel)

- WEEK 4 // INTERACTIVE FICTION (Sample, "textual media"

- "What is interaction design?" (Mazalek, "Principles of Interaction Design")

Technologies Taught in DH Courses

Term	Frequency	#Courses
xml	107	19
TEI	59	15
Omeka	51	16
PHP	38	5
Zotero	35	11
Perl	24	1
SQL/mySQL	19	3

Terms I Expected to See More Of…

Term	# Uses
argument	54
statistics	50
programming	47
representation	32
interpretation	28
accessibility	14
sustainability	9
algorithmic	7

Preliminary Conclusions

- DH courses fit into a big tent
- Digital humanities courses often:
  - Link theory and practice
  - Produce projects
  - Are collaborative
  - Engage in social media
  - Are not just about text
  - Reflect on contemporary issues such as copyright

http://www.flickr.com/photos/gordon_mckinlay/4511713335/

Future Work

- Enlarge corpus
- Compare disciplines, when the course was offered, level of class
- Experiment with other approaches & tools, e.g. topic modeling
- Conduct interviews with/ surveys of faculty and students
  - Goals of course
  - What worked
  - What didn't

Recommendations

- Use Creative Commons licenses on syllabi

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- Develop syllabus citation practices

Acknowledgements

This course was originally designed and has been taught since 2007 by my colleague William J. Turkel. I have followed his syllabus closely. I have borrowed liberally (right down to the color scheme of this site) from other Digital History courses as well, as taught by Jeremy Boggs, Amanda French, Jo Guldi, Mills Kelly, Jeffrey McClurken, Paula Petrik, William Thomas, Ethan Watrall, and others. Trailblazers all!

- Build an archive of remixable syllabi

A Proposal for a Digital Humanities Reader

- Use an open license (Creative Commons)
- Produce it collaboratively
- Make it easy to remix and update
- Support multimedia
- Include extant openly licensed materials as well as new content