

The Digital Watts Project (ENGL 5998.03.1)

Summer Session I | Tuesday & Thursday 4pm-7pm | UH 3304

INSTRUCTORS

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OVERVIEW

Digital Watts is a digital humanities* (DH) course focused on the 1965 “Watts Uprising,” which occurred in the Watts district of Los Angeles. Students will use digital tools to examine archival material related to the uprising and to design and create a public humanities project based on it. As part of this project, students will also be working with materials from the Southern California Library, an archive and community library in south LA dedicated to documenting and making available the histories of anti-racist struggles in Southern California.

*Digital humanities involves the use of digital tools, platforms, and methods to enhance and advance humanities scholarship. One question this class will explore is the following: *How can DH change the way we teach and conduct humanities scholarship?*

Learning outcomes:

- Students will learn about archives and working in archives
- Students will gain greater digital fluency: they will gain a greater understanding of the connection between information literacy and digital literacy and will be better able to navigate the world of digital information
- Students will learn how to use digital tools and platforms in humanities scholarship
- Students will learn how to digitize and make available online primary sources
- Students will learn how to engage with public humanities
- Students will learn how a humanities project can serve the university’s commitment to the “promotion of justice”

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, Vintage Books (1992) [e-book also available via the library catalog]
- *Fire This Time* by Gerald Horne, Da Capo Press (1997)

- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, Spiegel & Grau, (2015)
- Additional articles and videos

ASSIGNMENTS

- **Reading Blogs & Class Participation** Undergrads 25% | Grads 20%

Reading Blogs: Starting this Friday, we will post some questions that come out of our class discussions/assigned readings to the class website. Class members will be expected to post a contribution (a minimum of 10 sentences) by Tuesday at noon. We will not read nor give credit to any posting after this time. You can respond to one or more of our questions or write down your own reflections and insights on the assigned readings or course materials on which we are working. You should take some time after class to review that week's blog postings. You will be expected to respond to one of your classmate's postings (a minimum of 10 sentences) by Thursday at noon. Once again, we will not give credit to any posting after this time. We would love to think of this blog as a permanent record of our first extended engagement with a digital Watts project. Visuals and other media that will help future readers grasp what we were doing and what you were thinking will be great.

- **Group Bibliography Project & DH Discussion Lead** (grads only) 15%

We will "crowd source" a Digital Humanities bibliography. Each student will be responsible for finding three sources. One source should be a "groundbreaking" or "significant" essay on DH. One should be an essay on DH and pedagogy, and one should be an essay on DH and public humanities/community engagement. (More details will be provided.)

- ***The Fire Next Time* Word Analysis** Undergrads 10% | Grads 10%

Instructions will be provided.

- ***Los Angeles Times & Los Angeles Sentinel* Database Analysis** Undergrads 10% | Grads 10%

Instructions will be provided

- **Twitter Analysis** Undergrads 10% | Grads 10%

Instructions will be provided

- **Digital Project Analysis** Undergrads 20% | Grads 15%

Instructions will be provided

- **Digital Watts Project** Undergrads 25% | Grad 20%

Instructions will be provided

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: TUESDAY 5/17

- Class overview
- Introduction to *Fire Next Time* Word Analysis
- **Speaker:** Amy Woodson-Boulton, LMU, Department of History, “What is Public Humanities and History?”

WEEK 1: THURSDAY 5/19 (Southern California Library Visit)

- Watts readings discussion
- Introduction to The Digital Watts Project
- **Speaker:** Yusef Omowale, Library Director, “The Power of Community Archives”

Due:

- **Reading:** “A Journey Into The Mind of Watts,” *New York Times*, Thomas Pynchon (1966); “The Riot Inside Me,” Wanda Coleman (2005); “Venus in Two Acts,” Saidiya Hartman, (2008)

WEEK 2: TUESDAY 5/24

- *The Fire Next Time* discussion
- Share *Fire Next Time* Word Analysis
- Introduction to *Los Angeles Times* & *Los Angeles Sentinel* Database Analysis
- Watch documentary *Watts Riot or Revolt?* (54 minutes)

Due:

- **Assignment:** Reading Response, *The Fire Next Time* Word Analysis
- **Reading:** All of James Baldwin’s *The Fire Next Time*

WEEK 2: THURSDAY 5/26

- “Information (and the way we describe it and arrange it) is power” discussion
- Describing Watts
- **Speaker:** Dr. Safiya Noble, UCLA, Department of Information Studies, “The World According to Google”

Due:

- **Assignment:** Reading Response

- **Reading:** “Google Search: Hyper-visibility as a Means of Rendering Black Women and Girls Invisible,” Safiya Noble (October 2013); “Naming is Power,” Hope A. Olson (2002); “Can Computers Be Racist?,” listen to NPR audio clip and look at the comments

WEEK 3: TUESDAY 5/31

- *Fire This Time* discussion
- Share *Los Angeles Times* & *Los Angeles Sentinel* Database Analysis
- Introduction to Twitter Analysis
- **Speaker:** Dr. Robert Singleton, LMU, Department of Economics, “The Reality of Watts”

Due:

- **Assignment:** Reading Response, *Los Angeles Times* & *Los Angeles Sentinel* Database Analysis
- **Reading:** *Fire This Time* Introduction - Chapter 7 (pp. 3-167)

WEEK 3: THURSDAY 6/2 (Department of Archives & Special Collections, Library 3rd floor)

- *Fire This Time* discussion
- History of the book & textual technologies presentation

Due:

- **Assignment:** Reading Response
- **Reading:** *Fire This Time* Chapter 15 & 16 (pp. 322-354); “Metaphors We Surf By,” Paul Maglio and Teenie Matlock; *Metaphors We Live By*, Chapter 1 & Chapter 4

WEEK 4: TUESDAY 6/7

- “What is Digital Humanities?” discussion, led by grad students
- Share Twitter Analysis
- Introduction to Digital Projects Analysis

Due:

- **Assignment:** Reading Response, Twitter Analysis
- **Reading:** *Digital Humanities* Chapter 1, Anne Burdick (2012) [e-book]; “Digital Humanities, Public Work, Safety,” Sean Michael Morris (2016) [scan Tweets from January 8th #dipped conversation]; Listen to “Ask Not For Whom The Bell Trolls; It Trolls for Thee,” *This American Life*, episode 548 (21 minutes)

WEEK 4: THURSDAY 6/9

- *Between the World and Me* discussion
- Prepare for Digital Watts Project

Due:

- **Assignment:** Blog post
- **Reading:** *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015); “Listening to Ta-Nehisi Coates While White,” David Brooks (2015); “On Being White and Other Lies,” James Baldwin (1984)

WEEK 5: TUESDAY 6/14 (Meet in Hannon Library classroom 118)

- Share Digital Project Analysis
- Project workday

Due:

- **Assignment:** Digital Project Analysis
- **Reading:** “Understanding Web UI Elements & Principles,” Chris Bank
- **Watch:** *Design Aesthetics for Web Design* by Sue Jenkins, Watch all of “2. Using Elements of Design” and all of “3. Incorporating Principles of Design” Video can be found by going to MyLMU/System Logins/Lynda.com. Search, “*Design Aesthetics for...*”

WEEK 5: THURSDAY 6/16 (Meet in Hannon Library classroom 118)

- Project workday

WEEK 6: TUESDAY 6/21 (Meet in Hannon Library classroom 118)

- Project workday

Due:

- **Assignment:** Blog post
- **Reading:** Introduction to *Sorting Things Out* by Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star (1999); Chapter 4 of *Tagging* by Gene Smith (2008)

WEEK 6: THURSDAY 6/23 (Meet in Hannon Library classroom 118)

- Project workday

Due:

- **Assignment:** Graduate DH bibliography

UNIVERSITY & CLASS POLICIES

Special Accommodations: Students with special needs who require reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning, Physical, or Psychiatric) needing academic accommodation should contact the DSS Office (Daum Hall 2nd Floor, 310-338-4216) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information. Note that neither instructor can grant these aforementioned accommodations unless directed to by LMU's DSS Office.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism: It is never permissible to turn in any work that has been copied from another student or copied from a source (including the internet) without properly acknowledging the source. Any student who plagiarizes any work submitted for this course will be failed from the course. Loyola Marymount University's *Community Standards Booklet* clearly states what constitutes Academic Dishonesty. Every student at LMU is expected to read and understand these guidelines: "It is the student's responsibility to make sure that his/her work meets the standards set forth in the Honor Code. If the student is unclear about how these definitions and standards apply to his/her work, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to clarify the ambiguity."