DLA

the Digital Liberal Arts Initiative @ Middlebury College

Read on for news from the DLA about what we're up to this year and how we can help you.

September 2019

In This Issue:

Fall Events

Featured Resource

New Faces in the DLA

DLA Summer Institute

Summer Data Workshops

Faculty Fellows

External Opportunities

Fall Events

Tech Won't Save Us: Reflections

on the Messiness of Digital Scholarship

Though digital projects can produce exciting new opportunities for your research and your teaching, they can also perpetuate social biases and power dynamics. Navigating this tension is often messy and requires self-reflexiveness. You might even find yourself pushing back against the technology altogether. Please join us for a lunchtime talk by Sarah Payne, DLA Postdoctoral Fellow, and learn more about how her training in both literature and women's, gender, and sexuality studies has influenced her approach to the messiness of digital scholarship. You'll hear more about Sarah's experience working in digital scholarship, her current research, and how she can help you with your own digital explorations. Lunch will be provided beginning at 12:15. This event is open to the public, but for catering purposes please email dla@middlebury.edu to RSVP by September 21.

Date: Thursday, September 26

Time: 12:15-1:15

Place: CTLR Lounge, Davis Family Library

The Accidental Black Digital Humanist

The DLA is excited to welcome Daryle Williams, Associate Professor of History and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at the University of Maryland. Williams is involved in a range of digital projects. He is the Project Director of Slave Biographies: The Atlantic Database Network and the Co-Principal Investigator on African-American History, Culture and Digital Humanities. This lunchtime talk will cover one historian's journey through a burgeoning academic subfield known as black digital humanities. Special focus will be placed on the structural, circumstantial, and accidental conditions that led a somewhat conventional text-bound humanist to embrace digital tools of inquiry, analysis, and knowledge production. The discussion will include both personal and programmatic reflections on the possibilities of black DH in our times of stress and disruption in the liberal arts. Lunch will be provided beginning at 12:15. This event is open to the public, but for catering purposes please email dla@middlebury.edu to RSVP by October 26.

Date: Thursday, October 31

Time: 12:15-1:30

Place: CTLR Lounge, Davis Family Library

Stay Tuned!

Our second guest speaker, Sara Wylie, will be joining us later this fall. Wylie is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Health Science at Northeastern University where she is a member of the Social Science Environmental Health Research Institute. She has co-founded digital projects such as the Environmental Data and Governance Initiative (EDGI) and the Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science. Details of Wylie's talk, including time and date, are forthcoming.

For more related events, be sure to follow our partners in the Office of Digital Learning and Inquiry (DLINQ). Fall programming will focus on topics such as accessibility, attention, privacy, and more!

Take Our Survey

We're currently finalizing our 2019-2020 programming. Potential events include a brown bag lunch series, workshops, and guest lectures. While we're excited to plan our events we want to make sure we plan events you want to attend! **Please click here to take our brief survey and let us know what types of events you'd like to see on campus.**

Featured Resource

DH Toychest

The Digital Humanities (DH) Toychest is an online wiki run by Alan Liu, Distinguished Professor of English at UC Santa Barbara. You can think of the DH Toychest as a Wikipedia page for getting started in digital humanities. Users will find guides to DH as a field, tips on creating an online scholarly presence, and links to various tutorials. A highlight of the Toychest is the tools page, particularly if you're just getting started with a research question or are curious about different digital methodologies. If you're interested in digital mapping for example, the Toychest provides links and descriptions for a range of tools so you can choose the one that best suits your needs. For those wanting to know what exactly DH *is* or the types of tools available, the DH Toychest is a great place to start!

New Faces in the DLA

The DLA is excited to welcome Amy Morsman as the new Faculty Director of the DLA. Amy will be taking over for Jason Mittell who will remain on the DLA Executive Steering Committee. Sarah Payne, the new DLA Postdoctoral Fellow, will also be taking over for Michael Kramer who has accepted a position as Assistant Professor of History at The College at Brockport, SUNY.

Sarah Payne, Postdoctoral Fellow

Sarah Payne joins Middlebury from Northeastern University where she recently earned her doctorate in English literature. Her dissertation examined the concept of "racelessness" in twentieth century American women's literature. Her next project uses digital tools to visualize and map racelessness across literary settings. At Northeastern, she worked for the Digital Scholarship Group and the NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks. Sarah has particular expertise in digital exhibits and archives, but is available to consult on a wide variety of digital tools and projects.**You can schedule a consultation with Sarah or drop by her open office hours in the Wilson Cafe, Fridays from 1:30-3 PM. In addition to consultations, Sarah is also happy to provide information regarding funding opportunities and our Faculty Fellows program.**

Amy Morsman, Faculty Director

Amy Feely Morsman has been teaching American History at Middlebury since the fall of 2001. Her research interests lie in the historical evolution of gender roles, race relations, and regional differences in the 19th century. Amy is working on a digital history project entitled, "The Worlds of Solomon Northup: Exploring African American Life in Freedom and Slavery." Having recently curated "Votes . . . for Women?" an exhibit covering the history of woman suffrage in America at the College's Museum of Art, Amy will work with students in her Fall 2019 women's history course to build a digital variant of that exhibit. Amy is also the author of *The Big House After Slavery: Virginia Plantation Families and their Postbellum Domestic Experiment*, published by the University of Virginia Press in 2010.

DLA Summer Institute Recap

Written by Jason Mittell, Professor and Chair of Film and Media Culture

In June 2019, Professors of Film & Media Culture Christian Keathley and Jason Mittell, and Media Production Specialist Ethan Murphy, launched the first iteration of the Digital Liberal Arts Summer Institute (DLASI). The DLASI brought 14 faculty from around the country to Middlebury for an immersive two weeks to learn the practice and theory of "videographic criticism," or the creation of video essays. The workshop was the new iteration of their successful series of three NEH-funded workshops Scholarship in Sound and Image that had run in 2015, 2017, and 2018, and inspired a co-authored book on the topic. After the end of NEH-funding, the DLASI has shifted to a tuition-driven model, where participants self-fund their attendance; interest remained strong and the quality of work was quite high, suggesting a future for the DLASI.

Keathley and Mittell plan to offer their videographic criticism workshop again in June 2020. Additionally, Mittell serves as Director of the DLASI, and is interested in expanding future offerings to cover other topics. If you're a Middlebury faculty or staff member with expertise in a digital tool or method that you think could be successfully learned in a two-week immersive program, contact Jason to discuss potential future workshop ideas!

Summer Data Workshops

Written by Ryan Clement, Data Services Librarian, one of DLA's many collaborators in Davis Family Library

This summer, librarians Ryan Clement and Wendy Shook worked with the Undergraduate Research Office to organize and lead the first iteration of the Summer Data Workshop series. These workshops were open to all students on campus during the summer, but were primarily aimed at students working as summer research assistants working with data. The learning goals of the workshop series were:

• teach students principles of research data management and tidy data to help make the work they do more efficient, shareable, and reproducible

• teach students about navigating their computers using the Unix shell to increase their understanding of file systems and how their computers are organized

• teach students the basics of using the R programming language and the RStudio integrated development environment (IDE) for various data-related tasks such as cleaning, analyzing, and visualizing

Attendance and interest was strong – originally scheduled to be held in the computer lab in MBH 161, the workshops needed to be moved to various larger rooms around campus so that waitlisted attendees were able to participate as well. Students came from across the disciplines – among those represented were Neuroscience; Molecular Biology and Biochemistry; Math; Economics; Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies; Geography; Political Science; and others. Participants appreciated the chance to learn about these tools outside of focusing on a class project. One participant noted, "I became much more familiar with navigating R as a tool outside of class rather than completing class specific projects. Very useful!" Another student valued the "[o]pportunity to learn technical information about computers in detail, which classes usually require student[s] to self-study."

Faculty mentors also appreciated the opportunity for their SRAs to learn these skills during the summer. When asked "Would you be more likely to hire a student as a research assistant knowing they had gone through workshops like these? Why or why not?," one faculty mentor said, "Absolutely. It takes a lot of time and energy to train students in research methods. Particularly at the beginning of summer, it's very helpful if RA's can get a head start on the skills they need by taking workshops, while faculty can spend more time on finishing grading, and on research design and writing." Another faculty member noted that even when working with different tools, the "[w]orkshops in R also helped reinforce data concepts we had already learned in SQL."

Wendy and Ryan plan on continuing this workshop series in future summers, and perhaps other times of the year. They received feedback from this summer's mentors and students on what worked well and what other tools/concepts should be covered. If you're interested in discussing these or other data workshops, please reach out to them!

Faculty Fellows 2019-2020

Kathryn Morse, Professor of History and John C. Elder Professor in Environmental Studies.

Morse's project analyzes U.S. Farm Security Administration (FSA) rural rehabilitation programs in the rural South and West in the 1930s to illuminate connections between New Deal policies, race, documentary photography, land use, and natural resource conservation. During her fellowship, Morse hopes to create a digital narrative on a web-based platform and begin to build a database of archival sources.

Louisa Stein, Associate Professor of Film and Media Culture

Stein's project focuses on the collective creative authorship of fan audiences and suggests that we can understand such authorship as a "transformative database." During her fellowship, Stein will work on both an open access, born digital book and a dynamic database of pieces of fan work analyzed within the book.

External Opportunities

Event: Radical Cartography Now

In the public humanities, counter-mapping and "radical cartography" are emerging as powerful tools to critique institutional authority and imagine alternative ways of thinking about place. **Radical Cartography Now: Digital, Artistic and Social Justice Approaches to Mapping, to be held Friday, September 27 at Brown University**, **brings together historians, activists, social practice artists, digital humanists, and community members whose maps reveal new histories, new knowledge and new ways of co-creating artwork in and with communities.**

The conference is accompanied by an exhibition at the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage titled Map It Out – Providence (September 26 – November 14), an exhibition of hand-drawn maps created by Providence and Rhode Island community members in collaboration with the Toronto-based artists Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico. The maps reveal our community's experiences, and propose new ways of understanding the geography of our city and state. Exhibition attendees are welcome to add their own maps to the exhibition.

The conference, the exhibition and all associated programs are free and open to the public, but registration for the conference is required.

Event date: September 27, 2019

CFP: Connecticut Digital Humanities Conference

The inaugural Connecticut Digital Humanities Conference will take place at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut on February 28-29 2020. CT DH endeavors to bring to together a network of DH practitioners committed to advancing collaborative scholarship in digital humanities research and pedagogy across the New England region. CT DH will provide individuals across New England who are interested in digital humanities with an opportunity to learn new techniques and skills, hear about their colleagues' DH projects, and become part of a vibrant and diverse community of scholars and practitioners. We welcome proposals that address digital humanities & teaching, perhaps especially with undergraduates.

Deadline for Submissions: October 1, 2019

CFP: Digital Humanities 2020

The Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) invites submission of proposals for its annual conference, July 20-25, 2020 at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa in Ottawa, Canada. Submissions will be accepted in Algonquin, English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish.

The theme of the 2020 conference is "Carrefours/Intersections," a place where roads or streets meet. We specifically invite proposals that relate to our sub-disciplinary conference interests: First Nations, Native American, and Indigenous Studies; public digital humanities; and the open data movement. We welcome all who identify themselves as working in the broad variety of disciplines, methodologies, and pedagogies that the digital humanities encompasses.

Deadline for Submissions: October 15, 2019

If you have any questions about the DLA, please contact us at dla@middlebury.edu.

add contact information here