English 359:315
Reading With Your Laptop
Lectures via Canvas
Sections via Zoom

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Course Description

Computers are changing how we read. If you have ever googled a word you didn't know, or used COMMAND-F to locate a word in a digital file, then you are already reading with your laptop. Even more potent methods are emerging within literary analysis and allied fields. This course will introduce you to them.

Reading With Your Laptop is designed around a single, end-of-term individual project on a text or body of texts of your choice. For the first ten weeks, course readings will be fairly light. They will include a couple of novels and a play. The light reading load will give us the time and space to learn the rudiments of R, and experiment as a group with a few emerging approaches of digital literary analysis.

During the last five weeks, you will design and pursue an independent project, using tools you learned in the first part of the course. You will choose your own texts, develop a research question, compile and clean your data, and write the code to produce an analysis.

No prior experience with coding is required, or even expected. This course is designed for humanists, and will introduce you to the skills you need to produce original work in the digital humanities.

Prerequisites: This is an introductory course for upper-level students of literature, culture, and the arts. Aside from an active mind and a willingness to think differently, there are no other prerequisites. If you know how to use a keyboard when you arrive, you will be reading with your laptop by the end of the class. Actually, you will be doing some of this by the end of the second week.

Requirements: Aside from the end-of-term project, students will complete weekly challenges, which will allow you to demonstrate and apply your developing mastery of R to particular reading and interpretive tasks. You will also be responsible for two short projects, which discuss a digital method and an insight gleaned by deploying that method on a literary text.

Requirements will include:

1) Two short papers due on weeks 4 and 10; each of these will be based on conceptual models and computer-assisted techniques developed in class.
2) Vignette. For the first half of the class, you will also be responsible for weekly coding vignettes, some of which are drawn from Matthew Jockers's *Text Analysis with R*. A vignette is half code, half human-legible prose, which walks you through a digital tool and its implementation.
3) Challenges. To help you keep your coding skills on track, most weeks will include a brief challenge for additional practice. These are short projects explicitly linked to the vignette, which ask you to apply concepts learned that week to the literary text we

are treating in class. None of these challenges should take more than an hour or two to complete.
4) You will be responsible for a final project—in which you will apply one of the techniques you learned in class to a text chosen in consultation.
5) Participation. This takes many forms, but some of these include: regular attendance, thorough preparation, attention during instruction and discussion, visiting during office hours or over email, thoughtful contributions in class, and leadership roles in helping others or seeking help.

RHYTHM OF THE WEEK:

WEEKEND or MONDAY/TUESDAY:

1) Attend the **video lecture**. Video lectures will be posted Friday, and will be roughly 30 minutes in length. Each will discuss a few ideas about the text, and talk through the coding challenge for the week. Some weeks will involve a brief "philosophy corner," where we will have a chance to introduce the theories of language and meaning that underwrite the code techniques we are employing.
2) **Sign up** for a tutorial session. These will be on Thursday. You will select one that you can attend and sign up using the Calendar function on Canvas.
3) Complete the **readings**. Most weeks, the reading will be composed of:
    a. Roughly 10 pages or so of a coding vignette, either in the textbook or equivalent material in another format.
    b. Roughly 40 pages of literature.
4) Work through a **coding challenge**. You will be asked to answer a certain question or questions about the text that can be solved by applying the tool you developed in the vignette (above) to the reading for the week. Then you will write up a paragraph or two sharing your insights.

TUESDAY:

1) **Submit your response** to the challenge. Your challenges are due at midnight, and will include a discussion of your findings.

WEDNESDAY:

1) Optional: Drop into my **office hours**. There will be a session in the late morning to discuss technical issues and coding questions. You may attend if you like. I will also respond to emails with coding questions.
2) Optional: Submit your **2nd-chance challenge response**. This is for students who encountered technical difficulties in completing their challenge, which will probably be all of us, at some point. Humanists will recall that "hacking" has two meanings, at least. To submit a 2nd-chance challenge, you must have attended my office hours or have encountered coding problems that we worked through via email.

THURSDAY:

1) Attend **tutorial**. We will meet remotely in groups of seven or so. Sign up on Canvas. This session will be a chance to talk about what we've discovered, and put a few of our tools to work, turning computational findings into readings.

TEXTS (recommended editions):

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (Penguin)
William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Folger, 2003)
Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (Penguin)
Matthew Jockers, *Text Analysis with R for Students of Literature* (.pdf available free at https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-03164-4)
Douglas A. Luke, *A User's Guide to Network Analysis in R* (.pdf available at https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-3-319-23883-8)

SOFTWARE (free):

R and R Studio (please install before our first class)

OTHER RESOURCES (not required at all):

Hadley Wickham and Garrett Grolemund, *R for Data Science* (O'Reilly)
Available online at http://r4ds.had.co.nz
Jared P. Lander, *R for Everyone* (Addison-Wesley)
Also available though the library as an e-text:
http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/u6346297

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Papers (4-5 pages):	20%
Challenges (drop lowest):	25%
Final Project:	35%
Participation and attendance (miss 1 for free):	20%

SCHEDULE:

	WEEK	PRIMARY READING	VIGNETTE	CONCEPT	CHALLENGE
Basics	JAN18	R Basics: hello world and first foray	Spenser's Amoretti 75	Object-Oriented Languages	
Basics Type/ Token	JAN25	Oroonoko (to p 41)	Jockers 1-2 Scan and Transform	Types and Tokens	top ten words
	FEB1	Oroonoko (to end)	Jockers 3-4.1: Dispersion Plots	Continuous data	word pairs
Type/ Token Keyword Analysis	FEB8		Jockers 4.2-4.4 Token Distribution	Categorical data	ESSAY 1
	FEB15	Sense and Sensibility (v1)	Jockers 5 Correlations	Statistical Significance	tbd
Keyword Analysis	FEB22	Sense and Sensibility (v2)	KWIC	Signifier/ Signified	KWIC Tricks
Topic Models	MAR1	Sense and Sensibility (v3)	Topic Models	Lexical Distribution	Topic Models
Sentiment Analysis	MAR8		Sentiment Analysis	Sentiment	Sentiment Analysis
	MAR15	SPRING BREAK			
Network Analysis	MAR22	Macbeth (Act I-III)	Network Analysis	Discrete Data, Networks	Networks
Vector Space	MAR29	Macbeth (Act IV-V)	Vector-Space Analysis	Concepts as Collocation	VSA Macbeth ESSAY 2
Final Project	APR5	Texts of your choice	Research Question		
	APR12		Data Collection	Corpus	Prospectus
	APR19		Coding and Analysis		Hackathon
	APR26		Writeup		3MT
					FINAL PROJECT DUE