

Digital Humanities in the iSchool

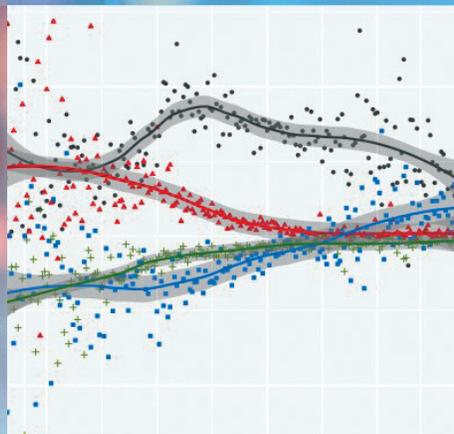
ILLINOIS
School of Information Sciences



Credit: University Library



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iSchool students discuss material during a breakout session.

Digital humanities is not a field with crisp boundaries. The label covers a range of activities that use digital technology to express, preserve, or understand human history and culture (or that critique digital technology itself). Data curation, digital scholarship, and data science, for instance, may be described as “DH” when they address humanistic material or problems.

Since the field includes people with many different backgrounds doing many different things, it is hard to define a single list of courses that prepare students to work as digital humanists. Instead, we have envisioned several roles, and sketched a list of subjects covered in the iSchool that might prepare you for each one. (Of course, there are also courses outside the iSchool that could be useful; in particular, it is vital to have a strong background in a humanistic discipline.)

If I’m preparing for a career as a digital humanities librarian, I might take courses in:

- data curation
- metadata
- data visualization
- data mining
- grant writing
- the history of digital humanities
- project management
- copyright and fair use

If I’m preparing to support or imagine alternate forms of scholarly publishing, for instance by creating digital editions, I might take courses in:

- copyright and fair use
- publishing
- data storytelling
- project management
- digital preservation
- usability engineering

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If I want to analyze some census data (or structured data), I might take courses in:

- data science
- network analysis
- data storytelling or visualization
- information modeling

If I want to analyze large collections of books (or unstructured data), I might take courses that cover:

- programming
- statistics or data science
- how to apply data science to unstructured data (e.g. text, images, etc)
- book history
- metadata
- the history of digital humanities

If I'm preparing to support the digital side of museum administration, I might take courses in:

- digital preservation
- project management
- grant writing
- metadata
- museum informatics

If I want to understand the broader conditions of information and its practices (material, social, cultural, etc.), I might take courses in:

- book history
- publishing
- information history
- data ethics

We've listed some of the more frequently-taught courses that correspond to topics listed above. If you have questions about a particular course, please contact the instructor. If you have general questions about the preparation required for different facets of digital humanities, contact Ted Underwood tunder@illinois.edu.

Course numbers subject to change.

- **IS417: Data Science in the Humanities:** *humanistic applications of data science, especially to texts, images, and other unstructured data; one semester of programming is a pre-requisite*
- **IS430: Foundations of Information Processing:** *programming basics; essentials of Python; no pre-requisite*
- **IS517: Introduction to Data Science:** *introduction to statistical learning and the data life cycle using R; no pre-requisite*
- **IS507: Data, Statistical Models, and Information:** *introduction to statistical learning using R; no pre-requisite*
- **IS563: History and Theory of Digital Humanities:** *survey of the field of digital humanities, emphasizing its relation to the history of humanistic disciplines*
- **IS586: Usability Engineering**
- **IS527: Network Analysis**
- **IS515: Information Modeling:** *no pre-requisite.*
- **IS575: Metadata in Theory & Practice:** *design and application of metadata standards & schema*
- **IS583: History of the Book:** *history of visualization practices*
- **IS543: Digital Preservation:** *long-term accessibility of digital materials*
- **IS541: Copyright for Information Professionals**
- **IS584: Data Ethics**
- **IS547: Data Mining**
- **IS592: Grant Writing**
- **IS457: Data Science Storytelling**
- **IS445: Data Visualization**
- **IS594 Project Management**
- **IS567: Text Mining**
- **IS580: Information History:** *explores information practices across time, technologies, and contexts*