

Digital Humanities Assignment
Introduction to Graduate Studies
Fall 2013

This assignment adapted from Lauren Klein, Georgia Tech University:

<<http://kleincourses.lmc.gatech.edu/dh12/assignments/>>

(1) Please read “The Hermeneutics of Screwing Around; or What You Do with a Million Books” by Stephen Ramsay:

<http://www.playingwithhistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/hermeneutics.pdf>

In “The Hermeneutics of Screwing Around; or What You Do with a Million Books” Stephen Ramsay contrasts the controlled, order nature of conventional search, like Google, with a research methodology characterized by “surfing and stumbling,” otherwise known as “screwing around.” The result of such a research methodology, he says, can be revelatory. He asks: “Could we imagine a world in which ‘Here is an ordered list of the books you should read,’ gives way to, ‘Here is what I found. What did you find?’”

Inspired by Ramsay’s provocation, your assignment is to do just that--to use one of the tools below to apply the methodology of “screwing around” to a text of your choice. After “surfing and stumbling” through the tools and texts, you should **(2) craft a blog post** that includes:

- (a) A screen capture of the best (or most interesting) instance(s) of what it was that you found; and
- (b) A short account of 300-500 words that explains what it was that you found, why you think it’s the best (or the most interesting), and what other questions you have that remain. You may also include a critical assessment of your experience learning and using the tool. For example, what were the challenges (technical and/or intellectual) of using it; how might this tool be beneficial (or not) to your research; would a close reading approach be better for this question?
- *Note: it is also okay if you find nothing significant. That is often the case, especially when learning a new tool. You can still make it “interesting” by including both (a) and (b) above in the blog post, addressing the challenges or difficulties you encountered, and explaining why you think you found nothing significant.*

Choose one of the following tools, read through the documentation, upload a text (or multiple texts), and see what you find.

TOOLS

VOYANT: <http://voyant-tools.org/>

documentation: <http://docs.voyant-tools.org/>

full list of Voyant tools: <http://docs.voyant-tools.org/tools/>

example corpus- Dubliners: <http://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=1378227918541.5315>

LEXOS: <http://lexos.wheatoncollege.edu/>

documentation: <http://wheatoncollege.edu/lexomics/>

JUXTA: <http://juxtacommons.org/> (you will need to register for a free account)

documentation: <http://juxtacommons.org/guide>

POEM VIEWER: <http://ovii.oerc.ox.ac.uk/PoemVis/>

CORPUS.BYU.EDU: <http://corpus.byu.edu/>

NAMED ENTITY RECOGNIZER (NER): <http://nlp.stanford.edu:8080/ner>

TEMPORAL TAGGER (SUTime): <http://nlp.stanford.edu:8080/sutime>

TEXTS

You can obtain full-text versions of most of the novels you are reading in class at <http://gutenberg.org> or <http://archive.org> (Note, due to copyright restrictions, translations may be older, different versions than the version you are reading for class.)

With the permission of the class professors, you may choose another text or set of texts for analysis.

*Note: If you are not already familiar with the differences between a **text editor** (e.g.*

*TextWrangler) and a **word processor** (e.g. Microsoft Word) please see:*

<http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/writing-power-tools-text-editors/38940>

A text editor is far better tool for preparing and manipulating texts for further analysis.

Open Help Session(s):

Monday, Sep. 23, 4:30pm (Watson 455)

Friday, Sep 27, 3:30pm (Watson 503)