The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
HUMA 5632 Digital Humanities Seminar Syllabus

Course Title: **Digital Humanities Seminar**
Course Code: **HUMA 5632** (Fall 2025)

Instructor: Michael Yan Hon Chung   Rm.2365; hmichung@ust.hk
Time: Tuesday 12:00-14:50
Venue: 5566
Office Hours: Tuesday 15:00-17:00/ By appointment

Course Description:

This seminar is for advanced graduate students who already have a clear research question and relevant sources. It introduces key digital-humanities literature and foundational tools so students can design and justify an appropriate digital methodology for their dissertation projects. Each meeting combines discussion of assigned readings with a hands-on workshop. No prior computational background is required; however, programming will be expected.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. explain major debates in digital humanities;
2. build and document a dissertation-relevant dataset (format of their choosing);
3. design and defend a fit-for-purpose digital methodology for that dataset;
4. write and run basic Python code for data processing;
5. communicate results and limitations in a short, reproducible presentation.

Assessment:

1. Attendance and participation (25%). Attend all meetings and workshops, complete required readings before class, and contribute substantively to discussion.

2. Weekly 250-word reading reviews (10%). Due before class; summarize the core arguments and identify the DH debate each reading engages. You are encouraged to use AI tools, but you must verify outputs and remain responsible for accuracy.

3. Book report (15%). A 4,000-word report on one book from the book list (provided in class).

4. Final project & presentation (50%). Create a digitized, well-documented dataset for your dissertation project and apply a digital method to analyze it; present the dataset, method, results, and limitations.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Use of AI

Use of AI tools is encouraged for learning activities if aligned with University guidelines (https://cei.hkust.edu.hk/en-hk/education-innovation/generative-ai-education/guidelines-and-policies). Document any AI assistance you use (tool, purpose, prompts) in a short note appended to each submission, and verify the correctness of all outputs. You remain responsible for originality and accuracy.

Class Schedule

Week 1 What is Digital Humanities

Reading(s):
Svensson, Patrick. 2012. Beyond the Big Tent. In M. K. Gold (Ed.), *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (NED-New edition, pp. 36–72). University of Minnesota Press.

Week 2 Introduction to Digital Humanities

Reading(s): Unsworth, John. 2000. "What is Humanities Computing and What is Not?" Kirschenbaum, Matthew. 2016. "What Is Digital Humanities and What's It Doing in English Departments?" *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2012*.

Workshop: Self-introduction–Research topic and sources

Week 3 Distant Reading

Reading(s):
Moretti, Franco. 2000. "Conjectures on World Literature." *New Left Review* 1: 54-68.
Underwood, Ted. 2017. "A Genealogy of Distant Reading." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 11.2.

Workshop: Online digital sources; web scraping; basic Python.

Week 4 Computational Literary Studies and Quantitative Method

Reading(s):
Bode, Katherine. 2018. *A World of Fiction: Digital Collections and the Future of Literary History*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Introduction.

Workshop: MARKUS; basic python.

Week 5 Rethinking Historical Study in the Digital World (1)

Reading(s): Ping-ti Po
Ho, Ping-ti. 1962. *The ladder of success in imperial China: Aspects of social mobility, 1368–1911*. Columbia University Press.
Swierenga, Robert. P. 1970. Clio and computers: a survey of computerized research in history. *Computers and the Humanities*, *5*(1), 1-21.

Open Workshop (1): Harnessing LLM AI for humanities research (no code)

Week 6 Rethinking Historical Study in the Digital World (2)

Reading(s):
Putnam, L. 2016. The transnational and the text-searchable: digitized sources and the shadows they cast. *The American Historical Review*, *121*(2), 377-402.
Milligan, Ian. 2022. *The transformation of historical research in the digital age*. Cambridge University Press.

Open Workshop (2): Fine-tuning large-language model for humanities research

Week 7 Digital History in East Asia

Reading(s):
Cha, Javier. 2018. "Digital Korean studies: recent advances and new frontiers," *Digital Library Perspectives*, Vol. 34 Issue: 3, 227-244.

Workshop: Historical Database–CBDB and others.

Week 8 GIS and Mapping

Reading(s):
Bol, Peter. 2007. "Creating a GIS for the History of China." *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship*. Redlands, CA: ESRI Press. 25-57.
Kwong, Chi Man. 2021. "Reappraising the Battle of Hong Kong: Preliminary Observations from a Spatial History Project." *Canadian Military History* 30, no. 2: 1-39.

Workshop: Google map API/ kepler.gl.

Week 9 What is Visualization

Reading(s):
Manovich, Lev. 2011. What is Visualization?, *Visual Studies*, 26:1, 36-49, DOI:
10.1080/1472586X.2011.548488

Open Workshop (3): How computer sees–a case of Manchu words segmentation

Week 10 Cultural Analytics

Reading(s):
Manovich. Lev. 2016. "The Science of Culture? Social Computing, Digital Humanities and
Cultural Analytics." *Journal of Cultural Analytics*.

Open Workshop (4): How artificial intelligence understand words–Vector database semantic
modeling

Week 11 Digital Humanities of Today: Big Data

Reading(s): Cha, Javier. 2023. "Big Data Studies: The Humanities in Uncharted Waters."
Korean Studies, 47(1): 247-299.

Workshop: No workshop. Individual consultations.

Week 12 Class Presentation