HUMA 150: Reading With Machines (FYS)

TuTh 10:10-11:30 Clark 342
Instructor: Mark Wolff

Office hours: MW 11:15-12:15, TuTh 12:30-2:00, and by appointment in Clark 324
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Description and Purpose

This course is an introduction to computer-assisted methods of text analysis. Students will experiment with various digital tools to discover patterns in texts and will use the results to inform their interpretations.

The course presents students with basic techniques for using computers to analyze texts. These analyses do not replace traditional reading practices but enhance them, offering students the ability to ask empirical questions (e.g. how often and in what context does a particular word appear in a text?) of which the answers serve as heuristics for further study. No prior experience with programming is required.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Learning Outcomes

- Reinforce standards of college-level writing.
    - Implementation: Students will complete paper assignments and participate in online discussions totaling at least 6,000 words with opportunity for commentary and feedback on the writing process.
    - Assessment: College Writing Placement rubric.
- Introduce college-level modes of discourse.
    - Implementation: Students will have frequent opportunities for oral discussion and will give at least two in-class presentations on how they applied computational tools for text analysis and what they learned from them.
    - Assessment: AAC&U oral communication rubric
- Improve student skills in evaluation, interpretation and analysis of texts and other forms of expression.
    - Implementation: Students will use various tools, including computational ones, to perform analyses of text. They will use these analyses to inform their interpretation of texts in class discussion and research papers.
    - Assessment: CAGE capstone assessment rubric (applicable elements)
- Cultivate information literacy and research techniques.
    - Implementation: Students will attend an information literacy lab session conducted by library staff. The focus will be on examples of and tools for the emerging practices of the digital humanities in text analysis.
    - Assessment: to be determined after consultation with library staff.

Prerequisites

- Math Placement Test score of L2 or higher.
- Students should feel comfortable doing the following:
    - Writing simple computer programs using an interpreted language (i.e. type commands without using a graphical user interface). No prior knowledge of a programming is required: students will learn programming techniques by following examples.
    - Reading. The course emphasizes the use of computational methods of text analysis, but these methods are useful and interesting only if they can help a reader understand texts. Once an analysis is complete, the reader must make sense of it. This usually requires more traditional reading practices.

Required Materials For This Course

All required materials will be availble freely online.

Evaluation

Online forums	30 %
Papers	20 %
Presentations	20 %
Projects	30 %
Total	100 %

Technology In This Course

We will use the Internet extensively in this course. All information for the course will be posted on the web. Daily homework assignments must be completed before coming to class.

If you have any questions or problems with how to retrieve and submit data for the course, please ask me immediately. If your computer does not function properly, you will have to do something about it. By all means you should inform me of your difficulties as soon as you experience them, but announcing that you have a problem is not enough: you must find a way to solve it. In the end it is your responsibility to complete assignments on time.

Special Accommodations

Hartwick College is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If a student with a disability wishes to request accommodations they must contact Jen Marciniak, Coordinator of Learning Support Services. Jen's office is located on the 5th floor of Yager Library in The Loft, room 10. Any information regarding a student's disability will remain confidential. Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible.

Academic Dishonesty

If you give or receive unauthorized help while completing assignments, you will be prosecuted for academic dishonesty. If you are unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty, ask me.

Attendance Policy

There is no specific number of "legal" absences allowed. Accepted absences are college-sponsored events (e.g. intercollegiate sports), documented illnesses, or a death in the family. If you must miss a class, please try to notify me **prior** to missing the class. Early departures and late returns for Fall and Thanksgiving Breaks will not be accepted as absences. Students who have missed a class for any reason will be expected to find out what has been missed. **You** are fully responsible for all missed work. While even one unexcused absence can affect your grade, three or more unexcused absences will seriously endanger your successful completion of the class.