Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Program guidelines also change and the samples may not match exactly what is now required. Please use the current set of application instructions to prepare your application.


Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Office of Digital Humanities staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Expanding Communities of Practice

Institution: CUNY Research Foundation, Graduate School and University Center

Project Director: Lisa Rhody

Grant Program: Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities
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Summary

The CUNY Graduate Center proposes building on our previous experience running institutes on digital research methods for an expanded community of humanities scholars. The Digital Humanities Research Institute (DHRI) will advance the research goals and professional growth of individual participants, while at the same time supporting their efforts to organize and lead digital humanities workshops in their local contexts. Short courses, or “bootcamps” that last anywhere from one day to two months are increasingly popular ways to offer intensive training in digital tools and skills over a short period of time; however, these courses are resource-intensive to run, reach a limited audience, and rarely offer ongoing support. Committed to building a vibrant community of scholars who deploy a critical use of digital technologies in their teaching and research, the CUNY Graduate Center ran three week-long institutes between 2016 and 2017, which offered a combined 100 hours of instruction on digital research methods to more than 100 students, faculty, staff, and librarians across the CUNY system (http://cuny.is/gcdri). Demand for foundational digital research skills remains high, as we have had to turn away as many participants, if not more, for each institute as we are able to accept.

During a ten-day residential institute in June 2018, participants will explore interdisciplinary digital humanities research and teaching with leading DH scholars, develop core computational research skills through hands-on workshops, and begin developing versions of the DHRI for their own communities. Over the following academic year, each participant will have access to an online network of peers, as well as 20 hours of consultation from our experienced staff. When participants return to New York in June 2019 to report on their experiences, their reflections will inform the publication of a guide to leading digital humanities skill workshops in a variety of institutional contexts.

As interest in digital humanities at universities, museums, libraries, and archives increases, so too does the demand for faculty, administrative staff, librarians, postdocs and graduate students who are tasked with expanding DH research and teaching capacity with relatively few resources. While recruiting applicants, we will target our outreach to early-career humanists from interdisciplinary backgrounds at a range of institution types who balance their own research interests with a need to support local communities of practice.

During the institute, participants can expect readings and discussions about humanities projects coupled with workshops on underlying digital methods. The DHRI will emphasize foundational technical skills, such as the command line, Git, Python, and databases, that provide a flexible technology “stack” and that better enable DH researchers to become self-teachers and mentors in their own right. Students will not only develop familiarity with useful tools but will also learn how to navigate a computer’s information architecture, read technical documentation, and reason through simple systems, leading to a greater conceptual vocabulary and increased confidence approaching technology with a critical eye.

Upon completion, fifteen humanities scholars will receive training in fundamental computational methods, ongoing support from a network of peers, mentoring from our staff, and create plans for running a digital humanities methods workshops at their home institution. A collection of white papers about participants’ experiences over the year, when assembled, will be produced as a guide for others interested in creating DH short courses at their own institution.
Narrative

Significance

In his preface to *Doing Digital Humanities: Practice, Training, Research* (2016), Ray Siemens points out that imagining digital humanities as a community of practice wherein participants come into conversation with one another over shared approaches to craft establishes a “methodological commons” where fields intersect by sharing their work processes. Presenting a taxonomy of approaches to training that span from the informal to the formal within the methodological commons, Siemens suggests that the variety of possible approaches builds an infrastructure for “self-determination” in humanists’ approach to learning useful skills. Somewhere between informal consultations and formal degree programs, short courses and “bootcamps” offer professional and research skill development opportunities that scholars can choose from based on their most pressing needs.

Digital humanities skill development cannot be automated; it is resource intensive. It depends upon a limited number of people to deliver highly personalized training to relatively small cohorts of scholars—a model that is difficult to fund and harder to scale. As interest in and demand for training in digital humanities research methods continues to increase, our capacity to reach the needs and interests of diverse populations of scholars in the wide range of institutional contexts where they do their work has not kept pace.

Focused on humanities research questions and with an eye toward expanding communities of practice, the Digital Humanities Research Institute (DHRI) will offer a concrete set of skills and a robust set of collaboratively-built planning documents and strategies to attendees. The following use cases show how the Institute will aid a wide set of DH practitioners in their work:

- Jennifer is a third-year Assistant Professor in the Department of English at an R1 university in the midwest who has become increasingly interested in the work of a local writer whose nineteenth-century manuscripts have just recently been digitized by her university’s library. Jennifer wants to compare these newly digitized works to the writings of some better-known contemporaries, looking particularly at how these writers characterized features of the natural landscape. Jenny has explored text analysis through a set of topic-modeling applications that provide GUIs, but she knows that she’ll need to learn more about the command line, git, Python, and NLTK to explore patterns in the texts, as well as GIS to begin mapping her findings to the landscape described. Jennifer will attend the DHRI to learn more about these areas, but she hopes, too, to bring the DHRI back to her own university to jump-start a text-analysis working group that will be composed of fellow English department faculty members, graduate students, and librarians.

- Amity is a postdoctoral researcher at a regional university. She specializes in 19th-century maritime narratives, and has made extensive use of TEI markup in her doctoral thesis on transatlantic commerce in the British novel. While Amity is expert in TEI and proficient in tools for research such as Zotero, as part of her new position she has been tasked with supporting digital skills training for Ph.D. and Masters students at her institution. In addition, one of Amity’s goals as a postdoc is to create a web application to highlight the research she has done for her dissertation. At the DHRI, Amity learns foundational skills such as the command line and Python that are in demand at her home institution. After returning from the Institute, Amity adapts a portion of the curriculum into a successful workshop series. Working in tandem with a fellow Institute attendee via the DHRI Commons, Amity is also able to complete an MVP (Minimal Viable Product) of her web application in the second year of her fellowship.

- Amosh is a Digital Archivist for a library at a public research university. Amosh has worked with a variety of technologies, including RFID and RDF, and he has picked up some coding in PHP, a language he learned in a course on web development. Too often, however, Amosh feels that he is
working around and not with these technologies, and he often must resort to copying code or solutions from the internet that he does not fully understand. His library is contemplating an initiative to automate some of its workflows, and Amosh knows that his colleagues will look to him to provide sound recommendations based on core data management and computing principles. After attending the DHRI, Amosh finds that he has an affinity for the command line, and he begins to use Unix tools such as curl to explore various library APIs, such as the WorldCat Search API. Six months after attending the Institute, Amosh is able to implement an API to unite two library databases that were previously siloed. He also begins to plan a three-day version of the Institute adapted to the needs of his colleagues and collaborators.

As these use cases show, humanities practitioners at varying levels are often in need of intensive training on fundamental computational methods and concepts that, once acquired, can lead to greater confidence and flexibility when making critical choices about the use of a particular technology in their teaching and research.

Broadly speaking, there are many more places to go to learn technical skills like basic coding than there were just a couple years ago, and yet few, if any, are appropriate for humanities scholars who wish to learn fundamental digital skills to improve their research and teaching. One or two-week courses, often called “bootcamps,” have become a popular method for offering intensive computational or statistical training to those with advanced education. While the quality and style of these courses vary widely, most are business portfolio-driven, expect significant technical abilities upon acceptance into the program, and are oriented toward either finding or changing employment—not to mention expensive. Camps, meetups, and other day-long opportunities to learn to code, such as Ladies who Linux, Django Girls, or Rails Girls may be helpful ways to learn how to use a specific platform, but their brevity makes them difficult for humanities researchers who may not have the opportunity to implement those skills immediately or who need a more contextualized introduction. Online platforms like Code Academy, Code School, and Khan Academy provide free courses for self-guided instruction, but they offer no face-to-face or disciplinary community-building element. While Software Carpentry and Data Carpentry provide their lesson materials openly on the web, instructors are typically researchers in bench science disciplines who are unfamiliar with the research questions most interesting to humanists.

Many DH short courses focus on the ability to use a particular tool or solve a particular humanities research question. Such courses are less successful in helping humanities scholars develop foundational skills and a common conceptual vocabulary that can lead to continued confidence and resiliency, for example, when changes in the direction of their research require them to develop new skills or find new tools. The Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) and Humanities Intensive Learning and Teaching (HILT) programs combine short courses with conference-like keynotes and programming. Some optional courses offer introductions to fundamental skills, such as DHSI’s “Fundamentals of Programming/Coding for Humanities” which includes some Python programming in service of “understanding how computer programmers think so that participants will be able to at least participate in high-level conceptual discussions in the future with more confidence.” HASTAC offers workshops in conjunction with its annual conference, but there are no skill intensives offered. “Rebuilding the Portfolio”—an NEH-supported institute at George Mason University—offers some introduction to foundational digital skills; however, the course is targeted specifically to mid-career historians and is highly discipline specific. Both the University of Florida and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, offered bootcamps in 2016 and 2013 respectively. Florida’s consisted of a two-day, team-based hackathon, but did not address core computer skills such as the command line or git. UNC’s sessions included introductions to markup languages, principles of data visualization, an introduction to LAMP applications (Linux, Apache, MySQL, PHP), and their own WordPress plugin DH Press, but no foundational computer training.

Each of these DH skill development programs offer necessary and valuable opportunities for humanities scholars, and they each play an crucial role in the growing adoption of digitally-enabled scholarship. However, for those tasked with expanding a digital humanities community of practice at a particular institution or consortium, these models present two significant challenges: reproducibility and
flexibility. Increasingly, universities, museums, galleries, and archives are tasking existing staff, reshaping traditional job descriptions, or hiring short-term and contingent staff for the purpose of integrating digital humanities methods into their institutions’ research and teaching activities. Even traditional faculty find themselves increasingly incorporating core training into their classes or offering additional workshops for students to fill in essential gaps necessary for digital humanities scholarship. While local workshops on individual tools are effective, they are usually highly labor intensive and often require the instructor to learn a new skill, then develop a lesson plan, find an appropriate data set, and create supplementary materials.

The CUNY Graduate Center (GC) proposes a sustainable, flexible, and portable digital research institute that, first, provides fifteen participants with in-person training in core digital humanities skills useful across a range of domains, and, second, employs a “train the trainer” approach to provide dedicated time and resources for participants to begin developing their own digital humanities research methods workshops based on an existing, shared curriculum on GitHub. By the end of the ten-day June 2018 DHRI, participants will be able to do the following in service of humanities research questions:

- Navigate file structures from the command line,
- Track versions of their work using git,
- Collaborate with others using GitHub,
- Write and execute basic Python scripts,
- Explore texts with the Natural Language Tool Kit (NLTK) package for Python,
- Train machines to search for patterns,
- Modify, query and join tables in databases,
- Design effective project plans,
- Identify and use cloud computing resources,
- Learn API architecture using Twitter’s API
- Demonstrate examples of humanities projects that make use of each skill.

Further, by producing core curricular materials that can be replicated, modified, and shared across institutions, participants will have the support to run variants of the institute themselves while receiving online support from an online network of peers, as well up to 20 hours of support from our Institutes Coordinator. At the end of the two-year grant period, all participants will report back on their experiences and will contribute to a guide book for running digital humanities institutes in a variety of institutional contexts with modifications based on local need. Our approach has the benefit of being modular, reproducible, and sustainable, as well as reducing the amount of human and financial resources required to run skill-based workshops for humanists. While our core curriculum addresses concepts central to digital humanities research and teaching, it also provides optimal flexibility and can either be adopted wholesale as a week-long program or integrated into a semester-long syllabus. Designed to be interdisciplinary to allow for maximum impact, the curriculum could also be adapted to meet the needs of particular disciplines.

Institutional profile

Founded in 1961, the Graduate Center’s fundamental mission is to provide a broad range of excellent doctoral programs to prepare students to become scholars and leaders in academe and in the private, nonprofit, and government sectors. Part of the nation’s largest urban public university, we strive to enhance access to doctoral education for traditionally underrepresented groups. In our role as a university center, we seek to foster significant research by faculty and students within and across disciplines, including research that addresses the problems and challenges faced by urban areas, and to foster interaction among CUNY faculty and students across 24 campuses. With over 35 doctoral and master’s programs of the highest caliber, and 20 research centers, institutes, and initiatives, the GC benefits from highly ambitious and diverse students and alumni—who in turn teach hundreds of thousands of undergraduates every year. The GC is centrally located in midtown Manhattan in New York City and enhances New York City’s intellectual and cultural life through its public programs.
The mission of the Graduate Center Digital Initiatives (GCDI) is to build and sustain a community of digital practice at the GC and at the City University of New York more broadly. Our approach to fostering this ecosystem is multivalent, and includes digital pedagogy, outreach, and the development of tools and platforms for teaching and scholarly communication. GCDI maintains the Commons In A Box (CBOX) project, a platform for creating scholarly communities online currently used by Project MUSE, by the Modern Language Association for the NEH-supported MLA Commons and Humanities Commons, by regional DH organizations such as NYCDH, Texas DH, and Florida DH, as well as by universities and nonprofit organizations. In partnership with the University of Minnesota Press and with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, GCDI is also currently developing Manifold, a platform for scholarly communication that transforms publications into living digital works. In addition, the GC continues active development of a number of NEH-supported projects, including Social Paper, DH Box, and Beyond Citation.

GCDI is bolstered by a thriving ecosystem of scholarly, technical, and pedagogical activities, among them the Digital Research Institute (DRI), the Digital Praxis Seminar, the Provost’s Digital Innovation Grants and our successful workshop series. Our programs are supported by the GC Digital Fellows, a group of graduate students specializing in digital research and pedagogy working out of the Digital Scholarship Lab under the supervision of Lisa Rhody and Matthew K. Gold. The GC Digital Initiatives also includes the New Media Lab, the Cultural Analytics Lab, the Interactive Technology and Pedagogy Program, the M.A. in Liberal Studies Program Digital Humanities and Data Visualization tracks, the Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy, and a forthcoming M.A. in Digital Humanities/M.S. in Data Analysis and Visualization.

Adjacent to the Morgan Library and Museum and located only seven short blocks from the New York Public Library’s Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, the Graduate Center will provide participants with opportunities to explore world-renowned collections in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts. While the GC does not have its own dormitories, an Institutes Coordinator will reserve blocks of rooms at reduced rates for participants at local college campuses, such as Columbia University, New York University, and Hunter College. Participants will receive $3,500 stipends prior to June 2018 to cover travel, accommodations, per diem, and incidentals. Coffee service and snacks will be provided in the mornings and afternoons, and participants will receive some material fees to cover expenses such as domain hosting. Participants will be encouraged to bring their own laptops if they have them, but the Digital Scholarship Lab will supply MacBook Pro laptops configured for workshop use to any participants who need them. When participants return in June 2019 to report on their activities and provide a white paper on adapting the Digital Humanities Research Institute curriculum to their own institutional setting, they will receive an additional stipend for $1500 to cover transportation, accommodations, food, and incidentals. Similarly, our Institutes Coordinator will make arrangements with local universities to reserve a block of rooms at a reduced rate. Please see Appendix H for estimated travel costs for sample participants.

The GC Digital Research Institutes

Initially supported by a CUNY-wide Strategic Investment Initiative grant with continued funding from the Provost’s Office, the GC Digital Initiatives hosted three week-long, interdisciplinary Digital Research Institutes between January 2016 and February 2017 (cuny.is/gcdri), which provided 85 total workshop sessions for participants who ranged from first year master’s students to adjuncts, librarians to senior tenured faculty from across CUNY. The proposed Digital Humanities Research Institute would adapt the administrative, curricular, and pedagogical successes of previous efforts to meet the needs of humanities scholars and to provide participants with resources that make it easier and more cost-effective to offer similar institutes at their home institutions.

The Digital Research Institutes built on four years of successful workshops run by the GC Digital Fellows at the Graduate Center, informing core pedagogical principles derived from teaching technical skills to graduate student and faculty researchers. These principles include challenge-based learning,
theory through practice, multimodal delivery, a pragmatic approach to computer literacy, and an emphasis on foundational rather than instrumental learning.

Our approach has proven effective in reaching highly interdisciplinary cohorts of previous participants because, as we discovered, students of all backgrounds responded positively to a humanities-focused approach. For example, CUNY’s population is one of the most diverse in the country and our curricular model is highly-attuned to existing barriers to entry for many women and minorities. Because building a supportive and engaged community of learners is a key outcome for our institutes, we will begin with activities that situate participants as experts in their own research questions. Through activities where participants either draw their research question or demonstrate them with Lego or clay, we facilitate conversations among participants and instructors that establish a common goal—leveraging technology in service of our unique scholarly interests. We encourage participants to become familiar with one another’s research so that as we proceed through the week, they can be aware of and responsive to their colleagues needs and concerns, becoming advocates for their own interests as well as the interests of those around them. We use red and green post it notes to indicate desire to move faster or slower, and purple for the need for breaks. We include challenge activities for students who proceed at a slightly faster pace, and we offer narrative explications for those who are unable to do the independent challenges. We introduce questions of ethics, data bias, and foreground research projects that represent the work of diverse researchers and also allow for anonymous feedback during each day via index cards at each table. Our efforts have proven effective, as participants often respond in daily exit slips that they feel comfortable asking questions of the instructor and peers.

The success of our approach is best demonstrated in the qualitative feedback we received after each institute. In retrospective blog posts, Lavelle Porter, Julia Lipkins, Mani Garcia Levy, Amanda Sanseverino, and Jenna Freedman all point to the significance of the institute’s community building activities as equally—if not more—important to specific skill training. They express gratitude for learning how to scope and shape research questions, plan their digital projects, and learn basic computational concepts that helped them not only develop immediate skills, but the ability to make more informed technology choices throughout their research projects. For example, Sanseverino writes:

*The most valuable thing I gained from the GC DRI was exposure. The goal is not to come out with a mastery of the digital research tools covered. Rather, it’s about understanding what’s out there and learning how to be flexible in your methods, because that knowledge will truly expand your research and teaching potential. It’s also about connecting with people in other areas of study. Talking to people outside of my discipline provided a window into what others are doing and helped me view my work in a different light. Exposure also came in the form of learning how to find help and resources in the future, whether through connecting with a Digital Fellow, attending a workshop, or getting involved in a project.*

We intend to build on these signature attributes of our existing workshops while honing our offerings to the particular concerns and interests of humanities scholars.

Curriculum and work plan

Pedagogical Philosophy

The DRI curriculum places great emphasis on foundational technical skills, and roughly one-third of all sessions at the Institute could be described as foundational. These skills—the command line, Git, Python, and databases—represent flexible technologies predicated on fundamental concepts in computational literacy. In learning the command line, for example, students begin to conceive of their computing environment as a "stack" of technologies and are introduced to the use of a text editor for writing code and markup. In learning Git, students learn not only a broadly useful tool for versioning and collaboration but also best practices for managing data and the basics of remote server architecture. In
addition to providing a practical entrée to fundamental concepts in computing, these foundational skills are widely useful in themselves and are prerequisites for more advanced approaches taught in later workshops.

We emphasize foundational skills because we believe that it is the most effective path toward enabling digital humanities researchers to become self-teachers and mentors in their own right. Many bootcamp-style intensives prioritize instrumental outcomes, such as whether students can write a for loop or deploy a website in React. While these results are desirable, we find that students who know how to use the command line, read technical documentation, and reason about simple systems are more self-sufficient and better able to approach technology (and technological rhetoric) with a critical eye. This leads to second- and third-order effects as students teach themselves and teach others, and also provides a common conceptual vocabulary and skill set that serves as a basis for collaboration within the community.

The difference between an instrumental approach and a foundational approach is not immediately apparent. While an instrumental approach satisfies a researcher’s most immediate need, a foundational approach takes into consideration the long term impact that learning core skills will have for the future professional and research needs of the scholar. For example, a historian who wants to produce a digital exhibit of archival materials at a local historical society may choose to find the best possible platform, say Omeka, and then look for training opportunities that help learn how to create an Omeka collection, select an appropriate theme, and use the Omeka “exhibit builder” to develop a publicly viewable resource. This approach quickly satisfies the researcher and historical society’s immediate needs, but does not necessarily provide the researcher with necessary skills to decide if the next collection that needs to be exhibited is best done with Omeka. In a foundational approach, the same historian would learn how to use databases, how to construct effective queries, and how to make use of MySQL. While the second researcher may still choose to use a tool such as Omeka to create a collection, knowing the underlying technologies will lead to more confidence when troubleshooting problems with themes or asking for help on the forums.

Format and Curriculum

The Digital Humanities Research Institute will take place from June 11-20, 2018 at the Graduate Center. Sessions will begin with introductory remarks at 9:30 every morning and conclude by 5:00 each afternoon. Mornings will feature discussions of reading (See Appendix D for bibliography of potential readings) or research presentations by guest participants, such as Kelly Baker Josephs, Sterling Brown Visiting Professor of Africana Studies at Williams College and Associate Professor of English at York College, who will describe her work on the Digital Carribean. Afternoon sessions commonly begin with conversations about digital humanities pedagogy. Discussion sessions will be followed by 2.5-3 hour workshops on topics such as the command line, Git, Python, the Natural Language Tool Kit, Machine Learning, Databases, and APIs. At the end of the first week and beginning of the second, participants will begin developing their own institute curriculum in workshop sessions that deploy skills git skills from earlier in the week to copy our curriculum on GitHub and make modifications. Participants will learn to create their own institute group site on our Commons In A Box and display their GitHub curriculum. We will discuss lessons learned for the application and review process, as well as how to identify instructional needs, recruit instructors, and submit pull requests to make changes for our core DHRI curriculum. We will also hold two discussions with visiting panelists on “Ethics, Data, and Digital Humanities Research” and on “Scholarly Communication, Open Access, and Advocacy.” See Appendix A for full agenda and course descriptions.

Outlines of workshops offered during our GC Digital Research Institutes are available on our website for review (http://cuny.is/gcdri). In the menu bar at the top of the site, there is a drop down menu that leads to the curricula for each of the three previous institutes. In the top right-hand corner of each workshop listing is a GitHub icon, which links to a live overview of the workshop on GitHub, such as an Introduction to the Command Line: https://github.com/mckinniburch/intro-command-line.
Work Plan

With an effective administrative scaffolding upon which to build future workshops, such as existing lesson plans on digital skills, datasets, and pedagogical philosophy, we will focus our efforts in the first year building an infrastructure to support the ongoing efforts of a digital humanities instructional community, outreach and publicity to recruit a diverse applicant pool, refinement of reading lists and project examples that connect humanities research projects with digital skill workshops. Our first task will include hiring an Institutes Coordinator, whose job description can be found in Appendix F. Next, we will get our CBOX installation setup and connected to our core curriculum on GitHub. We will also begin researching the job responsibilities of recent hires in digital humanities positions such as “specialists,” “coordinators,” and “postdoctoral fellows.” Our research about job responsibilities and available resources will help inform our approach as we support participants in the following year. Our Institutes Coordinator will coordinate the application process and respond to inquiries, while our GC faculty will review applications and respond to applicants. Once we have accepted applicants in February 2018, the Institutes Coordinator will begin assisting participants with travel arrangements, contact local campuses to secure reduced-rates on housing, order materials, communicate with workshop leaders, and coordinate all the logistical plans for the institute. Lisa Rhody and Matthew K. Gold will convene monthly meetings with institute faculty and instructors to enhance existing materials, collect datasets that reflect participant interests, and connect humanities research and pedagogy projects explicitly with skills workshops. The year will end by hosting the ten-day institute at the GC.

During year two, we will continue to offer support and feedback and to cultivate a supportive network of peers through our CBOX community forums. Participants will receive 20 hours of dedicated support from our Institutes Coordinator, GC Digital Fellows, and Lisa Rhody. As participants begin to run their own institutes, we will raise the visibility of their efforts through social media, on our own website, and through presentations at local events such as the CUNY Digital Humanities Initiative Lightning Talks and the NYC Digital Humanities Week kickoff meeting. Throughout the year, we will continue to refine the curriculum on GitHub and CBOX in response to feedback from institute participants. Our Institutes Coordinator will provide logistical support for our 2-day June 2019 meeting, assemble white-papers from participants, and assist Rhody and Gold as they prepare the guide to leading digital research institutes. An agenda for the June 2019 meeting can be found in Appendix B.

Participants

Our program will solicit applications from the growing number of faculty, librarians, staff, curators, museum educators, archivists, postdocs, and graduate students who pursue their own humanities research agendas while simultaneously being either been tasked with or interested in applying for positions that expect them to expand a community of digital humanities practice. In many cases, few financial resources are made available to support their efforts, and institutional IT infrastructure is oriented toward supporting learning management systems (LMSs) such as Blackboard or training staff how to use proprietary software such as Microsoft Office or Adobe Creative Suites.

As our experience leading workshops for graduate students, faculty, and staff at two and four year colleges and graduate schools and Rachel Buurma’s letter of support in Appendix J demonstrate, there is a growing number of humanities scholars in a wide array of institutional types who are looking for opportunities to develop foundational computational abilities in service of their humanities research and teaching. We believe that by focusing professional development efforts on those early-career digital humanities professionals, by supporting their professional, methodological, and research development, and by providing them with a network of colleagues and resources, that we are most likely to enable expanding communities of digital humanities practice, as well. We intend to circulate our applications widely for example through disciplinary and scholarly society listservs, through the Association for Computers in the Humanities, and through our deep academic social networks. We will also intend to be strategic, collecting job advertisements posted on sites such as Digital Humanities Now and H-Net and
approaching those hired into the open positions, and by soliciting applications from those who are either at the end of their doctoral programs, in postdoctoral positions, or have just begun one of their first positions to invite them to apply.

Our selection process will focus on three crucial aspects: evidence of interest in a particular humanities research project, responsibility or interest in building a community of digital humanities practitioners, and enthusiasm to become part of a network of institutes leaders. Rather than focusing on technical proficiencies, we will consider: Is the participant willing to participate as part of the group for the full year? Are they in a position to run a similar institute either at their own institute or as part of a regional DH consortium? Are they open to learning a range of approaches to scholarly production?

The evaluation committee for applications will include Gold, Rhody, the Institute Coordinator, Stephen Zweibel, and Kelly Baker Josephs with additional input from our visiting faculty and graduate students. Applicants will be rated on a Likert scale of 1-5 using holistic evaluation.

Impact and evaluation

By targeting key digital humanities personnel and offering them research and professional development opportunities, we believe that the DHRI has the potential to expand communities of digital humanities practice. Our ability to model proven approaches to teaching digital humanities methods in diverse contexts during our June 2018 institute will serve as a catalyst for larger conversations about how to address digital skill training in diverse academic contexts. We will use a combination of GitHub to host and share open access course modules, activities, readings, and slides and CBOX to create an online social network for participants. Our CBOX instance will provide forums for public and private conversation and file sharing. We anticipate that discussions about teaching and training in digital methods on group forums and on public-facing institute websites will fill a need to build community among those who are responsible for leading various forms of digital skill workshops. Furthermore, making our curriculum on GitHub visible through our CBOX-supported website, we will be able to share lessons learned and best practices with a wider public audience. As each workshop participant develops and launches public sites associated with their training programs, our CBOX community will seed public-facing examples of the many ways in which foundational skills in digital methods can be approached in a range of institutional and community contexts. By 2019, once we have seeded the site with pilot institutes, we will consider how best to open the CBOX community up to new members who wish to become part of the network of institute partners.

Evaluation will take place at several levels. During the June 2018 institute, exit slips will be collected each day that ask participants for feedback based on exit slips used at previous institutes and included in Appendix G. Each evening, the institute staff reviews feedback and makes adjustments. Additionally, a final evaluation will ask participants for feedback about whether or not they have developed more flexible foundational computational skills, whether they have developed more confidence in their use of digital tools, and whether they feel they have the support they need to advance their research. Finally, participants will be asked what progress they have made in creating their own institute and what support they may need from us over the year. When participants return in June 2018, they will offer reflections and lessons learned about their ability to implement a digital humanities research institute at their own institution, and provide a white paper. The guide will demonstrate what is successful, reproducible, and sustainable that comes out of the DHRI, and where improvements could be made. Finally, we hope to see that the community of digital humanities institute leaders will begin contributing back to the open and sharable curriculum that will continue to be hosted and maintained by the Graduate Center on GitHub.

Staff, faculty, and consultants

Staffing for DRHI will draw heavily from our GC resources. Given our New York City location and proximity to major institutions with expertise in digital humanities, we have also invited local humanities
researchers, pedagogues, and experts in scholarly communication to participate. Michelle McSweeney at the Center for Spatial Research at Columbia University will spend two days with us as a guest instructor for geospatial analysis and mapping. (See Appendix I for Curriculum Vitae and Appendix J for Letters of Commitment.)

CUNY Graduate Center

Lisa Rhody - is PI / Project Director for the Digital Humanities Research Institute and Deputy Director of Digital Initiatives. Lisa will be responsible for the overall intellectual direction of the institute, providing instruction on basic digital skill and, digital project development. She will provide mentoring and supervision for graduate student instructors, supervise the Institutes Coordinator, and handle all grant administration. At the 2019 workshop, she will facilitate conversations and write the final report with Matthew K. Gold.

Matthew K. Gold, Associate Professor of English and Advisor to the Provost for Digital Initiatives will help shape the intellectual direction of the institute, lead workshops on digital humanities pedagogy and advancements in open access publication and scholarly communication. He will serve as a mentor during the June 2018 institute for participants interested in developing communities of practice at their institutions or in their digital humanities local consortium, and help facilitate the June 2019 session, and contribute to the final white paper guide to leading digital humanities institutes in a variety of contexts.

Stephen Zweibel is Digital Scholarship Librarian and Assistant Professor at CUNY Graduate Center. He will serve as a primary member of the GC-based institute faculty, leading sessions on integrating virtual digital research tool solutions into your workshops, working with APIs, and using GitHub to manage collaborative projects. He will assist in the development and sustainability of our GitHub curriculum, contribute comments, testing, and changes, and during the June 2018 institute provide in-person assistance to participants. In June 2019, he will help respond to participant feedback.

Jill Cirasella is Associate Librarian for Public Services and Scholarly Communication at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York will participate in our Scholarly Communications Panel, offering participants insights into various ways to introduce humanists to the principles of Open Access publication both as producers and consumers, as well as answering participants questions about the best ways to collaborate with your librarian.

Luke Waltzer, Director, Teaching and Learning Center, will present on the relationship between creating platforms for digital pedagogy, such as Blogs@Baruch and the CUNY Academic Commons and the usefulness of knowing database basics. On Tuesday of the second week, he will sit in on conversations about digital pedagogy and creating platforms for sharing syllabi and course materials.

GC Digital Fellows are part of the GC Digital Fellows Program, which operates as an in-house think-and-do tank for digital projects. Digital Fellows utilize a team-based approach as they explore creative solutions for projects that can be implemented in a collaborative fashion. Their experience developing curricula and teaching for our GC Digital Institutes has prepared them to provide strong support at each session of the DHRI. Kelsey Chatlosh, Anthropology Program; Jojo Karlin, English Program; Mary Catherine Kinniburgh, English Program; Javier Otero Peña, Environmental Psychology Program; Ian Phillips, Linguistics Program; Patrick Smyth, English Program; Patrick Sweeney, Critical Social Psychology Program; Rachel Rakov, Linguistics Program

Visiting Presenters and Instructors

Nicky Agate is Head of Digital Initiatives at the Modern Languages Association and will join our conversation about building digital online communities and open access scholarly publication. She will introduce participants to the communities behind MLA Commons and Humanities Commons as another potential online location to find collaborators and support.

Patricia Hswe is a program officer with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and will join us for our panel on open access and the future of scholarly publication. She will also discuss her previous career...
experience as a digital content strategist and co-department head of Publishing and Curation Services at Penn State University Libraries,

**Kelly Baker Josephs** is Sterling Brown Visiting Professor of Africana Studies at Williams College and Associate Professor of English at York College. She will deliver a short presentation of her digital humanities teaching and research, including work from her course on the digital Caribbean. She will also participate in a 90 minute panel and group discussion about scholarly communication and digital research. **Shana Kimball**, Research Manager at Data & Society will participate on a panel discussing ethics, data, and digital humanities and will share with participants her ten years of experience as an academic publisher, project and people manager, strategist, communicator, and public speaker on open access, alternative academic careers, and more.

**Michelle McSweeney**, a Postdoctoral Fellow at Columbia University’s Center for Spatial Research, will offer an introduction to digital humanities research projects that make use of GIS and mapping software to ask long-standing humanities questions about space and place. She will lead a workshop on using open source mapping software to create interactive and rhetorically powerful maps in your teaching and research.

**Julia Miele Rodas**, Associate Professor of English at Bronx Community College, will participate on our “Ethics, Data, and Digital Humanities” panel. Drawing on her experience talking about many aspects of what we mean by “access,” Julie will provide consultation on disability services and digital humanities institutes in community college contexts throughout the year.
Appendix A: DHRI Agenda, June 11-20, 2018

(Bibliography of Readings by Day in Appendix D)

**Monday, June 11: Humanities Research Under Digital Conditions**

*Morning Session*
- Welcome, overview of the institute, discussion - Lisa Rhody and Matthew Gold
- Ice Breaker and Research/Pedagogy Sharing - Lisa Rhody
  - Participants use paper and pens, clay, Lego, and other materials to create a visual introduction to their research question, then circulate around the room, presenting their work to others in their cohort with the goal of meeting every other participant.
  - While working on their creative research projects, staff will circulate from table to table to make sure each participant has the software needed for the day installed properly.

*Lunch*

*Afternoon Session*
- **Introduction to the Command Line** - Mary Catherine Kinniburgh
  - In this session, we'll learn common commands by exploring and manipulating a simple data set. By the end of the session, participants will be able to navigate their computer, create and manipulate files, and transform text-based data using only the command line. Participants in this session often are surprised to realize that many of the simple tasks they have always wanted to be able to do with text corpora can often be accomplished relatively simply from the command line.

**Overview of Day 2, Day 1 Evaluation, Day 2 installation - Staff**
- At the end of each day, Lisa Rhody and the GC Digital Fellows provide a brief overview of what to expect the next day. We distribute exit slips before leading the group on the steps necessary to have all the software required for the next day properly installed.

**Tuesday, June 12: New Humanities Practices: Saving, Sharing and Collaborating**

*Morning Session*
- Morning briefing Lisa Rhody and Matthew Gold
- Digital Humanities Projects and Critical Approaches to Scholarly Collaboration - Kelly Baker Josephs
- **Introduction to Git and GitHub for Humanities Projects** - Jojo Karlin
  - Git is a tool for managing changes to a set of files. It allows users to access open source repositories, recover earlier versions of a project, and collaborate with other contributors. This session will be beneficial to anyone working with data, code, or text.

*Lunch*

*Afternoon Session*
- Humanities Research Presentation - Mary Catherine Kinniburgh
  - Python can be used for a variety of digital humanities research projects that range from collecting data through web scraping to poetic computation to the use of microprocessing and fabrication to explore humanities concepts. Participants will draw on reading materials to discuss how computational thinking can lead to deeper engagements with critical theory.
- **Python for Humanists** - Patrick Smyth
  - Python is a programming language that can be used for a wide range of tasks, including collecting and analyzing data in a variety of formats, building web
applications, and much more. It is likely the most popular language for academic researchers because of its flexibility and adaptability

- Ethics, Data, and Digital Humanities Panel and Discussion
  - Participants: Shana Kimball, Julia Miele Rodas, Kelsey Chatlosh, and Patrick Sweeney
  - A discussion of digital ethics with an emphasis on social justice, transparency, and accessibility. Humanists are not often familiar with guidelines for human research. The conversation will cover topics such as the human impact of big data analysis, sharing personal information, developing tools that capture personal data, open source and open access as humanities values, etc.

**Overview of Day 3, Evaluation, Day 3 installation - Staff**

**Wednesday, June 13: Handling Humanities Data**

**Morning Session**

- Morning briefing and discussion - Lisa Rhody and Matthew K. Gold
- Teaching humanities with Text Analysis Pedagogy presentation - Stephen Zweibel
  - From WordClouds to named entity recognition, collocation, and semantic analysis, this workshop will give participants an opportunity to explore how even simple text analysis tools can be useful teaching aids for close reading. Drawing from experience working with historians, art historians, curators, museum educators, and archivists, this conversation will explore how text analysis might be used in a wide variety of learning contexts.

- Natural Language Processing for Humanists - Rachel Rakov
  - This session will introduce text analysis and text classification in Python using The Natural Language Toolkit (NLTK) library and scikit-learn. Through attending this session, you will learn how to use Python to analyze large amounts of text (i.e., literary works, social media corpora, etc.) to find word frequencies, collocations, and learn the basics of text classification with machine learning. This session is designed for researchers who work with various forms of text-based data.

**Lunch**

**Afternoon Session**

- Digital Humanities Pedagogy Presentation - LMSs are Databases, too. Luke Waltzer
  - Understanding how databases operate can improve your ability to teach and to research more efficiently. This session will introduce the many pedagogical DH projects and participants will discuss how you can get the most out of a teaching blog or learning management system when you know how a database operates.

- Database Primer for Humanists - Ian Phillips
  - Databases are invaluable tools for organization and are better than a spreadsheet for working with multiple data sets, asking questions, and adding structure to your data. SQL is a programming language for working with databases. This workshop will introduce you to the basics of SQL, and will include hands-on practice creating databases and tables, importing data, and querying the database.

**Overview of Day 4, Evaluation, Day 4 installation - Staff**

**Thursday, June 14: Humanities Questions and Databases**

**Morning Session**

- Morning briefing and discussion - Lisa Rhody and Matthew K. Gold
- This workshop will focus on an array of strategies that can be used in the classroom to connect students to one another and to larger publics. Conversation will center on successful models for interaction and planning for assignments. Challenges to openness will also be discussed.

**Lunch**

**Afternoon Session**
- [Digital Project Development Workshop](#) - Lisa Rhody and GC Digital Fellows
  - Using the information gathered over the previous days of the DRI, participants will work in teams to develop a digital project plan for datasets relevant to their research areas.

**Overview of Day 5, Evaluations, Day 5 installation - Staff**

**Friday, June 15: Mapping Humanities Questions**

**Morning Session**
- Morning briefing and discussion - Lisa Rhody and Matthew K. Gold
- Humanities Research Presentation - Michelle McSweeney
  - Drawing on readings and exploration of a range of mapping projects, participants will consider the the power of maps as research tools for exploration, analysis, and scholarly communication, as well as the dangers and common pitfalls.
- Making spatial arguments with QGIS - Part I - Michelle McSweeney and Javier Otero Peña
  - This session introduces simple yet powerful ways of displaying spatial information through CartoDB and QGIS. This session will be of particular interest both to researchers working with spatial information as well as anyone interested in storytelling with maps.

**Lunch**

**Afternoon Session**
- Making spatial arguments with QGIS - Part II - Michelle McSweeney and Javier Otero Peña
  - This session will continue work begun in the morning and provide workshop time for participants.
- Teaching with Map-making technologies: Easy ways to introduce map-making into your graduate and undergraduate curricula.

**Overview of Day 6, Evaluations, Day 6 installation - Staff**

**Agenda: Week Two**

**Monday, June 18: Evaluating and Using Public Datasets and Building Your Institute**

**Morning Session**
- Morning briefing and discussion - Matthew K. Gold and Lisa Rhody
- [Working with APIs](#) - Patrick Smyth
  - This session will cover the basics of accessing data via the Twitter API, including specific challenges that arise when working with large, text-based data sets. This session will be beneficial for anyone who wants to collect data from Twitter or other social networks.
- What makes a good humanities dataset? - Stephen Zweibel
  - Participants will explore why the instructors have chosen the datasets that have been used throughout the DRI and carefully weigh the important considerations to keep in mind when selecting datasets for participants to use in their own institutes.

**Lunch**
Afternoon Session

- Building your Own Digital Research Institute - All GC Faculty
  - Participants will have time to draft and workshop their own plans for institutes with instructors on hand to answer questions or provide consultation. We will share with participants some of the lessons we learned through trial and error. For example, during our first institute, our application questions focused on determining participants "comfort" with certain technologies. This proved to be a poor indicator of a participant's success because participants were not accurate evaluators of their own skill level. While asking about a participant's research helped us to design our lessons, it did not help us to determine how well the student would respond to instruction. Instead, we began asking questions that helped us to determine participants' willingness to participate in the whole workshop, their willingness to learn in groups, their resilience responding to frustration, and their interest in scholarly fields other than their own.

Overview of Day 7, Evaluations, Day 7 installation - Staff

Tuesday, June 19: Digital Humanities Research Institutes in Open Contexts

Morning Session

- Morning briefing and discussion - Matthew K. Gold and Lisa Rhody
- Purposeful Pedagogy: What is the theory behind the CUNY-DRI? -GC Digital Fellows
  - This session will expose participants to the decisions, experiences, and best practices that have been integrated into the DHRI institute. We'll discuss what works as well as consider what modifications to approach might need to be made in other training contexts.
- Institutes Lab — Unstructured independent work. Attendees will be able to collaborate in groups or work alone, and will have the option to consult with instructors.

Lunch

Afternoon Session

- Digital Humanities, Open Access, and Advocacy Panel
  - Participants: Nicky Agate, Patricia Hswe, Jill Cirasella, Katina Rogers, Kelly Baker Josephs
- Building Open Workshop Curricula - Stephen Zweibel and GC Digital Fellows
  - Participants will fork DRI curriculum materials and learn how to make modifications. Attendees will also learn how to contribute their improvements and elaborations back “upstream,” improving the curriculum available to the whole network.

Overview of Day 8, Evaluations, Day 8 installation - Staff

Wednesday, June 20: Building an Institutes Community

Morning Session

- Morning briefing and discussion - Matthew K. Gold
- Hosted Solutions CBOX and DH Box - Matthew K. Gold and Stephen Zweibel
  - This session will consider how to grow online communities with CBOX and the advantages and drawbacks of cloud infrastructure providers, including shared hosting, Amazon Web Services, and proprietary services such as Python Anywhere. Participants will also be introduced to DH Box, a browser-based, open-source DH environment developed at the Graduate Center.

Lunch

Afternoon Session

- Discussion: Obstacles and Opportunities -

21
• Morning conversation will focus on small group discussions about participants’ unique institutional circumstances and the challenges and opportunities that each presents for running their own versions of a Digital Humanities Research Institute.
  • Lightning Presentations - All  
    • Each panelist will present a brief overview of what was most valuable to them and the challenges they foresee (and support they may need) moving forward.
  • Closing Comments - Lisa Rhody and Matthew K. Gold
Appendix B: June 2019 Agenda

Day 1
Afternoon: Participants arrive
- Presentations of research projects and workshops run over the past year

Day 2
Morning
- Small group focus groups on obstacles and opportunities
- Drafts of white papers
Afternoon
- Large group discussion culling feedback and making recommendations for building out a larger community of institute leaders

Participants Depart
Appendix C: Detailed Work Plan

**Year 1  9/1/2017 – 8/31/2017**

**Quarter 1**  
- Hire Institutes Coordinator and train  
- Install and build CBOX site

**Quarter 2**  
- Work on GitHub repository with curriculum and integrate into CBOX installation  
- Begin planning logistics, contact hotels, catering, and begin monthly meetings with faculty  
- Develop application and begin publicity about the DHRI, spreading the word via social media and listservs; Begin accepting applications

**Quarter 3**  
- Application deadline and make selections  
- Contact applicants with results  
- Set participants up in CBOX and add their profiles to the site  
- Finalize logistical organization for Institute  
- Continue meeting with faculty, refining humanities datasets, testing curricula, creating support documentation  
- Coordinate stipends

**Quarter 4**  
- Host institute June 11-20, 2018  
- Communicate with participants to let them know how to use the CBOX site to request help  
- Pay honoraria to visiting faculty

**Year 2  9/1/2018 – 8/31/2019**

**Quarter 1**  
- Actively cultivate conversation on the CBOX group forums  
- Provide support and consultation for participants as they begin figuring out how and when to host their version of the institute  
- Continue to refine curriculum and to accept pull requests from participants

**Quarter 2**  
- Continue supporting participants via CBOX  
- Publicize and circulate information about participants’ workshops  
- Begin planning logistics for June 2019  
- Keep track of the many variations of the curricula that begin and publicize them

**Quarter 3**  
- Finalize logistics for June 2019 meeting  
- Begin writing the Guide to Leading Digital Research Institutes  
- Consult one-on-one with each participant and actively foster conversation on the CBOX site in advance of our meeting

**Quarter 4**  
- Host June 2019 meeting  
- Write and submit final report including Guide to Leading Digital Humanities Research Institutes
Appendix D: Bibliography

Cited in Proposal

Working List of Workshop Readings

Day One

Day Two

Day Three
Day Four

Day Five


Day Six


Day Seven
Appendix F: Job Description for Institutes Coordinator

The Institute Coordinator will play a central role in the administrative, logistical, and community management responsibilities associated with the Digital Humanities Research Institute. In year one, the coordinator will be responsible for:

- Installing CBOX and developing a website for the institute, including creating the application form, managing user registration;
- Assisting with the application process by receiving, organizing, and coordinating the application, review, and response process;
- Managing the distribution and collection of paperwork required to dispense participant stipends and honoraria;
- Coordinating travel arrangements, including outreach to local universities and campuses to secure cost-effective accommodations for participants and communicating those arrangements to participants;
- Creating logistical materials about travel to NYC and local resources for our website;
- Sending publicity materials to increase diversity of applications to a wide range of listservs, institutional accounts, and postings on disciplinary websites;
- Facilitating communication with instructors, materials, logistics, and technical support;
- Maintaining and updating the website with relevant information about the upcoming institute.

In year two, the coordinator will continue many of the activities above, as well as:

- Manage the CBOX community forums;
- Respond to participants’ requests for support by either delegating questions or answering them;
- Manage pull requests to the core institute curricula on GitHub;
- Coordinate publication efforts for the final report.

Average 10-12 hours per week x 52 weeks x 2 years
Appendix G: Example Exit Slip

The online exit slip can be seen here: https://goo.gl/forms/757oDG1R6jeevaKH3. Responses from the exit slip can be found here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qZQ3eIvUXwlZsQk0XEgKe7oZPVE7Fo3wM-F3wePKU/edit?usp=sharing

Staff responded to feedback from the form by improving the number of screenshots we use to demonstrate working with Python from a Windows machine. We also started using purple notes to designate when participants were ready for a break.