

IMAGE ESSAY PROJECT

Lit 140: Intro to Media

Students will design and publish their own HTML homepages using GitHub. This will be the site for the About Me and Image Essay webpages you'll create (see below), as well as a space for additional material you find to be of interest. Most importantly, this is an opportunity to explore the potential of hand-coded HTML as part of a liberated, critical media practice. Starting from a blank slate, you will be the sole designer and webmaster of this space. Make yourself at home.

Prof. Keith O'Hara and Experimental Humanities Web Developer Ryan Sablonsky (contact via Bard mail) will get you up and running, and Ryan has kindly offered to serve as a resource for you in case you get stuck or have trouble as you work. Feel free to email him with questions or to set up meetings, but keep in mind that he may not be able to respond outside of regular working hours.

PART 1 - "HELLO WORLD" (1 PT.)

6 SEPTEMBER IN CLASS

Students will be hand-coding HTML webpages using GitHub in order to learn basic HTML concepts. By the end of the first session, students should have created homepages that say "hello world," include one image, and link to their "About Me" site, which will also contain text and one image.

Objectives: computational literacy, familiarity with basic HTML attributes

PART 2 - "ABOUT ME" (3 PTS.)

DUE 15 SEPTEMBER

Students will customize their homepages with 5 or more items about themselves. This can include text, video, sound, and animation, but **must include at least 3 image files -- .JPG, .GIF, or .PNG**. The media should be organized into folders. Their homepages should be further customized to include

- a background image or color,
- at least one hyperlink,
- at least one instance of colored, highlighted, underlined, italicized, bold, or blinking text, and
- at least one table

Tutorials will be available on 1) layout and color, and 2) embedding multimedia. See the source code for instructions. (In Chrome, go to View→Developer→View Source)

Objectives: webspace organization, embedding multimedia elements, considering "the message" of various media via McLuhan

PART 3 - "IMG ESSAY" (3 PTS.)

DUE 29 SEPTEMBER FOR CLASS

Students will collect **at least 5 pieces of media from their classmates' homepages**, downloading and rehosting them on their own webspace. This new page should include attributions to the original posters of the reused media with links back to their homepages. These images, animations, sounds, and videos, as well as others that the student may wish to include, will find a new home as parts of an "image essay" on a topic of the student's choice. An image that one student used as a representation of their "favorite animal" in the "About Me" project may appear again as a pictogram in an imagined conversation between two world leaders, for instance, or as an example in a critical history of "cuteness as commodity," or in a collection of "photographs with lens flare" which includes quotes from Pagan sun-worshipping rituals. Students will not be graded on artistic ability, but are expected to complete all of the requirements and attempt to tell a story or make a point through images and other media other than writing.

Objectives: introduction to "experimental" production concepts outside of the purely textual scholarly essay, generate ideas about re-use and re-contextualization of media.

PART 4 - "CLOSE READING" (3 PTS.)

DUE 12 OCTOBER TO ASPINWALL 306 BY NOON

In the fourth part, students will complete a close reading of a classmate's image essay. This might involve offering a critical, analytical perspective on the author's use of various media, drawing upon the discussions of close reading that they will have had in class. In addition to a three-page written analysis, students are also encouraged (but not required) to print out a copy of the source code for the essay they are responding to, marking it up with various notes, suggestions, and questions based on the syntax of the HTML code itself, rather than only the "content" of the essay.

Objectives: close-reading images, text, and HTML code

PART 5 - "RESPONSE" (EXTRA CREDIT, UP TO 2 PTS.)

DUE 19 OCTOBER BY CLASS TIME

Students may choose, for extra credit, to produce a "response" Image Essay that reacts to the Image essay that they close read for Part 4.

Regular updates and links will be available on the course blog.