

The availability of digital resources has significantly changed literary studies, especially because of the rapid increase the accessibility of literary and critical texts that were previously very difficult to locate or access, or were extremely rare. Because of their digital form, such texts can be searched and can be transferred almost instantaneously from place to place. Yet locating, accessing, searching, and easily distributing digital texts are not the only ways of taking advantage of their digital nature.

This course will investigate some of the ways that manipulation and analysis can more fully exploit the nature of digital literary texts. We will consider some methods of distant reading, such as those recently practiced by Franco Moretti in *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London: Verso, 2005)—methods possible only since the advent of huge collections of publicly available digital texts. We will also study related work, like Matthew Jockers's *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

The course will concentrate mainly, however, on methods of very close reading that digital texts and tools make possible for the first time, including those most associated with John F. Burrows (for example, his recent "A Second Opinion on "Shakespeare and Authorship Studies in the Twenty-First Century," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63(3), 2012: 355-392), and recently promoted by Hugh Craig and Arthur Kinney in *Shakespeare, Computers, and the Mystery of Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Along the way, we will work with individual digital literary texts, specially constructed literary corpora, online portals, databases, natural language corpora, text collections, and single-author sites, and with digital archives, including some, like the Willa Cather Digital Archive, and the Brown Women Writers Project, that include their own analytical tools. We will also work with Minitab (a statistical analysis program), with The Intelligent Archive (a free JAVA program for archiving and analyzing texts), and with some of my own text-analysis tools built in Microsoft Excel and Python.

Finally, we will take a searching look at Stephen Ramsay's influential recent book *Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011, mainly in relation to his provocative thesis that computational analysis must further the kinds of open-ended and innovative thinking favored by literary critics if it is to become influential. This thesis is a direct challenge to the long-established tradition of textual analysis and computational stylistics that aims to limit the subjectivity of critical claims and to bring defensible evidence to bear on questions for which it was previously unavailable. Specifically, we will take Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and Ramsay's algorithmic provocations concerning this experimental text as a case study through which to examine this complex issue.

Our goal will be to apply innovative techniques to long-standing literary questions and to explore kinds of inquiries that digital texts and tools have made possible for the first time. We will focus on a fairly wide range of literature in English from about 1800 to 1923, to avoid copyright problems, but students can study texts from any period and in many different languages in their own projects. The course assumes no advanced computational background, but it will take place in a computer lab (PC computers; some of the software does not run on Macs), and will involve extensive hands-on computational analysis.