INF 385S: Digital Libraries  
Wednesday 9-12, SRH 1.208 (Benson Conference Room)

This course explores the life cycle of a digital library/collection through various critical lenses and hands-on experiences. The objective of the course is for students to obtain a solid understanding of the theoretical frameworks, technical processes, and technologies needed to build meaningful, relevant, and ethical digital libraries.

Each 3-hour session will be in two parts. In the first part, the class will discuss the theoretical and ethical frameworks for the week’s topic/technical process based on assigned scholarly articles and book chapters. Students will be exposed to theories in archival science, social sciences, humanities, data science, and digital studies. Students will also read and critically assess case studies of existing digital libraries, particularly those providing access to materials documenting the lived experience of Afro-descendant, Asian, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, U.S. Latine, and other underrepresented/marginalized communities around the world. Students will write and submit critical reflections on the week’s readings prior to class with the hope that it will lead to a lively discussion in class.

The second part of each class will consist of collaborative activities and/or hands-on workshops intended to put into practice the theoretical frameworks and ethical considerations that were discussed in the first part. Through group projects, students will be creating, visualizing, and presenting a digital collection for a partnering local, regional, or national cultural repository. Through these experiential sessions and assignments, students will learn how to prepare digital assets for ingestion into platforms; create metadata using various standards and schema; ingest digital assets and metadata to create digital collections; expand/transform metadata into visualizable collection datasets; use open source tools to visualize collections for public engagement; and properly contextualize digital libraries. As a final assignment, students will develop a competitive grant funding proposal for the creation of a digital library in consultation with the partnering cultural repositories using guidelines and requirements from relevant funding sources such as the NEA, NEH, CLIR, IMLS, Luce Foundation, and the National Film Preservation Foundation.

Students will be evaluated on the following basis (tentative):

Reading Reflections and Class Participation 15%
Metadata Project 25%
  Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), 5%
  Collection Metadata, 15%
  Metadata Crosswalk, 5%
Collection Visualization & Public Project 25%
  Proposal and MOU, 5%
  Collection Data Visualization, 10%
  Contextual Wrapper for Visualization, 10%
Grant Funding Proposal 35%
  MOU, 5%
  Draft Proposal, 10%
  Peer Review and Team Evaluation, 5%
  Final Proposal, 15%
Tentative Course Schedule

WEEK 1
Aug. 22-26
Introduction to “Digital Libraries”
Introductions and syllabus overview; Digital library types; Critical appraisal/selection of collections and data for digital libraries; Consideration of cultural, privacy, intellectual, and other rights; Appraisal/Selection activity and discussion

WEEK 2
Aug. 29-Sep. 2
Digitization
Post-custodial archival development praxis; Factors for analog and digital formats; Tour of campus digitization labs

WEEK 3
Sep. 5-9
Metadata
Representation/Presentation of communities; Standards and schema; Introduce “Metadata Project” assignment and collections; “Metadata Project” Group MOU/contract due Sep. 9

WEEK 4
Sep. 12-16
Metadata/Data Extraction
Ethical and legal considerations; Critical application of automated technologies; Metadata/Data extraction and clean-up workshop

WEEK 5
Sep. 19-23
Digital Infrastructures
Repositories; Internationalization/Multilingualism; Platforms and user interfaces (CollectionBuilder; DSpace; Islandora; Omeka; Blacklight/Spotlight; Mukurtu); Interoperability and metadata crosswalks

WEEK 6
Sep. 26-30
Collections as Humanities/Humane Data, part 1
Humanity in digital library data; Data rights and ethics; Generating datasets for network visualization; Introduce “Collection Visualization & Public Project” assignment; “Metadata Project” Collection Metadata and Metadata Crosswalk due Sep. 26

WEEK 7
Oct. 3-7
Collections as Humanities/Humane Data, part 2 [Oct. 6-]
Considerations for the mapping of digitized cultural heritage; Extracting/Generating and mapping geospatial data; “Collection Visualization & Public Project” proposal and Group MOU/contract due Oct. 3

WEEK 8
Oct. 10-14
Contextualizing the Digital Library
Accessibility for diverse literacies and learning styles; Front-end and exhibition platforms; Discuss “Contextual Wrapper for Visualization” portion of assignment

WEEK 9
Oct. 17-21
Collaborative Digital Library Building
“Digital Library” as community space; Dismantling the notion of “crowdsourcing” and the attribution of community collaborators; collaborative digital scholarship platforms

WEEK 10
Oct. 24-28
Group Presentations
Collection Visualization & Public Project Presentations; Collection Data Visualization & Contextual Wrapper for Visualization due Oct. 28
WEEK 11  Grant Writing
Oct. 31-Nov. 4  Grant writing techniques; Budgeting; Data management plans; Introduce “Grant Funding Proposal” assignment

WEEK 12  Digital Preservation and Long-Term Access
Nov. 7-11  Linked Open Data; Persistent Links; Digital preservation workshop; “Grant Funding Proposal” group MOU/contract due Nov. 7

WEEK 13  Data Aggregations
Nov. 14-18  Metadata/data harvesting; Digital library/data bias and inequality; “Grant Funding Proposal” draft due Nov. 18

WEEK 14  FALL BREAK (No class)
Nov. 21-26

WEEK 15  Group Presentations & Course Conclusion
Nov. 28-Dec. 2  “Grant Funding Proposal” presentations & class feedback; Course reflections and evaluation; “Grant Funding Proposal” Peer Review due Dec. 2; “Grant Funding Proposal” Final version and and Team Evaluation due Dec. 9.