

<p>chid special colloquia section b spring 2009 mw 9:30-11:20</p>	<p>498</p>	<p>Jentery Sayers  jentery@u  parnassus  w 3-5 pm</p>
<p>mapping the digital humanities</p>		

>>> mappingthedigitalhumanities.org <<<
room: OUGL 102

Welcome to Comparative History of Ideas 498, Mapping the Digital Humanities!

What is the role of digital technologies in learning and taking humanities classes at the university? How are these technologies influencing humanities scholarship and research practices, as well as facilitating critical, collaborative, and creative inquiry? With these questions as a framework, this course provides you with the opportunity to **develop your own digital humanities project** throughout (and ideally beyond) an entire quarter.

More specifically, the class is structured around two approaches to “mapping” in the digital humanities: **geographical mapping and textual mapping**. In the first instance, as a class, you will collaboratively compose an interactive, digital map of the University of Washington’s Seattle campus through a combination of photography, video, sound, text, and Google Maps and Earth. In the second instance, you will pursue individual projects, where you will use a blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches to produce a digital model of your own research on a particular text or texts. Put this way, both the collaborative and individual projects will function as vehicles for “**animating**” information and moving audiences toward new ways of engaging humanities research.

This class is **an introduction** to the digital humanities. No technical competences are required, and the course content stresses technology-focused critical methods and computer-aided approaches to culture, history, and literature. That said, while I will assume that you have no technical competences in computing (specifically in XHTML, CSS, GIS, or data modeling), I will ask you to further the humanities **work you have already done**. Regardless of what individual project you ultimately choose, I ask that you think of this class both as a direct extension of your previous studies and as a tangible means of preparing you for future studies at the intersection of things digital and things humanistic. Try being a computer geek *and* a book nerd, simultaneously, if only for a quarter.

“Mapping the Digital Humanities” will be a quarter-long project on a number of registers—**individual and collaborative, methodical and experimental**, technical and critical. And as for that peculiar title: “mapping” the digital humanities implies not just the maps you will be producing, but also locating possibilities for the digital humanities in your own undergraduate education. This act of locating should allow you a great deal of leeway in making your own choices in this class; it should also allow me to learn a great deal with you in the process.

So what is “the digital humanities,” exactly?

“Don’t teach skills. Teach competences. . . . Computers can do better things than that.” – Sandy Stone, during a July 16, 2007 talk at the European Graduate School

The digital humanities is not a discipline. It’s best understood as **a field of study** that often requires interdisciplinary work across departments and learning spaces—for instance, here at the UW, this class emerged through a collaboration between faculty, graduate students, and staff in Geography, English, Comparative History of Ideas, and the Simpson Center for the Humanities, and with the input of some

undergraduates, I should add. While I am teaching the course, over the last year the development of the curriculum demanded practices, approaches, and experiences that could not be situated solely in the discipline of English.

With that brief history of the course in mind, the digital humanities is the **synthesis of technical competences in computing with critical practices** in the humanities. Yes indeed, humanists do use computers. In fact, scholars in the digital humanities often:

- “Refashion” print, or digitize and encode print texts for preservation and searching,
- Generate digital models (e.g., graphs, diagrams, and charts) that re-present and re-think the book,
- Study the history of computers and computing practices in humanities contexts,
- Use computers for storing, transmitting, and mining humanities research,
- Work in collaborative teams consisting of, say, literary critics, historians, information scientists, and designers, and
- Assess the cultural implications of new media and technologies.

True, not every digital humanities scholar practices all of the above, and there are many more things to be added to that list. Nevertheless, what each has in common is the fact that technology is never understood as merely a means to rehearse particular skills. Technology is more than *that*, more than the thing through which input generates output. It is a culturally embedded, contextual catalyst for **producing knowledge**. Technology shapes us, and we shape technology. Call that a “feedback loop,” if you wish.

Why teach this course, in particular, on “mapping”?

“there can be no true maps” – Fredric Jameson,
in *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*

My colleague (Matt Wilson, Geography) and I noticed something commonplace in undergraduate education and research at the University of Washington, namely that students in departments such as English and Comparative History of Ideas often learn about how technology is embedded in culture, yet they rarely have the opportunity to acquire technical competences in media production. On the other hand, students in departments such as Geography do often acquire the technical competences they need, but they do so without the chance to learn some critical perspectives on technology.

With this apparent polarity or gap in mind, this class asks you to blend the technical with the critical—to see how both function in any technology-focused project. However, by the calendar we must abide. We have just one quarter. Consequently, of all the things digital humanities scholars often do, we’ll narrow them down to two things: **(1) modeling and (2) refashioning print**. Both of these are knotted together through “mapping.”

This quarter, mapping both the campus and a text (or a group of texts) will allow you to:

- Learn how to use new media and technologies, as well as computer-aided approaches to the humanities, to identify and analyze patterns (e.g., everyday habits on campus, word occurrence, and lines of thought) that you perhaps overlooked in your previous studies and experiences,
- Examine the complex relationships between print and digital texts, particularly how digital humanities scholars do not simply “digitize” print—they reconfigure and reshape it, and
- Understand how all maps and classifications are inherently biased and how to pressure that bias toward critical readings of history, place, literature, and culture.

While there may be no true maps, some are much more persuasive than others, with far more palpable effects. **Abstractions are material**, and they are **not divorced from the actual, felt goings-on of everyday life**. Keep this in mind as you progress through the quarter. One challenge will be how—in all the modeling and refashioning—to make your work matter for particular audiences. Another might be how—in all the classifying, coding, and locating—to generate a surprise, or something that an audience does not expect from a map.

By focusing on maps and mapping, we'll attend to how maps are simultaneously:

- Abstractions and idealized forms,
- Material objects,
- Negotiations between social forces, cultures, practices, structures of power, and people, and
- Classification systems and means of producing and sustaining order.

How are the projects graded?

“The digital pioneers in American literature are beginning to take stock of their achievements. They are asking questions about how the new technology is affecting analysis itself, rather than focusing only on its scope, speed, or convenience.” – Kathlin Smith, in “American Literature E-Scholarship: A Revolution in the Making”

To reiterate: In this class, you will outline, execute, revise and present your own digital humanities research project that is not only feasible in a quarter, but also builds upon work you've already done. What's more, you'll be asked to use a method that's flexible enough to allow you to further develop your project after the class is finished. Your project will **emerge in steps**, which will include opportunities for you to comment on your peers' projects, receive feedback from them and me, and experiment with ideas.

By the quarter's end, you should:

- Become familiar with a markup language (XHTML) and a stylesheet language (CSS) and write in both of them (at a novice level) without the use of a computer.
- Collaboratively construct a geographical map (of the UW, Seattle campus) through a set of shared and agreed-upon standards for composing in a networked environment.
- Individually produce a textual map (e.g., of a city depicted in a novel, of the relations between texts in an archive) and articulate (in an abstract of no more than 300 words) the map's critical motivation, its classification system, and the method used to produce it.
- Research aspects of a print text (e.g., a novel, a geographical map), refashion and animate them in a digital text, and assess (in 750-1250 words) how that animation affords a novel way for audiences to perceive, navigate and interpret your research.
- Sample a variety of software and systems (e.g., ArcGIS, WordPress, and Google Visualization, Earth and Maps) and identify what software and systems are most appropriate for your own digital humanities project.

Note that these learning outcomes are not based simply on making humanities research easier or speedier. Instead, they stress how new technologies afford new analysis, which requires both technical competences and critical practices.

Based upon these outcomes, your work will be graded as follows:

- **Class participation (30% of the grade):** Class time will include hands-on modules on humanities computing, group conversations, short talks, workshops, and critiques. Aside from

these components, the class participation grade will also include the timeliness of your work, your participation in three conferences with me, and the quality of your collaboration with your peers.

- **Blogging and collaborative project (20% of the grade):** You will be blogging throughout the quarter. Since the collaborative project is for the most part housed on the blog, it is also included in this portion of your grade. Factors for assessing the blogging and collaborative project include timeliness, how persuasively your work responds to the prompt at hand, and how concretely the ideas and applications from class modules are mobilized in your writing and compositions.
- **Quiz (5% of the grade):** There will be one quiz—announced in advance—administered and taken in class. It will emerge from the modules and will cover the basics of XHTML and CSS. You can only take it once.
- **Final presentation (5% of the grade):** At the quarter's end, you will present your individual project (see next bullet point) to the class or to a wider audience. (We'll decide on the audience at the beginning of the quarter.) That presentation will be graded on how concisely you articulate your work, the clarity of your method, and the appropriateness of the presentation's content for the context.
- **Individual project (40% of the grade):** Individual projects will consist of six stages (i.e., thought piece, needs assessment, work flow, abstract, data model, and final digital model and assessment). Aside from the final digital model and assessment, you will be able to revise each stage of the project based upon the criteria in the prompt, comments from and conferences with me, and feedback from your peers.

These five components of the class will each be graded on a 4.0 scale and then, for your final grade, averaged according to the percentages I provide above.

How does the individual project work?

"Now imagine that the forest is a huge information space and each of the trees and bushes are classification systems. . . . Your job is to describe this forest. You may write a basic manual of forestry, or paint a landscape, compose an opera, or improve the maps used throughout. What will your product look like? Who will use it?" – Geoffrey C. Bowker & Susan Leigh Star, in *Sorting Things Out*

To elaborate on your individual project, each stage will be graded, outcome by outcome, on the 4.0 scale. These stages will allow you to continuously revise what your project will look like and who will be its audience(s).

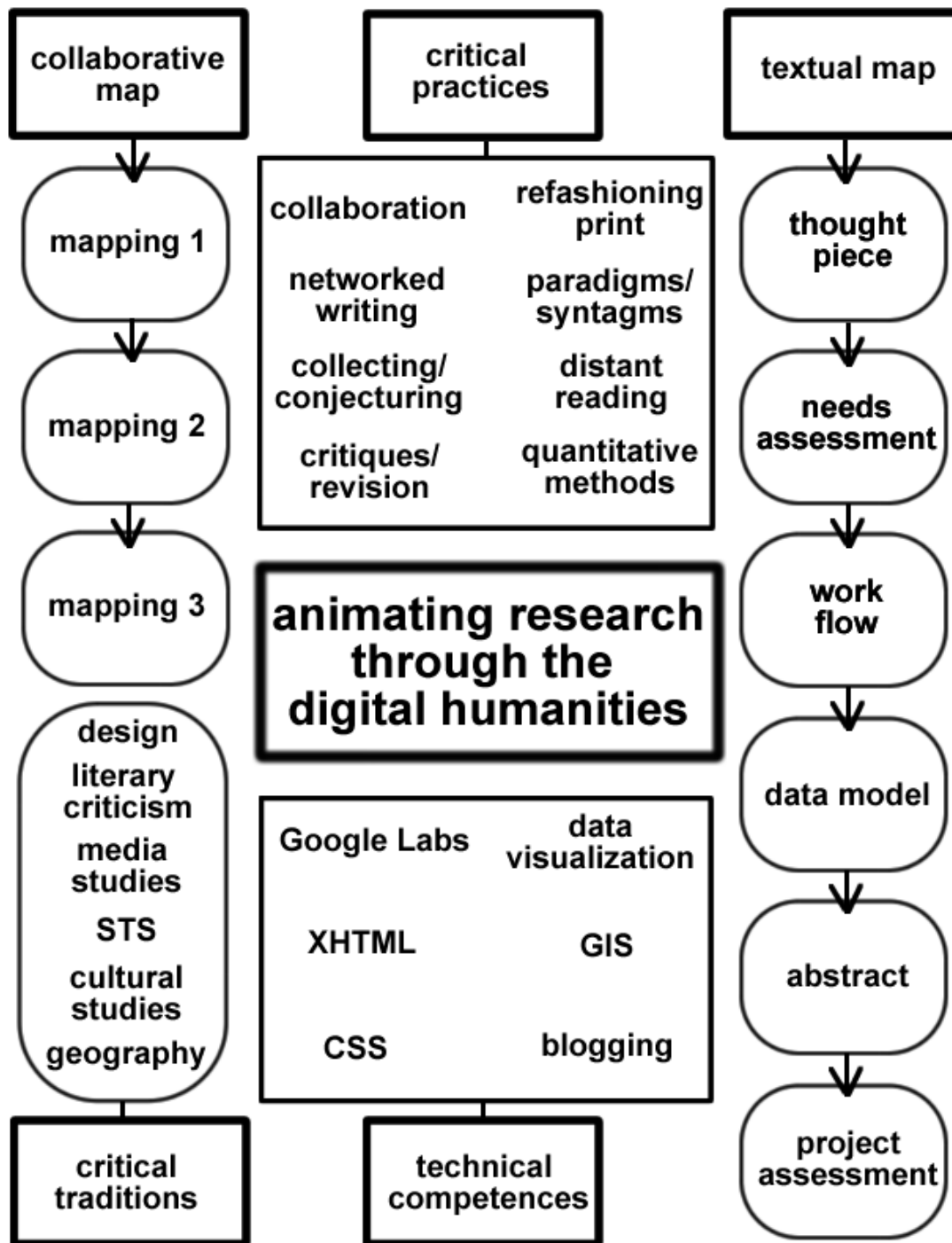
At the end of the quarter, your individual project will be treated as a **six-stage portfolio** and will receive one grade on the 4.0 scale. To receive credit for the class, all six stages must be included in your final portfolio (which will be housed at mappingthedigitalhumanities.org). Here is how I will calculate the grade for your portfolio:

- **Thought piece** (10% of portfolio, can be revised once after it's graded),
- **Needs assessment** (10% of portfolio, can be revised once after it's graded),
- **Work flow** (10% of portfolio, can be revised once after it's graded),
- **Data model** (15% of portfolio, can be revised once after it's graded),
- **Abstract** (15% of portfolio, can be revised once after it's graded), and
- **Final prototype and assessment** (40% of portfolio, cannot be revised after it's graded).

Please note that I will probably revise the prompts as the class progresses. Needs and demands change. Such is life.

Here is a map, then, of what the course includes. It's reductive, in a productive way.

- On the left are your collaborative mapping assignments (part of your participation grade).
- On the right are the assignments for the textual map (part of your individual project grade).
- In the middle (top) and middle (bottom) are the critical practices and technical competences you'll be asked to acquire, respectively,
- In the middle of the map is the course goal.
- On the bottom (left) are the critical traditions and practices used to generate the curriculum. ("STS" stands for "Science and Technology Studies.")



What are the course materials or textbooks?

There is no textbook for the class. The course material consists mostly of **ten modules**. These, too, are subject to change. The purpose of the modules is to work toward technical issues in the digital humanities through the lenses of history, culture, and literature. Generally speaking, a single module will take one class period (roughly two hours), with half of the class dedicated to lecture and conversation and the other half to technical application. What I ask of you, then, is to review each module prior to class (including the links provided), actively participate during class, and chat with me whenever questions or concerns arise.

Other than the modules, the **bulk of out-of-class reading, studying, and research will be project specific**. For your individual projects and with advice from your peers, I will work with you (in class, during conferences, and by appointment) to help you determine what texts, materials, and methods you might consider to produce a textual map by the quarter's end.

Occasionally, I will ask you to read a tad between classes in order to prepare for a module. Those readings will be provided in class, on the class blog, or via the class listserv.

Other than the readings and modules, you will occasionally need access to a digital camera, mobile phone, and/or camcorder. If you do not have any of these, then I suggest reserving a digital camera or camcorder from Classroom Support Services. (More at <http://www.css.washington.edu/>). I will keep you posted on when would be a good time to make those reservations. I realize there are time restrictions.

Where's the calendar?

First off, it's subject to change and quite elastic. That said, I provide it via a Google calendar, which is available via the course website (mappingthedigitalhumanities.org).

During class, I will generally announce what we'll be attending to in the next few classes. I often echo that in-class announcement with an email to the class listserv. In advance, thanks for your willingness to be flexible here. As an instructor, I find that flexibility pays off for both students and me.

What are the course policies?

>>> Participation

Since conversations are essential to the quality of this class, I expect that we shall work together to create an atmosphere of respect. College level discourse does not shy away from sensitive issues, including questions of race, gender, class, sexuality, politics, art, and religion, and neither will we. There are going to be differences in opinions, beliefs, and interpretations when we question texts, technology and cultural issues. You need not agree with the arguments in what we read or with what others—including me—have to say. In fact, it is important to think critically and question approaches. Still, you must do so intelligently and with respect. Respect for difference is instrumental to creating a classroom in which a variety of ideas can be exchanged and points of view can be explored.

What is crucial to CHID 498 is that you are **enjoying and are comfortable participating in the course**. If for whatever reason you are not, then please talk with me. I understand that some people are more comfortable speaking in the classroom than others. That said, additional blogging, visits to class colloquia (see below), and individual meetings with me will also improve your participation grade.

>>> Conferences

During the quarter, you are required to individually **meet with me three times** to discuss your project. The conferences are really conversations: they are informal ways of checking in, saying hello, and talking

face-to-face about particular aspects of your project (e.g., your thought piece, data model, and final presentation). Before each round of conferences, I'll circulate a sign-up sheet.

>>> Attendance

While I do not take attendance, attending CHID 498 will greatly enhance your chances of submitting a persuasive final project, learning about the material, engaging in modules, collaborating with others, and sharing your ideas.

Communication is key. If possible, then get in touch with me before you miss class, but most certainly after. I am not a detective. I will not hunt you down to tell you what you missed. Please rely on your peers and the course blog for that information. Thanks!

>>>Late Work

The best policy is to never turn anything in late. But things happen. The things to remember are:

- If you are falling behind, then just talk with me. We can make arrangements.
- Late work decreases your participation grade. The later the work, the greater the decrease.
- If you miss class when something's due, then just submit it (e.g., via the blog) ASAP.
- Assignments that are not turned in (e.g., via the blog) by the beginning of class on the due date are considered late and decrease your participation grade. However, you still need to complete and submit late work, as your project portfolio must include all six stages of the process.

>>> Drops

Before a specific date, you can withdraw from courses without an entry being made on your transcript. After a specific date, fees ensue. See the University's withdrawal policy for more information and those dates.

>>> Incompletes

I rarely consider giving a grade of "I" (for Incomplete). To receive an incomplete:

- A special request must be made to me,
- All of your work must be complete through the seventh week of the quarter,
- There must be a documented illness or extraordinary situation,
- A written contract, stipulating when course work will be completed, must be arrived at between you and me, and
- Failure to complete the course by the end of the following quarter (summer term excepted) will result in a failing grade of 0.0.

If, without explanation, you leave the class at any time during the quarter, an incomplete grade will not be considered. In such cases, I determine the grade based on the work you submitted.

>>> Plagiarism

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing—as long as you cite them.

Many students do not have a clear understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. It includes:

- Failing to cite the source of an idea,

- Failing to cite sources of paraphrased material,
- Failing to cite courses of specific language and/or passages, and
- Submitting someone else's work as her or his own.

If you have doubts about whether to cite or acknowledge another person's writing, then just let me know. Better safe than sorry. I would rather not report an act of plagiarism to the College of Arts and Sciences for review. And think about it: Google, databases galore, and the fact that I was a student, too, make it really, really easy for me to spot plagiarized work. So don't do it. For more information, refer to the UW's Student Conduct Code.

I will update and revise these policies if the quarter so requires.

How can students find help with 498 and find other support on campus?

>>> Digital Humanities Colloquia, Office Hours, and Appointments

My spring quarter **office hours are Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m.**, or by appointment (preferably on Mondays or Wednesdays), in Parnassus Café (in the basement of the Art building). (For appointments, I cannot meet on a Thursday, since I will be teaching another course (at UW-Bothell) on that day.)

Additionally, during this quarter there will be at least three "**digital humanities colloquia**" related to the class. These colloquia will occur during my office hours and are open to everyone in the class, as well as to others who might be interested in what we're talking about. Spread the word. For each colloquium, I invited UW graduate students and friends who are familiar with the course content to participate and offer insight.

Currently, the possible topics for the three colloquia are:

- **Contriving Rules: On Generative Constraints in Poetry**
- **Plots and Patterns: Mapping Practices in Detective Fiction**
- **Re-Mapping the University: The Race/Knowledge Project at the UW**

The colloquia are optional and intended to be conversational in character. You are invited to come quibble, ask questions, chat, or just listen. The first ninety minutes of a given colloquium will be geared toward group conversation. The final thirty minutes will give you the chance to individually meet with me.

If the class colloquia or my office hours are not amenable to your schedule, then please don't hesitate to ask for an appointment. I'm around. I may ask you to meet with me when I think a conference would be useful. I invite you to meet with me whenever you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

This quarter, there are also a number of talks, which will be relevant to the digital humanities, occurring on campus and elsewhere. I'll keep you posted. If you attend, then I'll give you extra participation credit.

>>> E-mail and Class Listserv

You can e-mail me at jentery@u.washington.edu. I will generally respond to e-mail within twenty-four hours, unless I am out-of-town giving a talk or the like.

The course listserv is chid498b_sp09@u.washington.edu. When you send an e-mail to it, everyone in the class will receive your message. Remember: if I send a message via the listserv (which I will do about once per week), reply to me (jentery@u.washington.edu) and not the listserv, unless you want everyone on the list to read your e-mail.

>>> Q Center

The University of Washington Q Center builds and facilitates queer (gay, lesbian, bisexual, two-spirit, trans, intersex, questioning, same-gender-loving, allies) academic and social community through education, advocacy, and support services to achieve a socially-just campus in which all people are valued. More at <http://depts.washington.edu/qcenter/>.

>>> Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity

The mission of the Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity is to ensure the access and academic success of a diverse student population through the advancement of knowledge, academic excellence, diversity, and the promotion of values, principles, and a climate that enriches the campus experience for all. More at <http://depts.washington.edu/omad/>.

>>> Center for Experiential Learning

The University of Washington's Center for Experiential Learning (EXP) is home to seven programs (the Undergraduate Research Program, the Mary Gates Endowment for Students, the Carlson Center, Pipeline, Jumpstart, Global Opportunities Advising, and the Office of Merit Scholarships, Fellowships & Awards), each of which connects UW undergraduates to compelling and invigorating opportunities to expand and enrich their learning. More at <http://exp.washington.edu/>.

>>> The Counseling Center

The Counseling Center exists to support UW students in all aspects of their development. They provide personal counseling, career counseling, study skills assistance, and other services to currently-enrolled UW students. The Counseling Center also provides consultation to faculty, staff, and parents who have concerns about a student. More at <http://depts.washington.edu/counsels/>.

>>> Writing Centers

You can find additional writing help at:

- The English Department Writing Center, located in B-12 Padelford Hall (<http://depts.washington.edu/wcenter/>)
- The CHID Writing Center, also in Padelford (<http://depts.washington.edu/chid/wcenter/about.php>).

If you make an appointment to see a writing center tutor, then you will receive extra participation credit.

>>> The DSO

Please let me know if you need accommodation of any sort. I can work with the UW Disability Service Office (DSO) to provide what you require. I am very willing to take suggestions specific to this class to meet your needs. The course syllabus, prompts, and modules are available in large print, as are other class materials.

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>>> My Contact Information

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Thanks! And please let me know what questions or concerns you have! In the meantime, I'm looking forward to this quarter!

A thank you and nod of appreciation to:

- The Comparative History of Ideas Program
- The Simpson Center for the Humanities at the UW
- UW English
- UW Geography
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- Sarah Elwood
- Phillip Thurtle
- The Humanities, Art, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory