



HARC 355 | Spring 2020 | Mon 1:30–4:15 | MAC 126

Dr. Sarah Laursen | slaursen@middlebury.edu | 802.443.5491

Office hours: MAC 119 (HARC) | Mon 4:15–5:00 / Tue 1:00–2:00 / Thu 10:45–12:00 / by appt

Course Description

In this hands-on course, we will learn to use the digital tools that art historians and museum curators employ in the analysis and display of artworks. At the same time, we will work together to construct knowledge about a series of reliefs from the Northwest Palace of Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) at Kalhu (Nimrud) in Iraq, which are currently in museums across the world. Building on an ongoing collaboration of institutions in the Northeastern U.S. called “NW x NE,” we will design a project around the relief in the collection of the Middlebury College Museum of Art.

The driving questions we will attempt to answer through our project are:

Why are the Assyrian reliefs still important today, 3000 years after their creation?

How should the museums that care for them and present them to the public?

What technologies should be used in the study and display of Middlebury’s relief?

This is not a lecture course, and the quality of our discussions will depend on your preparation and participation. The nature of the final project is also not predetermined—we will decide as a group how to proceed.

Learning Goals

The primary goal of this course is to familiarize you with the digital tools currently available for art historical and museum-based research and presentation. We will not get to everything, but we will cover as much ground as possible. The digital and cooperative skills you develop in this class will prepare you not only for future DH projects at Middlebury but also for a job market that is increasingly tech-oriented and team-based.

Assignments & Grading

- 15% Attendance, participation, and good citizenship
- 15% Presentation and leading discussion
- 50% Weekly journals and at-home assignments (5% x 10)
- 5% Final project presentation
- 15% Final project contribution

Attendance, participation, and good citizenship

Attendance will be taken at all sessions, and unexcused absences will lower your final grade. Two unexcused absences are grounds for automatic failure of the class. In order to receive full credit, you must come to class prepared to engage in discussions with your classmates. Being a good citizen means being fully present in class, listening attentively, asking questions, and offering constructive criticism.

Presentation and leading discussion

You and a partner (or partners) will lead one discussion on the assigned readings, supplement those readings with your own research, and present your findings to the class in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. You will be graded on the overall quality of the presentation and discussion, your ability to work in a team, and your individual contribution.

Weekly journals and at-home assignments

Documentation is one of the most important activities in the digital humanities. Each week, you will write a journal entry (of no more than 1000 words) answering questions based on the week's readings, your own research, and your experiences completing tasks involving tools covered in class. The quality and completeness of these assignments (e.g. the cleaning of a data set) will also be factored into your grade.

Journals must be submitted on Canvas by 5 pm on Sunday in order to receive credit. If you are unable to access Canvas, email your response to slaursen@middlebury.edu as a .doc file (not .pages or .pdf). When referencing specific points in the reading, use the author's name and page numbers in parentheses, e.g. (Myers, p. 46), and provide an alphabetical Turabian style bibliography at the end of your journal. Quotations should not exceed one sentence.

Journals will be graded with points: one for "satisfactory," two for "outstanding," and zero for "unsatisfactory." Students who consistently receive ones and an occasional two can expect to receive the equivalent of an A for their responses, which amount to 50% of the final grade. Your professor may ask you to rewrite and resubmit "unsatisfactory" responses.

Final project

Over the semester, the class will develop plans for a final project that addresses the driving questions listed above. Roles will be assigned according to students' interests and skillsets. Again, you will be graded on the overall quality of the finished product, your ability to work in a team, and your execution and presentation of your individual contribution.

A note on grades:

- A: Exceptional in the quality of the ideas and the format
- B: Very good, and well above satisfactory
- C: Fulfills all requirements, but does so without original thought
- D: Unsatisfactory, does not fulfill the requirements
- F: Failure. Directions not followed, answers and discussions beside the point, the question, or the assignment, and/or revealing ignorance of the readings.

Course Materials & Additional Resources

All readings and course materials will be available at the David Family Library reserve desk or on the class Canvas site or Google Team Drive. In order to participate in this class, you will need a laptop and a smartphone with sufficient memory to install free software. If you do not have one or both of these, please see me after the first class. In some classes, you may need a Google account, which is automatically provided to all Middlebury students.

I encourage you to consult with the **DLA, DLINQ, and Library staff** as needed:

Sarah Payne, Digital Liberal Arts (DLA) Postdoctoral Fellow: sarahp@middlebury.edu

Ryan Clement, Data Services Librarian: rclement@middlebury.edu

Patrick Wallace, Digital Projects & Archives Librarian: pwallace@middlebury.edu

Bill Koulopoulos, Director of Learning Spaces and Infrastructures: bkoul@middlebury.edu

Middlebury's Digital Learning and Inquiry (DLINQ) office: <https://dlinq.middcreate.net/>

Class Policies

Covered beverages in the classroom are fine, but food and gum are not. Plan accordingly. Cell phones should be put away and in silent mode during class, unless they are being used for a class exercise. Although laptops will be used in this class, they should not be used for texting, emailing, social media and other non-class-related activities. Irresponsible use of electronics during class will be considered poor citizenship.

Presentations cannot be made up, and failure to present on your assigned day will result in an automatic zero. Conflicts due to religious holidays, athletic competitions, performances, etc. must be brought to my attention *at the beginning of the semester*.

Students with documented disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact me as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Assistance is available to eligible students through Student Accessibility Services. Please contact Jodi Litchfield, the ADA Coordinator, at litchfie@middlebury.edu or 802-443-5936 for more information. All discussions will remain confidential.

Written assignments should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman or Garamond font, with one-inch margins on all sides. Your name, the date, and a title should all be written (singles-spaced) at the top of the first page only. In the digital humanities, it is extremely important to fairly cite your sources and acknowledge your team of collaborators. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism, cheating, and copying, and academic dishonesty in any form will be grounds for failure of this class. To read more: go/honorcode.

When **emailing a professor** (in any class), begin your email with “Dear Prof. ____ / Dr. ____” unless your professor has specifically invited you to use their first name. In your email, concisely explain your reason for writing, using complete sentences and proper grammar and punctuation. End your email with a professional signoff such as “Best regards,” “Best,” “Regards,” or “Thank you.” Be aware that your professor is unlikely to respond quickly to an email outside of normal business hours. Think ahead, and ask your questions well in advance of assignment due dates.

Schedule

Unit 1: Data Analysis and Visualization		
Feb 10	MAC 126, MCMA	Intro to the NW x NE Project + data ethics Metadata + Databases (The Museum System) + bibliographic style + library research Guest: Patrick Wallace, Digital Projects & Archives Librarian
Feb 17	MAC 126	Collecting History + Cultural Property; Rayanne Tabet (Lebanese), <i>Alien Property</i> Data cleaning (OpenRefine) + APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) Guest: Ryan Clement, Data Services Librarian
Feb 24	MAC 126	Neo-Assyrian history + Ashurnasirpal II + the standard inscription Geocoding (AwesomeTables) + Mapping (ArcGIS Online) Guest: Ryan Clement, Data Services Librarian
Mar 2	MAC 126	Assyrian Religion + the Bible Data visualization Guest: Alex Lyford, Assistant Professor of Mathematics
Mar 9	MAC 126, MCMA	Materials + construction + conservation Computer vision + image analysis Guest: Andrea Vaccari, Assistant Professor of Computer Science
Mar 16	MAC 126	Iconography + style + costume Data analysis Guest: Chaz Topaz, Professor of Mathematics, Williams College
Mar 16	MCA 125	Extra credit: "Art, Social Justice, and Data Science" public lecture, Chad Topaz
Unit 2: Exhibition Tools		
Mar 30	MAC 126, MCMA	Palace architecture + reconstructions; Michael Rakowitz (Iraqi-American), <i>The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist</i> StoryMaps (Esri)
Apr 6	MAC 126, MCMA	Destruction + repatriation; Morehshin Allahyari (Iranian), <i>Material Speculation: ISIS Beacons</i> (Estimote) + directional audio (Holosonic) + self-guided tours (ARIS)
Unit 3: 3D Imaging and Printing		
Apr 13	MAC 126, MCMA	Photogrammetry I (Google Street View, Qlone) + VR (Thinglink) + AR (Merge cube) Workshop time
Apr 20	MAC 126, MCMA	Photogrammetry II (MetaShape) + Structured-Light Scanning (David Scanner) Guest: Michelle Leftheris, Assistant Professor of Studio Art Guest: Jim Dougherty, Associate Technical Director Guest: Bill Koulopoulos, Director, Academic Technology Workshop time
Apr 27	Bunker	Image annotation (Sketchfab) + 3D printing (Ultimaker) Guest: Bill Koulopoulos, Director of Learning Spaces & Infrastructure Workshop time
May 4	MAC 126, MCMA	Final Presentations and Reflection Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) Guest: Sean Burrus, Mellon Post-Doctoral Curatorial Fellow, Bowdoin College