English 420 2018W   Instructor: Sean Silver
Reading With Your Laptop   srsilver@umich.edu
                                                  Angell 3182, M 2:30-4:30

G040 Tisch   Writing Mentor: Amrita Dhar
MW 1-2:30pm   amritad@umich.edu

Course Description

Computers are changing how we read. If you have ever googled a word you didn't know, or used the "find" function to locate a word in a digital file, then you are already reading with your laptop. Even more potent methods are emerging within literary analysis and allied fields. This course will introduce you to some of them.

Course readings are fairly light. We will be reading three novels over the course of the semester: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. The light reading load will give us the time and space to learn the rudiments of R, a popular programming language that can handle large data sets (like, for instance, all the words in a novel). This, then, is the goal of the class: to learn to use R to develop novel interpretations of literary texts.

Past students have found these techniques to be transformative; you will look at books in ways that you never looked at them before. Indeed, you will be producing readings of books that even experts have never considered—for computer-assisted approaches suggest interpretations that human beings cannot arrive at alone. Finally, you will gain basic familiarity with an important programming language.

Prerequisites: This is an introductory course for upper-level students of literature, culture, and the arts. Aside from an active mind and a willingness to think differently, there are no other prerequisites. If you know how to use a keyboard when you arrive, you will be reading with your laptop by the end of the class. Actually, you will be doing some of this by the end of the second week!

Requirements: Students will be responsible for three essays, based on skills we develop in class and through a short, user-friendly textbook on programming with R. You will also complete weekly "challenges," which ask you to adapt and employ your new skills to particular reading and interpretive tasks.

TEXTS (these editions are REQUIRED):

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (Penguin)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (Penguin, 2003)

Matthew Jockers, *Text Analysis with R for Students of Literature* (.pdf available at:
    https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/012944517)
Sections of: Douglas A. Luke, *A User's Guide to Network Analysis in R* (.pdf available at
    https://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/014040568)

SOFTWARE (required):
R Studio
R
Any Text Editor (like Mac's built-in TextEdit)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This class is divided into three units; your course grade will be substantially determined by the five essays you will produce. Your grade will be determined through a weighted system that emphasizes your highest-scored work while de-emphasizing lower ones. The report that receives the lowest score will count for 20% of your grade, while the report that receives the highest will count for 30%, with the others distributed between.

Reports:	Lowest grade:	15%
	Second-highest grade:	20%
	Highest grade:	30%
Participation:		15%
Challenges (8 highest):		20%

SCHEDULE:		**DISCUSSION TOPIC**	**TECHNICAL READING**
Jan	3	hello world	
	8	Behn: *Oroonoko* (to the ship)	Jockers1: R Basics
	10		Jockers2: First Foray
	15	MLK DAY *Oroonoko* (to end)	Jockers3: Word Freq Data
	17	continuous vs categorical	Jockers4.1: Dispersion Plots
	22	*Oroonoko*	Jockers4.2-4.4: Token Distribution
	24		
	29	*Oroonoko*	Jockers5: Correlation
	31	sapply(), lapply(), do.call()	
Feb	2		**Paper 1 Due**
Feb	5	Shelley, *Frankenstein*, vol 1	Jockers8: KWIC
	7	stopwords	
	12	Shelley, *Frankenstein*, vol 2	Jockers9: KWICr
	14		
	19	Shelley, *Frankenstein*, vol 3	plot()
	21		
	23		
	26	SPRING BREAK	
	28	SPRING BREAK	
Mar	2		**Paper 2 Due**
	5	Austen: *Mansfield Park* (beginning)	KCTF
	7		
	12	Austen: *Mansfield Park* (end vol. 1)	topicmodels::
	14		
	19	Austen: *Mansfield Park* (to p. 232)	topicmodels::
	21		
	26	Austen: *Mansfield Park* (to p. 360)	Luke2:
	28		
Apr	2	Austen: *Mansfield Park* (to 440, end)	Luke3:
	4		Luke4:
	9		
	11		
	16	Last Day: Algorithmic Criticism	
	20		**Paper 3 Due**