

AUTUMN 2019

Textual Studies and Digital Editing

ENG 501 (SLN: 22976)/FREN 551 (SLN: 22973)/C LIT 551 (SLN: 22977)

Monday, 12:30-3:20

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This course offers a hands-on exploration of the nature of texts, of the practice of editing in a digital environment using historical printed sources, and of issues relating to preservation, interface, reading, and access. We'll learn some of the essentials of digital editing and text encoding, including transcription using the widely-adopted guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), protocols for collaboration, and basic techniques for web publishing (XSLT, HTML and CSS).

No prior experience with any of this is required or expected (if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at gt2@uw.edu).

Our texts will be drawn from the publishing world of late 17th- and early 18th-century France and England, which was defined by the growing demand for *nouveautés* – “new things”, aimed at

entertainment – and by a thirst for “news.”

Scholars argue that a new public took form in this moment, laying the basis for the public sphere of the later 18th century.

The texts generated in this world were defined by their temporality: periodicals, ephemeral works asserting their novelty, and rapid re-editions. They present fascinating editorial puzzles. We'll explore, with our own digital “edition” of a selection of these materials, how best to address this volatility. We'll also investigate broader questions: how platforms (print vs. digital) and interface influence the amount of time, attention and focus a reader devotes to a text. These questions are, in turn, linked to ongoing debates in the Digital Humanities about close vs. “distant”

reading techniques. What is the future of literary scholarship in the digital age? Students will have the chance to work either on a French or English text. **It is not necessary to read French.**

This is a core course in the **Textual and Digital Studies Graduate Certificate**

(<http://depts.washington.edu/text/>). Our digital project will be complemented by readings in the field of textual scholarship, starting with classic formulations of New Bibliography. We'll look at a series of critiques, emphasizing the “social text” and “material text,” along with postcolonial, queer and feminist perspectives on editing. These critiques have reshaped and revitalized the field of textual studies; as have opportunities for textual work opened up by digital platforms. The rise to dominance of digital texts in our reading and scholarship has revalorized editorial work as a scholarly project. It has required renewed reflection on what a text is, how a text is shaped by processes of publication, how it preserves or hides its history as a document, and how the text is shaped over time by its circulation, reception, and archiving/preservation; not to mention, what counts as scholarship and what public(s) we seek to engage. The digital shift has also entailed that we learn new techniques and new skills for working with texts.

