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October 11, 2013

Dear Members of the Digital Humanities Working Group,

I am writing to enter my course “Anthropology 290: Campus Sex in the Digital Age” into the Digital Humanities Pedagogy Incentive Competition. I created this new class especially for the Digital Humanities Initiative. This course, to be taught in Winter 2014, will explore how the cell phone has impacted hooking up and dating at college, with particular attention to Washington and Lee University as a case study. We will discuss the development of campus sexual culture in America and the influence of digital technology on student sociality. Students will use open source digital research tools to analyze data collected by me in Fall 2011 about dating and hookup behavior at our college. As a digital humanities project, students will work in groups to post their weekly analyses on the class WordPress site. The ultimate goal of the course is to come up with a variety of interpretations of the data that might challenge, as well as reaffirm, the theoretical and empirical points that I discuss in an article manuscript under review at *Gender & Society* (submitted in August 2013).

As the syllabus indicates (please see attached pdf), students will work in groups of two to three persons each to analyze sets of interviews and focus groups via web based tools. For each new data set (there are six total), students will use a different tool, and they will have two weeks to learn it, apply it, and post their results on the website. They will also incorporate any theoretical and comparative empirical points discussed in the weekly readings. I have reserved one day a week in class as a “digital research day” just for this purpose.

In the first week of the semester, students will meet with Brandon Bucy who will introduce them to the WordPress format. Brandon, Alston Brake, and I have already set up “campus-sex.academic.wlu.edu.” Although my research was approved by IRB and all names have been changed, I want to keep the website private until the end of the semester when I can review the data posted to make sure that all the information is anonymous.

Brandon suggested that the students utilize Voyant Tools, (voyant-tools.org), and he will meet with students in the second week to do a training session. Voyant has five separate but interconnected tools that students will use for five out of the six data sets. In email to me, Brandon listed these tools as “cirrus (word cloud), summary (basic information about each text in the collection), corpus reader (an interactive copy of the texts that allow for hover over data retrieval and selection of words for the other tools), words in corpus (ordered list of terms in all documents including micrograph displaying distribution across corpus), and words in documents (shows frequency information in graphical form for terms in each document).” For the fifth and final tool, students could either chose one of their own from Voyant’s other offerings, or identify one within TAPoR (www.tapor.ca) or Bamboo Dirt (dirt.projectbamboo.org). Brandon has been gracious enough to offer his time during Wednesday research days or after class to help students if they need extra guidance. As for the statistics, I will provide them with a print out in the tenth week of the course, and they will take class lab time to compare the results to the information already gleaned from interviews and focus groups.

Each student research group is responsible for posting their analysis on the class' Wordpress site, as well as turning in brief written reports, at the appropriate deadlines. To properly evaluate the totality of their work, I have set up several due dates at the end of the term. First, they will meet with me as a group in week eleven to discuss the project and their conclusions. Then, they will present their final product, as a group, to the rest of the class in week twelve. This will allow me to see how they put their analysis together and overcame any problems that might have been encountered weekly. Finally, on the last day of class, students will turn in an individually written response paper about their experiences with the reading and research. This will give me additional insights into the dynamics of the group and how the class challenged common student knowledge about the campus social scene. This paper will include the following: 1) a list of the student’s top three readings about campus dating and why they were chosen; 2) a list of the student’s top three digital research tools and why they were chosen; 3) a two-paragraph statement as to how this class impacted the student’s views on W&L's dating and hookup scene; and 4) a one-paragraph discussion about how the personal dynamics in the research group affected the allocation of responsibilities among the members. In addition, 30% of the class grade will be based on individual participation on days that we discuss the readings. So, although most of the grading will be based on the group project, individual responsibility and effort will play a large role in the allocation of final grades.

I have already received approval to list this course as an elective for Women’s and Gender Studies. Therefore, I have designed it to meet the learning objectives of this minor, as well as those of the Sociology & Anthropology Department. As a result of class discussions and research, students will be able to answer and debate the following important issues:

1. How do gender, sexual orientation, and race influence cell phone techniques and sexual behavior in college?
2. How do campus dating and hookup practices relate to larger issues of socioeconomic power relations, gender inequalities, and heteronormative sexuality?
3. What are the most pertinent feminist, anthropological, and sociological theories to help explain these concepts?
4. Why has campus-dating behavior changed, and how has digital technology influenced the trajectory of that transformation?
5. What are the various ways to analyze social scientific data such as interviews and focus groups with digital resources? What are the benefits and drawbacks to such techniques?
6. How did working with primary research data, as well as reading literature about campus sexuality, give students opportunities to examine their own lives and values critically?

In summary, I believe that this class will expand my teaching methodology, as well as introduce students to new research tools that could be used in any course of study in the humanities and social sciences. Personally, I am excited to learn about these web-based research technologies. And, I am eager to find out if students come up with any insights that contest my original conclusions. In fact, I hope that they *do* find new interpretations of the data! A discussion of the differences between my work and theirs could be the basis of a new article manuscript on the challenges and rewards of digital research in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Sascha

Sascha Goluboff
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