

Fall 2018 ENGL 6311: Introduction to Digital Humanities, or, New Ways to Read *Tristram Shandy*  
Dr. Claude Willan

Course Description:

What are the digital humanities, and how do you do them?

In this course, we will explore the digital humanities through two lenses. The first is R. R is a free, flexible, powerful, and easy to learn programming language. Through it you can create different kinds of data, make data visualizations, do your own text mining, topic modeling, and explore network graphs. The second is the eighteenth-century novel *Tristram Shandy*. *Tristram Shandy* is not only one of the most important texts of eighteenth-century literature in English, it is also perhaps the funniest, strangest, most provocative and enjoyable. It asks its readers to open their minds to looking at a text in new ways, and as such, it makes for a perfect test bed for the application of new methods of reading.

This semester, we will learn how to use R and R Studio to process, analyze and transform a text in order to explore it in new ways. Since the best way to learn R is by doing it, half of each class will be given to a practicum, as we work through different methods of analyzing and visualizing data. Since this is a hands-on class, you will need to bring your laptop to class. If you have difficulty accessing a laptop, please contact me and one will be provided. By the end of the semester you will have a richer and deeper understanding of the many ways that you can read a text digitally to add to your repertoire as researchers.

Course Readings and Programs:

Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*.

R, [www.cran-project.org](http://www.cran-project.org)

R Studio, [www.rstudio.com](http://www.rstudio.com)

Course Grade Breakdown:

Participation: 25%

Weekly problem sets: 40%

Final paper: 35%