

Digitized Dissent

A Training Course on Digital Humanities Research Methods
and the Cultures of Dissent in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989

proposed syllabus/schedule for the 2019 CEU SUN Program

A. Statement of Purpose

Of the many goals and objectives of SUN programming, this course is most obviously targeting a new/emerging discipline: the wide range of theory and practice that fall under the umbrella term “digital humanities” (DH). In our case, we are not simply proposing a generic training course in DH, but rather leveraging the expertise and experience of membership in our COST Action on oppositional cultures in Eastern Europe.

“Digitized Dissent” would follow in the spirit of a 2012 SUN course [Policies and Practices in Access to Digital Archives](#), as well as two more recent internally-supported initiatives: the [CEU Digital Humanities Initiative](#) (2016-2018) and the [Text Analysis Across Disciplines ITI](#) (2017-2018). The last few years of working closely with faculty, students, and staff at CEU to explore possible resources for DH as well as areas for growth, has led to many working collaborations that will enhance this SUN course and anchor it in the ongoing projects and concerns of the CEU community (e.g., Blinken OSA, History, CNS, SysLab, and CMDS). We have identified people from all over campus who are interested in DH methods, or who work in relevant disciplines, but do not yet understand how they could be integrated into a traditional academic discipline. “Digitized Dissent” will offer both a **transfer of knowledge** and a **proof of concept** to this audience, and offer many avenues for continued cooperation with our COST Action after the end of the SUN course.

This summer university course would also build on several ongoing initiatives and partnerships between CEU faculty and Budapest-based scholars and researchers. The H2020 project [COURAGE: Connecting Collections](#) (ending in January 2019), which concerns the same subject area and has a strong digital humanities component, has a local base of operations at the Institute for Historical Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA-TKK). We will continue to work closely with Tamás Scheibner, as a representative of MTA-TKK and an assistant professor of History at ELTE. And finally, this course will allow us to build on our partnerships with the local computational linguistics community (András Kornai at BME, Gábor Palkó at ELTE and PIM), the new [Digital Humanities Centre at ELTE](#), as well as Zsófia Ruttokay, who runs the [MOME TechLab](#). All of these people have been identified for their expertise in different aspects of the digital humanities, which complement the skills and experience of CEU faculty. Over the course of the SUN course, they will be invited to join as guest faculty, as consultants on projects, and we will make every effort to involve their students as participants in the course.

B. Prerequisites for the course

No prior knowledge of any computational methods, or even data-driven approaches to research are expected from the participants. However, we will be targeting scholars, librarians/archivists, and cultural heritage actors who can bring first-hand knowledge of the main research area (cultures of dissent in Eastern Europe during the Cold War). Participants will be expected to have either: a) carried out a medium- to large-scale research project on a related topic, or; b) worked extensively as an archivist or curator with materials related to this topic.

C. Brief overview of the course

Pre-SUN online sessions: In order to guarantee that the final outcome of the course is directly relevant to the research and curatorial practice of the participants, we would hold at least three online sessions (not necessarily synchronous) prior to July. They would be devoted to identifying and assembling relevant materials from existing archival collections, online databases and other resources for research resources. Core faculty (Bunout, Perczel, Maryl, and Wciślik) will lead this process, but will also engage the archival staff at relevant institutions (Blinken OSA, ArtPool), as well as the proto-participants in the course. We will aim to make our datasets correspond to each of the 4 research-oriented working groups of the COST Action: Surveillance and Counter-Surveillance; Grey Zone; Alternative Culture; Politics of Memory.

Days 1-2: The first two days of the SUN course would be devoted to the curating of materials (pre-selected with the course faculty from larger archival collections during the pre-course online sessions), and feature **lectures** (Bunout; Perczel; Wciślik) on the historical and cultural specificity of the materials, the archiving process and provenance (Bóné, Szilágyi, Siefert), and conceptual issues that arise when trying to standardize idiosyncratic and incomplete records of human activity (Maryl, external speakers Jennifer Edmond and/or Costis Dallas). In addition to lectures, we will have hands-on **practical sessions**, broken down into groups by area of expertise, in order to complete the data curation process. Our two specialists in data modeling, Pim van Bree and Geert Kessels from nodegoat.net, will begin to work with the participants on setting up the datasets in the nodegoat environment.

Days 3-5: Once we have a reliable data model and textual corpus, we will use three digital humanities methodologies (**text mining, mapping, and network analysis**) to explore and visualize different relationships that can be traced between actors, objects, and other variables identified in the materials. The format of these days will follow a pattern: 1) lecture and demo, 2) break-out sessions with practical experiment, 3) group discussion of results, successes, limitations of the methodology. This will effectively be a **pilot version of a larger goal of our COST Action, to create digital resources to help scholars make new connections in the area of dissent and oppositional activity:** across languages, media, and even periods of Cold War history. We will be joined by specialists in each of the respective methodologies, some drawing on local expertise (Perczel and Lagutov from CEU, Ács from BME).

Days 6-7: The last two days of “Digitized Dissent” would focus on the **larger, disciplinary implications** of using these digital humanities methodologies to bring new knowledge to our research area. There are several norms of scholarship, archival practice, and even exhibition practice that are challenged by digital research and approaches, and we would like the group to consider the **academic benefits, ethical issues, and institutional resistances** that they are likely to encounter. We will invite some of the key figures from the COURAGE projects to share their insights into using DH in this research area, and look for ways to build on what they have already created. The final outcome of our last two days will be a concrete plan for a public-facing project, a working plan for scaling up from our pilot study, or proposals for a series of articles (or even special issue of a single journal) using digital humanities methods to explore East European cultures of dissent.

Post-course Follow-up: For the SUN course to achieve its larger objectives, it will be crucial for us to follow up with participants afterwards and evaluate who would be willing to carry out plans developed during the course, who would benefit from more training, and how we might supplement our 7-day intensive workshop with periodic updates on COST Action progress.

D. Bibliography

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E. Tentative Schedule

Pre-session		Curatorial selection
Pre-session		Curatorial selection
Pre-session		Nodegoat.net introduction; registration and orientation
Mon 7/15	Topic 1	Introduction; Cold War Collecting; Data Curation I
	Faculty member(s)	Maryl, Wciślik, Bunout, Perczel, Bóné (OSA); Kessels and van Bree (nodegoat.net)
	Number of hours	4
	Teaching Mode	100-min lecture/demo + 50-min break-out practicum + 50-minute discussion
	Discussion Points	<p>After the first introductions of participants and pre-selected datasets, this first day will feature several forms of orientation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) lecture on the historical and cultural specificity of the materials (historians and curators) 2) lecture/practicum on standardizing and cleaning datasets (Maryl, Perczel). <p>Break-out sessions divided into groups by area of expertise will allow participants to work on the data curation process with guidance from our two specialists in data modeling, Pim van Bree and Geert Kessels from nodegoat.net.</p> <p>Finally, participants will reconvene to discuss their experience curating the material, and insights into how this process can be challenging and interesting.</p>
Tues 7/16	Topic 2	Data Curation ctd.; Extraction and Modeling
	Faculty member(s)	Bunout, Perczel, Kessels and van Bree (nodegoat.net), Marsha Siefert (CEU History)
	Number of hours	4
	Teaching Mode	100-min lecture/demo + 50-min breakout session + 50-minute discussion
	Discussion Points	<p>The format of Day 2 will be quite similar to Day 1, with the notable difference that we will now have structured data that we can begin to ask questions of. Siefert and Perczel and will offer their experience in gathering large datasets to analyze Cold War history, and Maryl will offer a wider view on how our digital research infrastructure can enhance or detract from collaborative work. Our nodegoat.net trainers Kessels</p>

		and Van Bree will continue to help us customize our data model (perhaps on a group-by-group basis).
Wed 7/17	Topic 3	Method 1: Mapping
	Faculty member(s)	Labov, Maryl, Wciślik, Viktor Lagutov (CEU); Kessels and van Bree (nodegoat.net)
	Number of hours	6
	Teaching Mode	100-min lecture/demo + 100-minute practicum + 100-minute discussion of visualizations
	Discussion Points	Mapping has exploded as a mode of understanding the world in almost every form of communication: from personal correspondence to journalism to a certain location-based augmented-reality mobile game. This is largely the result of advances in satellite imaging techniques, and the increasing density of georeferenced information available (i.e., information which is encoded with latitude and longitude points). In scholarly terms, it is often easy to confuse maps used purely as illustration with those employed as a research tool. We will discuss how the rise of GIS-mapping coincided with a theoretical paradigm shift within Cultural Studies and History towards space and place (“the Spatial Turn”), and the accumulated effect of this on the humanities. GIS specialist Viktor Lagutov (ESP) has been working for years with scholars in History, and will help us imagine how to see our datasets spatially. With a few basic steps, this will be easy to carry out within the nodegoat environment, as well. After demo and practice, the most important part of the day will take place after lunch, when we reconvene to compare our initial visualizations, and discuss any relevant insights for future research.
Thurs 7/18	Topic 4	Method 2: Network Analysis
	Faculty member(s)	Maryl; Wciślik; Perczel; Kessels and van Bree (nodegoat.net)
	Number of hours	6
	Teaching Mode	100-min lecture/demo + 100-minute practicum + 100-minute discussion of visualizations
	Discussion Points	One of the most effective DH tools that is adopted directly from the social sciences is network analysis. Used most commonly to visualize relationships between people or between concepts, it adds an important layer of abstraction to both literary and historical datasets. What does this abstraction allow us to see that is new? How do we then respond to new ways of seeing our research, and proceed in a different direction? Here at CEU we have access to one of the best academic programs in <i>network science</i> in Europe, and we will draw on this source expertise on Day 4. At

		the same time, we will invite an expert in <i>historical</i> network analysis, who can work together with our local CNS representative and our nodegoat team to zero in on the specific research benefits of this type of relational analysis. The format of the day will be similar to Day 4, with the majority of the morning devoted to exploring the methodology, and the final 100-minute session devoted to group discussion of the results.
Fri 7/19	Topic 5	Method 3: Text Analysis
	Faculty member(s)	Bunout; Maryl; Wciślik; Judit Ács (BME); Bóné (OSA)
	Number of hours	6
	Teaching Mode	100-min lecture/demo + 100-minute practicum + 100-minute discussion of visualizations
	Discussion Points	In the bigger picture of data visualization and analysis, text analysis represents the point when we look closely at the full content of our materials, instead of simply trying to extract relevant variables from it. Instead of working within the nodegoat environment, we will switch to a ‘corpus view’ of our collections, drawing on the tools and expertise of computational linguistics to look for new insights about the key terms, topics, and style of the historical collections we are working with. Estelle Bunout is an expert in machine-learning as applied to text analysis, and will teach the group some of the principles behind text mining. We will then use simple, out-of-the-box tools (such as Voyant) to visualize our mini-corpora, with the modest goal of starting to think about text-relevant questions in this research area.
Mon 7/22	Topic 6	Analysis of Visualizations
	Faculty member(s)	Maryl, Wciślik, Perczel, Bunout, Siefert, Zsófia Ruttkay (MOME TechLab)
	Number of hours	6
	Teaching Mode	100-minute breakout session + 100-minute group discussion + 50-minute breakout session + 50 minute consensus-building exercise
	Discussion Points	Over the weekend it is possible (though not required) that the participants continue their experiments with data modeling and visualization. The point of Monday’s sessions is to think collectively and deeply about the research value of these methodologies. In some cases, the outcome of these conversations will be a firm plan on how to scale up from a small, pilot-level study to an article-worthy DH analysis. In other cases, we might decide that a particular DH methodology is not likely to lead to interesting new research on a

		given set of materials. In the afternoon break-out session groups will be split into ‘digitization projects’ and ‘DH research’ categories, with specific tasks and projected outcomes for each. At the end of the day, we will work to agree as a group on a set of priorities (collections to digitize, digital collections to mine, and/or types of analysis to carry out) for DH-inclined scholars in this area.
Tues 7/23	Topic 7	Exhibition Plan and Conclusions
	Faculty member(s)	Maryl, Wciślik, Bunout; Perczel; Bóné or Szilágyi (OSA); Julia Klaniczay (ArtPool); Zsófia Ruttkay (MOME TechLab)
	Number of hours	6
	Teaching Mode	100-minute breakout session + 100-minute group discussion + 50 minute consensus-building exercise + wrap-up discussion with future plans
	Discussion Points	One of the explicit goals of this 7-day training workshop is to plan an exhibit of materials on the culture of dissent in Eastern Europe which is enhanced by digital humanities scholarship and interactive visualizations. For this reason, we will invite one of the strongest local innovators in ‘creative technology’ as an installation practice, Zsófia Ruttkay, to our last two days of discussion. Ruttkay has founded the MOME TechLab and has become known in cultural heritage circles for her playful but deeply meaningful installations in GLAM institutions. Whereas Monday’s discussion will be focused on the research implications of our training course, our final day will bring that conversation to a public-facing, outreach-oriented conclusion. Although the two modes of DH practice are quite intertwined and related, and not so simple to separate, we will aim at the very end of our course to sketch out a possible exhibition (online, offline, or more likely hybrid) which will bring some of these archival materials to a wider public in a creative and engaging way.

Total Hours (1 teaching hour = 50 min): Week One 26 + Week Two 12 = 38