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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SI 640 DIGITAL LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES: ASSIGNMENTS

CLASS PARTICIPATION (25%)

The overall success of the course depends on the active participation of all members of the class. Class participation is a sizable portion of the grade. Unless excused, students must attend all classes and be prepared to enter into class discussions and to raise questions reflecting their reading and interests. Students are also expected to complete all required readings in advance of class. This is especially important since a portion of the class sessions will be discussions about the readings.

On the first class, each student will sign up with two or three other students to focus deeply on the required readings for a given week. This is an opportunity to read one set of assigned readings more deeply than average, to work collaboratively on identifying themes or critical ideas, and to demonstrate understanding of one component of the course.

All of the students who are "reading leaders" for a given course module will form a panel discussion following the completion of the module, the goal of which is to synthesize the ideas presented in the lectures and discussion, find points of continuity and discontinuity, and to make connections between digital libraries and digital archives. Participation in the panel discussion counts toward the class participation grade.

ESSAY AND REFLECTION (25%)

This assignment has two parts: a documented essay approximately 2,500 words in length (not counting footnotes) and a 500 word reflection the ideas expressed in the essay. The essay is due on week 5; the additional reflection and any revision of your work is due on week 13. The grade is assigned to the final product, but an interim grade will be provided after the essay itself is submitted.

For the essay, each student must address the following proposition: "The terms 'digital library' and 'digital archive' are interchangeable."   In your essay you must take a position either for or against the proposition and document your position with secondary literature. You are strongly encouraged to work with the required readings for the first three weeks of the class, but a successful essay will draw on a mix of literature from the archives field and also from the digital library field, which you will find out overlaps in some ways and not in others. The essay must use a minimum of six articles, chapters in books, and other sources; it may be advisable to use more sources.

For the reflection, each student will append a personal reflection on the proposition that is based on ideas and insight gained in the modules of the course that come after the module on definitions. The reflection is an opportunity demonstrate learning in the course (and in this way is a bit of a "final exam) and to speculate on ways in which you may or may not have changed your mind about the nature of digital libraries and archives through the course.

Students may re-write, augment, and otherwise revise their initial essay to document and demonstrate some of the points made in the reflection. The final "gradable" product is the combination essay and reflection, edited as you see fit.

METS AND PREMIS ANALYSIS (20%)

This assignment entails deconstructing, annotating, and augmenting a Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard (METS) record for an item located in the Online Archive of California (OAC). The purpose of the assignment is to learn how the elements of a simple METS record work together and

demonstrate how PREMIS data would be used to document changes to the item over time. Specific instructions on accessing the METS records for OAC items are provided in a separate document. The assignment involves searching in OAC for a set of items that contain rich METS records, saving the record locally, annotating that METS record to describe the major components of the METS record and track those components to the METS standard itself, and adding additional data to the METS record drawn from the PREMIS data dictionary (2.0) and appropriate documentation. The net result of the assignment is demonstration of the capability to "read" a METS record, explain it, and change it in meaningful ways.

During the first week of class, a demonstration of searching and retrieving in OAC will provide an entre to the extensive collections. By the second week of class, students will provide the instructor with a list of between 4 and 6 items from OAC that are appropriate for the assignment. The specifics of reading, interpreting, and augmenting METS records are provides as part of the module on metadata for digital libraries. The document containing the annotated and augmented METS record is due during week 11.

Most of the resources needed to complete the assignment are listed in the readings for weeks 8 and 9. Additional information is included on the CTools site for the course under \Resources\Assignments.

MEDIA WIKI DIRECTORY (30%)

At present, no directory of digital libraries and digital archives exists. The purpose of this assignment is to work through, collaboratively, what such a directory might contain. Students will create and edit entries for digital libraries and digital archives, using the conventions of wiki writing pioneered by Wikipedia. MediaWiki is the open source software platform that was developed for Wikipedia. SI640 students will use a dedicated instance of MediaWiki provided by the University of Michigan. http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki The wiki is closed to the general public during the term but may be opened after the semester ends.

Each student will create and edit three entries in the Media Wiki Digital Library and Archive Directory and edit at least one entry created by other students in the class. One entry must be for a digital library or archives created and managed by a government entity, either a US state or a national government agency anywhere in the world, including but certainly not limited to the United States. One entry must be for a non-governmental or non-profit organization in the United States, including digital libraries and archives created by universities, non-profit consortia, and non-government organizations. A third entry is a grab-bag, giving you flexibility to choose a commercial site or a second governmental or non-profit organization.

The criteria for choosing a digital library or archive for an entry are in part derived from the definitions developed in the class. The site should have substantial digital content available for use by the general public or by designated communities. The site should be "maintained" and "well documented," both of which are subjective concepts.

Each entry will follow the general style of Wikipedia, but contain the following six sections:
- overview, a one paragraph description of the site
- history, background on the origins and development of the site, including possibly information on the intended audiences for the site
- content, description of the scope and characteristics of the content of the site
- metadata, description of the metadata that is exposed to users and the metadata schemas that exist in background.
- interface and tools, description of the look and feel of the site and any tools present to support use of all kinds

- references (to documentation on the site, including internal documents mounted on the site)and links (to websites, including the main gateway for the site itself plus any other relevant websites mentioned in the entry.

Grading of the assignment is based on the quality of the analysis (depth of thought, accuracy of writing, style) and the level of effort expended on the project, including demonstration of mastery of the MediaWiki tools and authoring conventions, number of substantive edits made to your and other students' work, and the creative use of internal and external links to tie the entries together. The entries may be illustrated as appropriate with examples of content or screenshots. The entries may be internally linked to other entries on the Media Wiki Directory.

This class project carries three deadlines. The first one (seek 4) is submission of the name of and a link to the digital libraries that each student proposes to analyze. The second deadline (week 8) is the initial creation of entries, roughed in as appropriate. The third deadline (week 15) is the completion of all writing and editing, at which time the wiki will be frozen for grading and assessment.