

Project Guidelines

Group Blog:

Each group will have a group blog, where individuals will share their thoughts on the reading along with documenting research into the specific topic area. I will give more direction from week to week, but for the most part during the first eight weeks these posts will be about the weekly readings, and over the second half of the course more directly focused on topic areas. I recommend using WordPress, but if the group has a different preference let me know.

Timeline:

-Second week: Set up blog. Each group member should have a post about the readings, see class blog for details.

Part One: Investigative Histories/Research

In weeks nine through thirteen the class will turn from its broad theoretical overview of the Gutenberg Parenthesis to focusing on the history of specific knowledge institutions (each week we will cover a different one, see the class blog for an updated syllabus/order). During these week student groups will be responsible for coordinating these investigations. Each class period will be divided into two sections, the first a discussion/history of that particular institution during the Gutenberg Parenthesis, and the second a discussion/elaboration into how said institution has attempted to update itself in the digital age. Groups are responsible for supplying the reading for their respective weeks as well as arriving at class with two short presentations (one for each half) which should help to initiate class discussion.

Research:

Your group should start *now* doing research into the institution you are covering. These are big topics so there is no way you can cover it all. So, you want to divide up the workload between you group. Ask me for advice, I will probably be able to point you in the right direction. You want to research how said organization came to be, but more importantly how it has been shaped by the existence of broadcast media and analog structures. You will also need to research examples of how your institution is being updated/alterd by the change to the digital network. This means both researching existing projects and reading works that talk broadly about the change.

Readings:

For class you should assign 4-5 hours of “reading.” Reading here is in quotes because not everything you assign needs to be text. You could for instance assign a recorded lecture, a short documentary, or a website. But, a substantial portion of the reading should be scholarly articles with a critical perspective on these questions. You want the readings to address not only the history of said institution, but also the ideas that have informed that history. Your group could also choose to divide the readings in interesting ways, having some shared readings (which everyone would cover) and some distributed ones (half the class looking at one thing, with the other half another).

Class Discussion/Presentation:

Each group should come to class prepared to frame the discussion for the day. This should take the form of *a very short presentation* (think ten minutes). Which highlight the central

questions/issues for the day. For the first part of the class you should focus solely on the old/analog part (ignore the digital).

For the second half of class you should show 3-4 examples of current projects being explored and talk about what is interesting about each example.

Timeline:

- Now: Start reading/researching on your topic.
- Three weeks prior to class session: Email me a working list of the readings for feedback.
- One week prior to class session: Post and make available, a list of readings for the week.

Part Two: Final Projects

In the final two weeks of class each group will have half of class to present their creative vision of a future possibility of their institution. In one sense these visions should be informed by the investigative history your group has done, but in another you want to be bold, creative, and experimental, to think beyond what has been done, past the history of these institutions. Begin by asking yourself what is it that these institutions do, how can it be enhanced by the digital, and how does that conflict with the digital. These creative projects can take a variety of forms, depending on your specific institution. I am not expecting you to fully build anything (building a university could take some time), instead think of this as a proof of concept along with a vision statement. At the same time you want to do more than tell us what your vision is you want to **show** us. This means for example if you are doing the library you might want to have building sketches (if indeed it involves a building), or a website mock-up if that is important. Consider making a short video if that would help. For your in class presentation, again you want to do more than just tell the class what you imagine, rather you want to show them. Your presentation should **tell a story** not only about what you envision, but why and how this will be accomplished, along with problems and concerns. Each presentation should last 20 minutes leaving substantial time for discussion.

As part of each project each group will need to write a ten page paper (one paper per group, not one per person) which contextualizes the project, think of this as the written form of the presentation.

Finally, all projects are required to be public. That is you should host the pieces of the project on your group blog, make the paper available to anyone who wants. The goal here is not to show me, or even your classmates something “cool,” but rather to push the wider discourse around these institutions and what is possible.

Timeline:

- Three weeks before presentation: Initial outline of your group’s idea and sketch of what materials you will be producing.
- Week of Presentation: Completed project along with individual and group write up.