Digital Humanities Graduate Certificate Handbook and Objectives

1. Overview

In the certificate experience, students will learn both how the digital humanities can open up transformative avenues of research and pedagogy that may help to re-envision what it means to do research and teaching in the humanities, as well as help them to do the traditional work in their fields more effectively and efficiently. Students will examine both theory and practice, engaging in critical discussion as well as production. Through active engagement, research, and building, students will learn how to conceptualize digital tools and techniques. While general familiarity with modern web technologies is suggested, no prior programming or web development knowledge is required. Important to the program is flexibility for students to follow interests related to their specific fields, while also giving them a broad knowledge of the possibilities involved in digital humanities work.

2. Objectives

This certificate aims to help students develop comfort with all aspects of Digital Humanities work. In alignment with this goal, students who complete this certificate will be able to:
- Objective 1:
  - Demonstrate hands-on experience using digital humanities methods
    - *Students must have knowledge of a range of digital humanities methods, enough to know what method(s) to select for one's own project.*
- Objective 2:
  - Demonstrate a capacity for adapting to technological changes through digital humanities project work.
    - *Students must develop comfort with experimentation and adopting new methods and approaches.*
- Objective 3:
  - Articulate how digital humanities methods, theories, or practices can contribute to original research in their own fields, in ways that account for the ethical implications of using digital methods for this research
    - *Students must be able to apply DH methods to their own field and discipline.*
- Objective 4:
  - Articulate an awareness of the methods, questions and issues in research areas beyond their own

- - - *Due to the interdisciplinary nature of DH, it is critical that students understand how digital humanities interacts with many fields of study in order to collaborate with Digital Humanists outside of their discipline.*
- Objective 5:
  - Manage or significantly contribute to a digital humanities project that may involve collaboration
    - *The project is a ubiquitous concept within Digital Humanities, and may encompass many types of work. Being able to develop, manage, and complete a multi-faceted project is a critical skill for DH Practitioners.*
    - *Projects often require collaboration across disciplines, departments, and institutions. Students in this certificate will gain experience working in teams with a variety of skills and knowledge.*
- Objective 6:
  - Apply digital humanities methods and practices to enhance pedagogy
    - *Pedagogy takes place in many formats and spaces, including but not limited to, a credit-bearing college course, a K-12 environment, in museums, through non-profit work. Digital Humanities can enrich and enhance learning in any of these spaces.*

3. Requirements

The certificate has three required components (for a total of 9 credits), culminating in a portfolio. This portfolio is submitted to the DH@MSU Curriculum Committee for review upon completion of the Certificate.

3.1 DH865 / HST812 (3cr.) – Digital Humanities Seminar

This seminar course provides an overview for digital humanities conversations, theory, history, and practices. It is typically offered in the Spring Semester. Students will chart conversations in DH in tandem with experimenting with a range of DH methodologies, theories, and tools.

This course is not a prerequisite for students' completion of the Pedagogy or Research Requirements for the Certificate. It may be taken at any point in a student's graduate career or at any point in the Certificate.

3.2 Digital Humanities Pedagogy Requirement

Pedagogy takes place in many formats and spaces, including but not limited to, a credit-bearing college course, a K-12 environment, in museums, and through non-profit work. To complete the certificate, students must engage with the critical work of planning and delivering DH instruction.

Students may fulfill this requirement in the following ways:
- Taking DH861 Digital Humanities Pedagogy (taught regularly in the Spring semester)
- Taking another pedagogical methods course with a Digital Humanities emphasis

- RAship or Internship in DH-related units in which teaching and the creation of educational materials is at the center of the work.
- Teaching or TA-ing in a course which incorporated digital humanities methods (at the case-by-case approval of the DH@MSU Curriculum Committee)
- Completing a Cultural Heritage Informatics Fellowship with a pedagogically focused project

In instances where the pedagogy component has been completed through teaching, a TA-ship, or an internship (e.g. when the requirement wasn't fulfilled by taking the DH861 course or another similar course for credit), the student is required to submit the following materials as part of their Certificate Portfolio (see Section 3.4):
- Any relevant artifacts of the pedagogy (e.g. syllabus, assignment description(s), artifacts of student work, as appropriate and available)
- In cases of an internship, or a TA-ship, the faculty/internship supervisor needs to complete a [recommendation form](#) attesting to the student's work

In these cases, the student must also identify a course taken for credit that relates to their pedagogical work. For example, if a student achieves the pedagogy component by teaching a course on Modern Japanese History through DH methods, they could use a course that they took for credit about 20th Century World History or Japanese history as the credit-bearing course associated with the Pedagogy Component of the Certificate.

3.3 Digital Humanities Research Requirement

To complete the certificate, students must engage in a DH-related research project. This may also be fulfilled by:
- Taking a Digital Humanities course (either with the DH course code or with another course code)
- Taking a disciplinary course and engaging in a digital humanities project during the course, as the final project or paper (at the case-by-case approval of the DH@MSU Curriculum Committee)
- Taking an independent study course that focuses on Digital Humanities, such as DH 890
- RA-ing/GA-ing or interning in a Digital Humanities unit on campus (such as MATRIX, Mesh, DHLC, DSL, etc) or with a faculty member in which the work is focused on digital humanities research
- Completing the Digital Scholarship Lab Graduate Arts Fellowship
- Completing the Cultural Heritage Informatics Fellows Program or the Cultural Heritage Informatics Field School with a DH research-focused project
- Completing an individual DH research project based on previous coursework, leading to substantial academic output (at the case-by-case approval of the DH@MSU Curriculum Committee)

Dissertation work may not count toward the Research requirement of the certificate, per University policy.

In instances where the research component has been completed through an RA-ship, a Fellowship, an internship, or through an extended research project, the student is required to submit the following materials as part of their Certificate Portfolio (see Section 3.4):
- Any relevant artifacts of the research (e.g. white papers, presentation materials, research reports, articles, digital project artifacts such as a URL, screenshots, etc)
- In cases of a Fellowship, an internship, or an RA-ship, a letter from the faculty/internship supervisor needs to complete a recommendation form attesting to the student's work

In these cases, the student must also identify a course taken for credit that relates to their research work. For example, if a student achieves the research component through a Digital Scholarship Lab Graduate Arts Fellowship, they could use a course that they took for credit about Digital Art Production or on the subject matter relating to the Fellowship directly as the credit-bearing course associated with the Research Component of the Certificate.

3.4 Digital Humanities Portfolio

To qualify for the certificate, each graduate student must submit a portfolio, attesting to and reflecting on their digital humanities work.

The portfolio, which is formatted as a form, includes:
- Information detailing how the student has fulfilled the requirements (Required)
- A teaching philosophy statement (see Section 3.4.1, Teaching Statement)
- A reflective narrative (see Section 3.4.2, Reflective Narrative) (Required)
- Supporting documentation for the pedagogy and research components (Required if Pedagogy and/or Research components are fulfilled outside of direct coursework)
- Any documents, links, or other materials relevant to the completion of these requirements that the student wishes to include (Optional)

When complete, the student submits their portfolio through the portfolio form on the DH@MSU website. Students may submit their portfolio at any point in their graduate career or the academic year. Students planning to graduate in the summer should submit their portfolio during the spring semester prior. If a significant part of the work completed for the certificate occurs during the summer when the student is graduating, the student may submit their portfolio for consideration in the following fall semester. For more information on how the certificate is awarded, see Section 5.1, Process for Awarding the Certificate.

3.4.1 Teaching Statement

All students completing the Certificate must include a teaching philosophy statement that discusses the role of DH/Digital Pedagogy in their approach to teaching in 400-500 words or 1

page. Students are encouraged to think expansively about teaching and pedagogy as extending beyond the university classroom as they consider this statement, especially if they are not pursuing a career in the academy.

Students who completed the DH861 course are welcome to simply submit the [Teaching Philosophy Statement](#) written for the course as part of the Certificate Portfolio. Students who have not taken DH861 may follow the framework of that course assignment for writing the teaching philosophy statement for the Certificate Portfolio, or they may incorporate DH/Digital Pedagogy methods into a Teaching Philosophy Statement used otherwise for job applications, etc. If you already have a teaching philosophy statement, you are welcome to use it as long as it extensively discusses how DH fits into pedagogy.

3.4.2 Reflective Narrative

The portfolio also includes a summative essay reflecting on the student's experience in the Certificate and how DH has shaped their work overall. Students should discuss each requirement of the certificate as well as any work that builds on or has developed from them and they should. Be sure to include links, images, and/or materials that help to exemplify their work. This is the student's opportunity to articulate their journey through graduate school as it relates to DH and to show the Curriculum Committee how they see DH integrating with (or not) their work moving forward. The narrative should be 1200-1500 words or four pages double-spaced in a 12 point font.

3.4.3 Public-facing Summary Statement

The portfolio also includes a statement of 100 words or less describing your DH work that you've achieved in your time at MSU that you would like to highlight. This paragraph should be appropriate for a wide set of possible audiences, including prospective employers, other graduate students considering completing the certificate, and the broader DH community. Students are encouraged to include links to their own websites, projects, social media accounts, etc. Students may also include 1-3 images and/or a 30-second media clip (slideshow, images, audio, excerpt from a project, etc.). All materials must be [accessible,](#) e.g., alt-text for images and captioned videos, etc. Students may choose to have this paragraph and accompanying materials included on the DH@MSU website with comments from the DH@MSU Curriculum Committee.

4. How to join the certificate

Graduate students matriculated into any graduate program at MSU (masters or PhD level) are welcome to join the certificate, regardless of the College in which their degree is located. The student fills out the short [Application Form](#) for the Certificate. Then, the student will receive a welcome email from the DH Advisor to set up an onboarding meeting in order to help map out

the student's pathway through the Certificate and to connect them to resources in the DH@MSU community.

5.   Completing the Certificate

The Certificate has three main components:
   1. Digital Humanities Seminar (DH865/HST812)
   2. Digital Humanities Pedagogy Requirement
   3. Digital Humanities Research Requirement

As they progress through this coursework, students develop a portfolio of Digital Humanities work to be submitted to the Curriculum Committee and Associate Dean for Graduate Education for approval. Students submit their portfolio through the [Digital Humanities Graduate Certificate Portfolio Form](#) located on the [Graduate Certificate page on the DH@MSU website](#).

Students are welcome to complete the portfolio form at any point in their graduate careers at MSU. Students may complete the form for review immediately after completing the Certificate requirements, or they may submit the form for review in their final semester at MSU.

More details on how these requirements may be found in Section 3, Requirements.

5.1 Process for Awarding the Certificate

The DH@MSU Curriculum Committee reviews completed Certificate portfolios (as submitted through the [portfolio form](#)) each Fall and Spring semester. Students graduating in Summer may submit their portfolio in the Spring semester prior to graduating, or they may submit in Summer for review in Fall. There is no penalty for awarding the certificate in the semester after a student graduates with their degree.

After the Committee reviews and approves portfolios, the portfolio is sent to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education in the College of Arts and Letters for final approval. Finally, the certificate information is sent to the Registrar's Office and is added to the student's academic record.

5.2 Example Pathways Through the Certificate

The Digital Humanities Certificate aims to provide a flexible experience that reflects the interests and opportunities available to individual students. The consistent curricular component of the certificate is DH865/HST812. This three-credit course can be taken at any point in a graduate career at Michigan State or at any point in the certificate. Other requirements may be completed within or outside of coursework as detailed below.

Certificate seekers may also propose alternative routes to complete the certificate. These are reviewed/evaluated by the Curriculum Committee on a case by case basis. Approval should be sought before undertaking the project or the start of class.

These pathways are presented as examples of routes students might take to complete the Certificate. They are not intended to be exhaustive nor restrictive.

Example 1

- Seminar - DH865/HST812 - Digital Humanities Seminar
- Pedagogy - DH861 - Digital Humanities Pedagogy
- Research - DH891 - Special Topics: Digital Public Humanities
- Compile and Submit Portfolio:
    - Teaching Statement
    - Reflective Narrative
    - Public-facing Summary Statement
    - Submission of materials to the Curriculum Committee

Example 2

- Seminar - DH865/HST812 - Digital Humanities Seminar
- Pedagogy - Graduate Assistant position in LEADR
- Research - Cultural Heritage Informatics Fellowship
- Compile and Submit Portfolio:
    - Pedagogy component:
        - Recommendation Form from LEADR Director
        - Relevant pedagogical artifacts (assignment descriptions, lesson plans, examples of student work)
        - Course code, instructor, and semester of instructor for credit-bearing course associated with the Pedagogy component
    - Research component:
        - Recommendation Form from CHI Director
        - Relevant research materials (white paper, blog posts reflecting on research work, link(s) to project)
        - Course code, instructor, and semester of instructor for credit-bearing course associated with the Research component
    - Teaching Statement
    - Reflective Narrative
    - Public-facing Summary Statement
    - Submission of materials to the Curriculum Committee

Example 3

- Seminar - DH865/HST812 - Digital Humanities Seminar
- Pedagogy - DH861 - Digital Humanities Pedagogy

- Research - Digital Scholarship Lab Arts Fellowship
- Compile and Submit Portfolio:
  - Research Component:
    - Recommendation Form from Digital Scholarship Lab supervisor
    - Relevant research artifacts (link(s) to project, white paper, etc)
    - Course code, instructor, and semester of instructor for credit-bearing course associated with the Research component
  - Teaching Statement
  - Reflective Narrative
  - Public-facing Summary Statement
  - Submission of materials to the Curriculum Committee

Example 4

- Seminar - DH865/HST812 - Digital Humanities Seminar
- Pedagogy - Teach HST251 - Doing Digital History
- Research - DH890 - Digital Humanities Independent Study
- Compile and Submit Portfolio:
  - Pedagogy component:
    - Relevant artifacts from HST 251 (such as syllabus, assignment descriptions, or student work as appropriate)
    - Course code, instructor, and semester of instructor for credit-bearing course associated with the Pedagogy component
  - Teaching Statement
  - Reflective Narrative
  - Public-facing Summary Statement
  - Submission materials to the Curriculum Committee

This Handbook was created by the DH@MSU Curriculum Committee in Spring 2020 and underwent review by the DH@MSU Core Faculty in May 2020. It will be reviewed by the DH@MSU Curriculum Committee on an annual basis and may be updated accordingly after subsequent review by the DH@MSU Core Faculty. It was most recently updated in January 2025.