

Digital Project Requirement

The Digital Project Requirement is a central component of the Digital Literacy Initiative. It challenges students to engage their research and scholarly work in new ways through digital tools and methods. To successfully fulfill this requirement, all MA students are asked to create a digital project, or contribute to a collaborative digital project, in at least one course during the MA program. The work completed for this requirement should be substantial, academically rigorous, and equivalent to a final research paper. In courses where there is no suitable final project, the student may, with the consent of the instructor, select a different assignment for their digital work. Students can also satisfy this requirement by completing a Digital or Exhibition QP.

This document features guidelines and an overview of previous projects which have satisfied this requirement. These options are by no means exhaustive, however, and we encourage students to embrace the technologies and tools that best complement their scholarly inquiries and encourage creative solutions.

Completing the Requirement

Students seeking to complete the Digital Project Requirement should first explore the course descriptions for the upcoming semester; courses designed with a digital project that satisfies the requirement will be indicated. The one notable exception is the "Approaches to the Object" course, which features a digital project as part of the coursework, but cannot be used to complete the requirement since it is conceived as an extension of the orientation skills workshops.

If a course has not been specifically designed with an option to fulfill the requirement, students should approach the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss this possibility. This initial dialogue is very important in establishing the student's intentions, setting expectations, and devising schedules for the completion of the digital project work. Please note that despite a student's desire to complete the requirement in a specific course, faculty are not obligated to make this option available or accept a student's proposal if it does not seem germane. Students may also fulfill the digital project requirement through a consortium course, but it must be approved by a student's academic advisor.

Prior to midterm week, students must complete the first section of the Digital Project Requirement Form outlining their project and approach and then present the document to the faculty member(s) or supervisor(s) who will oversee their work. After receiving approval, the student must then meet with the Director of Digital Humanities and Digital Exhibitions to review the project proposal before proceeding. Following the completion of the project, students will complete the second section of the form and submit it, along with their digital project, to the faculty or supervisor. Faculty will notify the Academic Programs office and the student's advisor that the requirement has been completed.

Project Examples

Personal Digital Projects

Personal Digital projects typically serve as an alternative to a course's final paper and present a substantial scholarly work. Faculty may offer this as an option to students as a final project or can build a digital project into coursework. If a digital project option is not offered, students may confer with faculty to explore this possibility. Faculty make the final determination as to the viability of a digital project for their course. The most common examples of individual digital projects that students have completed to date are websites and 3D exhibition designs.

Online Exhibitions

Online exhibition projects typically focus on single objects or thematically organized constellations of objects. They vary in approaches, goals, design, and functionality. Despite the wide range of possibilities, these projects each strive to present scholarly research through the digital in ways that would not be possible through traditional print scholarship. They often place a strong emphasis on audience, presentation, non-linear narrative, experimentation, and/or multivocality. Past digital exhibitions have made good use of audio/video resources, interactive elements, and linking structures which create visible relationships between source materials and objects.

Online exhibition examples: [Kettle of Community](#) and [Handmade Worlds](#)

Archives

Students may also build a digital archive. These archives digitize existing collections or bring together new collections of digital or digitized materials to create lasting and shareable resources for future scholars and scholarly works. Additionally, these archives organize and present materials through thoughtful information structures which draw attention to the relationships between selected objects.

Digital archive example: [Dated Tang MetalWork](#)

Exhibition Design (3D design)

3D exhibition design projects, commonly completed in the Exhibition as Medium / Design and Curatorial Thinking course, focus on the exhibition and presentation of objects in three-dimensional space. Using 3D modelling platforms, such as Sketchup, students think about the organization and design of exhibition spaces, including facets such as interpretation, casework, object mounting, and graphics. These efforts help students focus on the visitor experience in physical space and towards collaborations with exhibition designers and curators. Sketchup models developed through these courses often become the basis for Exhibition QPs.

Experimental Project Options

Although the website and 3D exhibition projects are the most commonly employed digital projects used to satisfy the Digital Literacy Requirement, students are encouraged to explore other formats, tools, and technologies as well. Students may consider the use of mobile and location-based projects, mapping interactives, 3D object creation, and extended reality (AR/VR) projects. Students must consult with faculty should they wish to undertake a more experimental approach to ensure that their project is achievable and appropriate.

Collaborative Projects

Students may also fulfill the Digital Literacy Project Requirement through projects that feature the work of multiple persons working collaboratively toward a single final project. Students must demonstrate that they have made a substantial and tangible contribution to the project.

Group work on a course website/exhibition

Courses may include a final project which is designed to invite the contribution of all students. These projects may be predetermined in design and concept, with detailed requirements explained up front, or they may be projects which evolve over the course of the semester.

Course project example: [Body of the Poet](#)

In this project, students worked together to design and develop a course website which became an in-gallery interactive for an exhibition at the Grolier Club titled "*Poet of the Body*": *New York's Walt Whitman*. The students were also responsible for conceiving and developing a section of the website which featured their scholarship and research using various digital tools to approach material objects related to Walt Whitman. These approaches included 3D object creation, Virtual Reality, and interactive web elements.

Focus Project Digital Interactives

Focus Projects present unique opportunities for students to conceive and develop digital interactive projects for the exhibition space. Depending on the Focus Project, students may be asked to work on specific aspects of these projects, including content creation and management, research, design and layout, and project management.

Focus Project interactive examples:

[Fabricating Power with Balinese Textiles](#)

Students conceptualized and designed this digital exhibition interactive working alongside the exhibition curator. Students gathered, researched, and composed all content for the interactive. Finally, they worked with an outside development company to finalize the project.

[New York Crystal Palace 1853](#)

A constellation of interactive elements was featured in the *New York Crystal Palace 1853* Focus Exhibition, including an interactive engraving from a period newspaper, a visitor's guide, an audio guide, and an interactive guidebook. Students each conceptualized, designed, and created content for one to two of these elements in the two courses related to this Focus Project. Students also wrote individual essays for the exhibition's online catalogue/publication.

Substantial Contribution to an Online Project

Collaborative projects can also require substantial student contributions towards digital workflows and processes of implementation, such as digitizing and entry. This work demonstrates proficiency with digital tools and contributes to the ongoing success of institutional projects.

Online project examples:

[The Story Box Exhibition Website](#)

For this project a student worked with Aaron Glass and the Director of the DML over a semester to organize assets, enter data, and help shape the direction and scope of this Focus Project's online exhibition website. This component was built following the completion of the exhibition. It served to preserve the conceptual work of the project while also collecting and displaying many of the elements, both digital and physical, which were featured throughout the exhibition space.

[Craft, Art and Design Oral History Project](#)

The Craft, Art, and Design Oral History Project is an online archive of oral history interviews of contemporary craftspeople, artists, and designers. This project requires ongoing maintenance and updates with new interviews and content. A student could work over the course of a semester digitizing, designing, and uploading assets, building out new sections of the project, and managing existing content.