

GLIS 650 Digital Libraries: Fall 2014

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Meeting by appointment

Class times: Thursdays, 5:30 pm– 8:30 pm

Location: BRONF [179](#)

Course duration: September 4, 2014 – November 27, 2014

Prerequisite: GLIS 617 Information System Design

Course description

Analysis of the complex concepts and applications that professionals are likely to encounter in the design, development, and management of digital libraries. Topics include digital objects, knowledge representations and discovery, architecture, user behaviour, services, and evaluation.

Digital Libraries provides an introduction to the complex concepts and applications that professionals are likely to encounter in the information environment. The course materials and activities are designed to provide students with a solid understanding of the kinds of applications and technologies that are used by professionals to launch digital libraries and manage their operations.

Although the course has a technological focus, it does not include computer programming or other technical aspects (such as HTML), and it builds upon the concepts introduced in the core MLIS courses, providing comprehensive and detailed coverage of various features of digital libraries.

Learning objectives

The learning objectives for the course are as follows:

- Understand the technological and organizational foundations of digital libraries.
- Understand the different forms of content that can be found in digital collections. Understand how that content is digitized, how metadata is ascribed, and how the digital materials are preserved.
- Understand how to use user-centered design practices to ensure the effective discovery, access, and use of digital library's content and services.
- Carry out the initial planning required for creating a digital library, including the scope and nature of the collection and services that would be offered as well as the processes, workflows, and resources that would be required to support the ongoing operations of the digital library.
- Build a digital library web site using specialized web publishing software.

Course schedule

Week	Date	Title	Notes
1	Sep 4	Introduction	
2	Sep 11	Digital libraries as organizations	
3	Sep 18	Needs analysis	Report #1 due (individual)
4	Sep 25	Software architecture	
5	Oct 2	Application software	Project Brief due (group)
6	Oct 9	Access	Report #2 due (individual)
--	Oct 16	<i>Study week</i>	
7	Oct 23	Content: Digitization and formats	
8	Oct 30	Metadata	
9	Nov 6	Copyright, privacy, permissions	Report #3 due (individual)
10	Nov 13	Preservation	
11	Nov 20	Evaluation	
12	Nov 27	<i>Group presentations</i>	Proposal due (group)

Readings

This course will likely involve a fair amount of reading. Some of it will come from the required readings, but just as much (if not more) will come from the self-directed readings that you will do as you work on your assignments and explore the topics we cover in class.

You should also expect to do supplemental research and reading depending on our level of familiarity with the concepts or technologies involved in the course.

Required readings

There are no required textbooks for this course. Required readings will take the form of articles, book chapters (usually e-book chapters), or other online resources that you should read in conjunction with each of the topics in the course.

The readings for each topic will be posted to myCourses, usually at least a week in advance of the class where we will be covering the topic.

Recommended readings

There are a number of recommended texts that have been placed on reserve at the Education Curriculum Resources Centre. These texts provide a good general coverage to several aspects of digital libraries and can be useful for solidifying your understanding of the topics.

An alternate listing of these texts with links to their WorldCat records (which provides a table of contents) as well as their e-book versions (when available) can be found on myCourses.

Bülow, A., Ahmon, J., Spencer, R., & National Archives (Great Britain). (2011). *Preparing collections for digitization*. London: Facet Publishing, in association with the National Archives.

Courtney, N. (2010). *More technology for the rest of us: A second primer on computing for the non-IT librarian*. Santa Barbara, Calif: Libraries Unlimited.

Dale, P., Beard, J., & Holland, M. (2011). *University libraries and digital learning environments*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.

In Monson, J. D. (2013). *Jump-start your career as a digital librarian: A LITA guide*.

Kresh, D., & Council on Library and Information Resources. (2007). *The whole digital library handbook*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Lesk, M., & Lesk, M. (2004). *Understanding digital libraries*. Boston: Elsevier.

Li, L. (2009). *Emerging technologies for academic libraries in the digital age*. Oxford: Chandos Pub.

Papy, F. (2008). *Digital libraries*. London, UK: ISTE.

Tsakonas, G., & Papatheodorou, C. (2009). *Evaluation of digital libraries: An insight into useful applications and methods*. Oxford: Chandos.

Whittaker, B. M., & Thomas, L. M. (2009). *Special collections 2.0: New technologies for rare books, manuscripts, and archival collections*. Santa Barbara, Calif: Libraries Unlimited.

Witten, I. H., Bainbridge, D., & Nichols, D. M. (2010). *How to build a digital library*. Amsterdam: Morgan Kaufmann Publishers.

Additional guidance on relevant journal titles, databases, and web sites will also be provided in class and on myCourses throughout the course of the semester.

Assessment

The following table lists the three forms of assessment that will be used in this course with how much each will contribute to your final grade.

Reports (3 reports, individual)	45%
Project brief (group)	15%
Digital library proposal (group)	40%

The sections that follow describe each of these in more detail.

Reports (3 reports, 45% total, individual)

During the course of the semester you will prepare and submit three short reports on topics related to digital libraries. The objective of these reports is to provide you with an opportunity to explore the literature on digital libraries, to read and synthesize the information and to demonstrate your understanding of the topic.

Topics

The topics for the three reports are as follows:

Report 1: Overview of digital libraries in one non-library context (i.e. museums, government, non-profit organizations, corporations, etc). The report should provide examples and identify emerging themes in the role digital libraries are serving in the chosen context, industry or domain.

Report 2: Overview of one of the following applications: Omeka, Islandora, Hydra. You can consider the report to be a summary for a library considering adopting one of the applications for their own digital library initiative. The report should describe the scope of the application (i.e. what functionality it provides), its strengths and its weaknesses, and should draw on independent sources for its information.

Report 3: Report on a topic related to digital libraries of your choosing (to be cleared by instructor in advance: provide a short description of your topic and explain its relevance/interest to you and/or the course).

Although each of the reports is described in terms of a somewhat general topic, there is still leeway for you to focus the report so that it is useful and interesting to both you and the reader.

Content

Your report should demonstrate a strong understanding of the concepts. It should be concise, well-written and organized. You should make good use of the literature to support your writing. Respect your reader and avoid the verbose writing style that plagues most academic writing. The majority of your sources should be from scholarly sources, although non-scholarly references are permitted and encouraged.

Length

Each report should somewhere between 700-800 words in length (not including the title page or your list of references). Marks will be deducted for reports that do not respect this length requirement.

This length has been chosen to encourage you to be concise in your writing. If you find that you do not have space to cover everything, remember that it is better to focus on the things that are more important than it is to be comprehensive. You'll need to prioritize and choose what to include and what to leave out. Your introduction should also make it clear to the reader of the report what choices you have made in this regard and why.

Format

Your reports must be written using APA style, including formatting, writing style, and citation style. They should have both an introduction and conclusion. You are encouraged to use headings to organize your report. Marks will be deducted from papers that are poorly formatted, organized, presented and/or written.

Project Brief (15%, group)

For this assignment your team will prepare a project brief for the implementation of a digital library. The objective of the assignment is to provide the rationale and scope for a new digital library by describing the collection, the user community, and the needs that the digital library will fulfill.

You will use this project brief as the basis for the digital library that your team will propose in your final project.

Content

Your project brief must include the following:

- Provide a brief overview of the proposed digital library, its mission, and the community it will serve.
- Provide the rationale for why the organization wants to build a digital library.
- What are the top three goals for the digital library in order of priority? These are goals that you decide upon based on your understanding of the organization, its user community, and the capabilities of digital libraries.
- Who are the top three categories of people who are the primary audiences for the digital library, in order of priority? What are each user category's primary uses of the site?
- What content will make up the digital library?¹ Your description should include the scope, format(s), and acquisition of content (current and ongoing). For the purposes of this assignment, the content cannot be born digital, but must require digitization before it can be added to your collection.

Your report must be written using APA style, including formatting, writing style, and citation style. Your report should somewhere between 1500-2100 words in length, not including the title page or your list of references—approximately 5-7 pages in APA style. Marks will be deducted from papers that do not respect the length requirements, are poorly formatted, organized, presented and/or written.

¹ Although your proposal must be based on content that requires digitization, it is possible that when you build the prototype of your digital library that you will use content that has already been digitized.

Digital Library Proposal (40%, group)

For this assignment your team will develop a proposal for a redesign of a public library/archive's web site, one that is based upon the Project Brief of one of the other project teams in your class.

You will work in the same project teams that were set for the Project Brief assignment. Everyone on the team is responsible for the entire work, and will receive the same grade for the work submitted.

The proposal consists of **three components**: a written report, a functioning prototype of your digital library, and a brief presentation of your proposal to the class. Each of these is described in the sections that follow.

Report

The proposal report must answer the following questions:

- **Rational:** Why does this digital library need to be implemented? What need does it meet? Why is it the most effective way of meeting this need?
- **Goals:** What are the top three goals for the digital library?
- **Audience:** Who are the top three audiences for the digital library? How will each of them use the web site and the services the library will provide?
- **Scope:** What functionality and services will the digital library provide to users?
- **Workflow:** What process will be used for adding new material to the collection?
- **Digitization:** How will the content be digitized? What equipment or software will be required? What special considerations will need to be made?
- **Metadata:** What metadata will be stored for each item? What is/are the source/s of this metadata? How will metadata be assigned and maintained?
- **Copyright and legal issues:** What copyright issues are their around your collection and how will they be addressed? What copyright will you assign to the digitized content in your collection? Similarly, how will any other legal issues such as privacy, permission, etc be dealt with?
- **Preservation:** What preservation issues are relevant for your collection? How will you ensure they are addressed and that the digital objects in your collection are preserved?
- **Staffing:** What different roles will be required for the ongoing operation of the digital library? How many people will need to be employed (Full-time or part-time? Permanent or casual? etc)?
- **Evaluation:** How will you determine whether the digital library is meeting its goals?

Your report must be written using APA style, including formatting, writing style, and citation style. Your report should somewhere between 3000-4500 words in length, not including the title page, illustrations, or your list of references—approximately 10-15 pages in APA style. Marks will be deducted from papers that do not respect the length requirements, are poorly formatted, organized, presented and/or written.

The report will account for 45% of the team's grade on this assignment.

Prototype

As part of your proposal you will develop a prototype of web site for the digital library you are proposing. The prototype will be building using Omeka web publishing software, specifically the free hosted version of Omeka <<http://www.omeka.net>>.

The prototype is meant to give someone who is reviewing your proposal a good idea of what the digital library you are proposing will look like. It is meant to be a concrete representation of what you have described in your report.

The prototype must include the following elements:

- 20-30 digital items with complete metadata
- At least one collection
- At least two exhibits
- As much content and functionality as possible to support the scope of the digital library described in your report.

Note: Given the limitations of the Omeka hosted software, it is possible that you will not be able to implement everything you've described in your report.

The prototype will account for 45% of the team's grade on this assignment.

Presentation

Finally, as part of this assignment your team will need to present your digital library proposal to the class. The presentation will take place during the last class (November 27). The presentation should be approximately 20 minutes in length, with an additional 5 minutes or so for questions.

The presentation must include a PowerPoint slide deck that has to be submitted before the start of class. While you do not have to provide the full design proposal report to the audience, you might want to consider producing handouts.

You should try to distribute the presentation work between everyone on the team. For example (and this is just a suggestion!):

- 2 people could present the slide content
- 1 person could demonstrate the prototype site
- 1 person could take the lead on preparing the presentation slides
- 1 person could take the lead on preparing a handout for the class

The presentation will account for 10% of the team's grade on this assignment.

On group work

For the project brief and digital library proposal assignments you will work in project teams of five (or so) people. You will be randomly assigned to a team at the start of the semester.

Teams are expected to work together throughout the semester, to collaborate and produce both the project brief as well as the site proposal. Everyone on the team is responsible for the entire work, and will normally receive the same grade for the work submitted.

At the end of the semester you each will be asked to submit an assessment of your team's performance. This assessment will include your assessment of each person on the team (including yourself!) as well as your thoughts the group's overall performance.

This peer assessment is a required element of the course, although it will not contribute to your grade. Instead, you will each at the end of the semester be provided with feedback based on the assessment given to you by your team members. The feedback will be suitably summarized and anonymized.

A document containing both the assessment rubric and feedback form can be found on myCourses (See: Content > Handouts > team peer assessment). You can submit your team peer assessment using the Assignments tool in myCourses.

Submitting your assignments

- All assignments must be submitted electronically using the Assignments tool in myCourses.
- Your written assignments must be submitted electronically as an MS Word file (.doc or .docx) or alternately as a rich-text format (.rtf) file. All diagrams, tables, etc must be inserted in your document: they cannot be submitted as separate files (.xls, .pdf, etc).
- For individual assignments, please use the filename **assignmentname-firstname-lastname.doc** (or.docx or .rtf, depending on the format you use). For group assignments, use **assignmentname-group1.doc** (or group2, group3, depending).
- Late assignments will not be accepted, and will receive a grade of zero (0). Extensions are only granted in the most exceptional and incredible of circumstances, and even then they must be requested at least one week before the assignment is due.

Grading

The grading in this course is based on letter grades, with numerical values used only for combining the various forms of assessment into one final grade. The letter grades, their general meaning as well as the associated numerical ranges are:

Letter	Comment	Range	Criteria (partial)²
A+	Excellent	95-100	Exceptional work
A	Very good +	85-94	Demonstrates understanding of advanced principles. Able to apply knowledge to problems. Minimal rework required.
A-	Very good	80-84	Demonstrates understanding of advanced principles. Able to apply knowledge to problems. Some rework required.
B+	Good +	75-79	Demonstrates knowledge of basic principles. Able to apply knowledge to problems. Rework required.
B	Good	70-74	Demonstrates knowledge of basic principles. Has some difficulties in applying knowledge to problems. Significant gaps or omissions in work.
B-	OK	65-69	Demonstrates incomplete knowledge of basic principles. Has difficulties applying knowledge to problems. Significant omissions and/or rework required.
F	Unacceptable	0-64	Fails to demonstrate knowledge of basic principles.

Note: For the determination of the final grade, "A" ranges from 85-100

You will receive a letter grade for each form of assessment based on how well the assignment addressed and met the stated requirements. These letter grades will be converted into numerical values typically using the mid-point of the associated range. These numerical values will be combined using the appropriate weights to give a numerical value, which will then be converted back into a letter grade. This will be your final grade for this course.

² The criteria provided here are meant to give you a general idea of the level of performance associated with each letter grade. They do not give you a complete measure of how each form of assessment will be evaluated. For example, issues relating to communication, writing, presentation, etc will also figure into your grades.

The following table provides an example of a grade calculation:

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Numerical Value</i>	<i>Weighted Score</i>
Reports	45%	A-	83	37
<i>Report #1</i>	33.3%	B+	77	26
<i>Report #2</i>	33.3%	A-	82	27
<i>Report #3</i>	33.3%	A	90	30
Project brief	15%	B+	77	12
Proposal	40%	A-	83	33
<i>Report</i>	45%	A-	82	37
<i>Prototype</i>	45%	A-	82	37
<i>Presentation</i>	10%	A	90	9
Total				82
Final Grade				A-

Verifying your grades

You can check your grades using the Grades feature in myCourses (available on the toolbar on the left in myCourses). You are responsible for verifying that the grades recorded in the Grades feature in myCourses match the grades on the work that is returned to you. If you notice any discrepancies, please contact me as soon as possible so that I can look into the matter.

General information

Academic integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Council and Disciplinary Procedures. See <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity> for information.

Academic policies

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights. See <http://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/rights/> for more information.

Language of instruction

All lectures, discussions, and course materials are in English. However, students have the right to submit their work in French.

Students with disabilities

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. Please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 prior to discussing the case with the instructor. See <http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/> for more information.