

## ENGL 2095, Literature by the Numbers

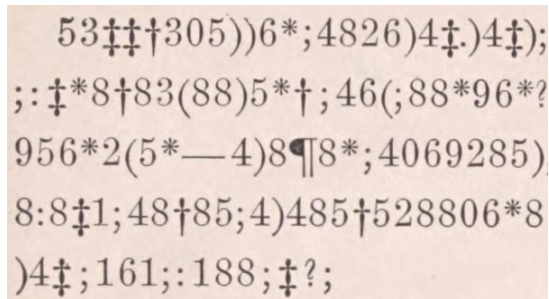
Professor Swanstrom (Lisa)

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Meetings: Tues and Thurs, 12:25-1:45

Place of meetings: Tuesdays in SAEC 2147 and

Thursdays in LIB 1745 (Mac Lab)



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*Image from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Gold Bug"*

### Welcome!

In the emerging field of the Digital Humanities, computational tools allow readers to apply new forms of “objective” (or at least statistically quantifiable) critique to the study of literature, and, in complementary fashion, enable writers to generate literary texts that are shaped by digitally-powered formal constraints. In some ways, this “Literature by the Numbers” approach might seem incompatible with tradition. Conventional literary study, after all, involves close reading, demands careful interpretation, and generates multiple and sometimes even contradictory conclusions. And yet literature itself has always been constrained by form, genre, and cultural mores. And some instances of literature, in particular, such as mysteries, puzzles, and algorithmically generated texts, invite a more specific analytic approach, requiring readers to deduce a single solution or methodology before any meaning can be explicated. In this course we will look at examples of such texts, as well as how a variety of computational tools might assist us in making sense of them and literary production in general.

Note that although this course involves frequent hands-on interaction with digital tools, no special knowledge of computing is required or expected.

**REQUIRED TEXTS** will be available in pdf or online, in canvas.

### GRADE BREAKDOWN

Participation in class discussions: 20%

In-class assignments, including Labs: 20%

Homework: 20%

Quizzes: 15%

Final Project: 25%

### EXPECTATIONS

Careful reading, active participation in class discussions, and a high quality of written work are all required to be successful in this course. In other words, come to class, do your work, be prepared, be original, be courteous, be critical, be kind, be on time.

## POLICIES

### **Absences & Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. Every three tardies counts as an absence. Leaving class early more than three times also counts as an absence. You can miss four classes without penalty. *More than five absences will result in a zero in participation. Each additional absence beyond that will result in a one point deduction from the final grade. I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Use them wisely!*

### **Late Work**

Late work will be penalized a full letter grade for each day it is past due. You have one “late pass” that you can use for either a homework assignment or an in-class assignment. The late pass gives you a one-week extension without penalty. You may not use the late pass for quizzes, the final paper, or the project proposal.

### **Plagiarism**

Students at the University of Utah are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust, personal integrity, and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see the Code of Students’ Rights and Responsibilities: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php> [Links to an external site.](#)

***Students with Disabilities (ADA statement):*** *The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability & Access.*

***University Safety Statement:*** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu) [Links to an external site.](#)

***Addressing Sexual Misconduct.*** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677 (COPS).

***English Department Diversity Statement:*** Literature allows us to imagine the lives of others and broaden our perspectives. How we talk about it together, in the physical or virtual classroom, is part of that process. Our diverse identities and experiences will inform and enhance those discussions. As we approach sometimes difficult topics, each member of the class is expected to foster a respectful, generous, and supportive classroom environment that makes room for productive difference and reasoned debate.