

PROTOTYPING TEXTS: INTERPRETATION THROUGH ALTERATION

Spring 2017 at UVic

English 508

Thursday

2:30 - 5:20

In the humanities, digital technologies are frequently used to prove things about literature: to reveal hidden networks, make whiz-bang visualizations, or construct quantitative arguments about bags of words. However, in the spirit of the arts and experimental media, they can be used for speculation, too.

During this seminar, we will conduct "what if" analyses of texts available in electronic format. This conjectural approach will involve something peculiar: interpreting our primary sources by altering them. We'll substitute words, change formats, redact documents, create forms, rearrange poems, remediate manifestos, glitch images, swap typefaces, bend data, and build bots, all to better understand the importance of aesthetics and design to digital studies.

**Instructor: Jentery Sayers
(Dept. of English)**

Our experiments will include altering texts with charged design elements, published between the 1870s and 1970s and associated with various -isms: Symbolism, Cubism, Nowism, Futurism, Dada, Minimalism, Expressionism, Imagism, Vorticism, Constructivism, Surrealism, Thingism, Concretism, and Plasticism, for instance.

At the end of term, these experiments will be gathered into portfolios and presented during an informal exhibition.