

emiCulture Work: Script Ohio
Final Report: Grant Proposal for Digital Storytelling Project
Kim McMullen
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The project for which I received a Mellon Digital Storytelling Grant was completed almost exactly as proposed. Sixteen students—most, but not all, English majors—enrolled in ENGL 391.03 and, working collaboratively over the course of spring semester 2018, completed original research and fieldwork focused on five Ohio writers (Sherwood Anderson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, William Dean Howells, Toni Morrison, James Wright). Each team articulated their insights in two specific digital storytelling projects: an interpretive video (offering a multi-media explication of a poem or prose passage by each writer) and an 8-11 minute digital documentary which introduced the writer and the historical and cultural context out of which each worked, focusing on his/her Ohio origins and particular contributions to American culture. These videos were combined with other materials into a digital exhibition entitled “Script Ohio” (www.scriptohio.kenyoncip.org) which was premiered to an audience of about 50 faculty and students in May 2018.

Class and the production process. While two students in the class were film majors, and while others had some experience with video production, the instruction and support of Ashley Butler, of CIP, and Jenna Nolt, of LBIS, were key to students’ technical mastery of equipment and software, and to the quality of the videos they produced. Both Ashley and Jenna led in-class workshops and served as resources outside of class time, as did Molly Wise, a student who acted as Technical Assistant for the class. The organization and timeline laid out in the grant proposal generally served us well. I had originally envisioned production teams of three students (a size I still believe is optimal), but since eight students needed to work with a nineteenth-century writer to fulfill major requirements, the Howells and Dunbar teams had four members, which left two teams of three (Wright, Morrison) and one team of two (Anderson). The latter pair struggled a bit with the relatively heavier workload (shared among more students in the other groups), while the four-person teams occasionally found time management tricky. Altogether, it seemed that working collaboratively was one of the biggest challenges for some students, and in future iterations of the course, I will be more proactive in teaching cooperative skills and strategies.

The timeline and pace of production was brisk but manageable. Because the film projects and the larger exhibit were complex collaborative productions, I carefully structured the schedule to require students to finish work incrementally, with the final projects dependent upon prompt and thorough completion of small tasks along the way. As the attached syllabus illustrates, students completed many small assignments individually as well as collaboratively, and actively edited and critiqued each other’s work as they might in a creative writing workshop. Each of these lesser assignments and critiques was assessed, and all contributed proportionally to the student’s final grade in the class. Thus I was evaluating both the *process* of digital storytelling as well as the final *product*.

An unusual aspect of the course was the off-campus fieldwork required to produce the digital videos. Some of this field research was serendipitous: one team filmed footage at the James Wright poetry festival in Martins Ferry, interviewing Wright’s biographer there; a second located

and interviewed a scholar at Lorain Community College who has worked extensively on Morrison’s connection to that community; another enterprising student used spring break to do archival research at Chicago’s Newbury Library, returning with images of original letters and manuscripts to add to the Anderson film. Yet scheduling this fieldwork—traveling two or more hours to a location and making good use of a visit to a historic site or a library or museum—was a real drain on student time. I’m not sure this kind of research fully benefitted each team or their subsequent digital stories, and so I have eliminated it from my new iteration of the class.

Budget. I requested substantial support for student travel to complete fieldwork, yet while each team made two or more research trips, most of money remains unspent. The majority of students used their own cars and did not submit requests for mileage reimbursement. Only two teams utilized college vehicles, for a total expenditure of \$147.53. Molly Wise acted as course TA, supplying invaluable technical support during hours when professional personnel are unavailable. She worked 19.5 hours and was paid \$184.06. I requested a stipend of \$1000 to support the additional planning and research for the course design.

	Requested	Spent	Balance
Transportation	604.56	147.53	457.03
Technical Assistant wages	400.00	184.06	215.94
Stipend	1000.00	1000.00	
Total	2004.56	1331.59	672.97

Learning Outcomes. The digital storytelling project engaged students in three “high impact practices”: writing intensive work; collaborative work; and undergraduate research. By completing independent research into the historical and cultural contexts of literature, producing literary and cultural analysis in video form, and working collaboratively, students achieved the following seven Kenyon general education outcomes:

- A. Acquire and integrate knowledge and understanding of the humanities
- B. Gather information from a variety of sources and evaluate its quality
- C. Formulate ideas rigorously and communicate them effectively, orally and in writing
- G. Develop an aesthetic sensibility through practice and critical examination of the fine, performing and literary arts
- H. Work creatively
- I. Work collaboratively and across disciplines
- J. Prepare for leadership and for civic and community engagement

Students met also seven English departmental outcomes:

- 1. Write clearly, effectively, and persuasively
- 2. Read closely and critically
- 4. Work both individually and collaboratively
- 5. Sustain a supportive, respectful environment in which to offer written or spoken feedback
- 7. Ask complex questions and seek even more complex answers through research and analysis
- 8. Approach critical work creatively
- 14. Recognize how the past shapes the present, identifying differences and similarities between the cultures of previous eras and the present

Pedagogic Benefit. My experience with the digital storytelling project of “Culture Work: Script Ohio” has inspired a complete redesign of an existing literature course—American Modernism—to employ digital storytelling pedagogy for all student research and analysis. As in “Script Ohio,” students in “Culture Work: American Modernism” will produce an interpretive video of a piece of literature and an 8-10 minute digital scholarly video in lieu of more conventional critical essays. Moreover, because engagement with digital media is relatively new to my department, I was attentive to the pedagogic challenges and benefits of this method of teaching and tried to craft different digital storytelling assignments that other instructors might use in their courses. I shared my findings with departmental colleagues at the end of May, at the English department’s annual “Departmental Outcomes and Assessment Review.” Additionally I met briefly with CIP’s digital storytelling workshop in June to share materials including syllabus and a peer-editing rubric, and I would be happy to share additional instructional materials with others. Finally, I am currently serving on a committee to review Mellon Digital Storytelling Grant proposals for 2018-19.

**ENGL 391.03—Culture Work: Creating with New Media
Spring 2018**

Kim McMullen
207 Lentz
mcmullen@kenyon.edu

Office Hours: 11 am-12:30 T/Th
11:30 am-12:30 WF
Phone: 740 427 5185

“Culture Work” offers a hybrid approach to literary and cultural study: part literary discussion, part individual research seminar, part writing workshop, part hands-on laboratory. Working both independently and in teams of three, students will pursue original literary and cultural research (including off-campus archival and field work) into five Ohio writers: Toni Morrison, James Wright, Sherwood Anderson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and William Dean Howells. From their research, they will collaborate on (1) an interpretive digital video narrating a passage of prose or a short poem; (2) a mid-length (10 minutes or less) documentary digital video introducing each writer and the historical and cultural context out of which each worked, highlighting especially regional influences and his/her distinct contributions to the American literary tradition; (3) a hypertext introduction to a major work; (4) an annotated directory of textual sources, archives, material artifacts, museums, and Ohio sites. These materials will be collected into individual digital exhibits dedicated to each writer, and the five exhibits will be housed in a digital exhibition called “Script Ohio,” designed using the Omeka content management system.

Teamwork. Because this is an expansive project, with many working parts, teamwork is essential to our success, as it is for much of the culture work accomplished beyond the walls of academe (in publishing houses, archives, museums, galleries, new media outlets). Thus, teams are responsible for sharing equally in all tasks—research, composition, production, editing—and if, at any time, a team feels one of its members is not pulling their weight, it should consult with me immediately. The importance of teamwork is reflected in the fact that roughly 60% of each student’s final grade will be determined from the quality of the team’s work, while 40% will be determined from the individual’s work. See “Assessment” for more detail.

Fieldwork. To encourage teams to take advantage of regional libraries and historical societies and to visit landscapes and sites associated with the authors and their texts, I have received a small grant to fund team travel (utilizing Kenyon vehicles). Most fieldwork will occur during/immediately after spring break and teams are responsible for designing itineraries and making contact with relevant institutions and local experts, and driving themselves to/from sites.

Technical Production. Instruction and technical support for WeVideo and Omeka will be supplied by Ashley Butler and Jenna Nolt, both of Kenyon LBIS, with additional assistance from a student Technical Aide. We will use Kenyon software and equipment for the production.

Assessment. In a large and complex collaborative project, work is completed incrementally, with the final products (in our case, the digital exhibits, documentary and interpretive videos, hypertext introductions) dependent upon prompt and thorough completion of small tasks along the way. Thus, as you will see from the calendar below, you and your teammates will be required to complete, individually as well as collaboratively, many smaller assignments as you build toward your digital exhibit. I will evaluate each of these assignments according to outcomes articulated for each task. Grades will be determined according to a point system,

where each task is weighted proportionally, with smaller and simpler tasks given less weight than more complex and important tasks. **365 total points are available for the course; 145 can be earned on individual assignments, and 220 can be earned on team assignments.** Thus, about 40% of your grade is awarded on the basis of your individual achievement and 60% is awarded for team achievements. A 10-point assignment, if completed perfectly, will equal about 2.7% of your final grade. **See the calendar, below, for the weighting of specific assignments.** ******Except in extraordinary circumstances, any work received after the deadline will automatically lose at least half of its value.******

Attendance. You are allowed two unexcused absences from classroom attendance, but you are expected to keep all extra-classroom appointments with your teammates. **I will deduct 10 points from your final grade for each unexcused classroom absence beyond two.** Your teammates will have the opportunity—in their Team/Individual Assessments—to register any excessive absenteeism from team meetings.

Academic Honesty. Because we are creating for publication on the internet, we will adhere to best practices when it comes to copyright and fair use. Plagiarism of any sort and unfair use of copyrighted materials not be tolerated; at the very least, such a violation will result in your work being excluded entirely from the digital exhibition. Please reacquaint yourself with Kenyon's policy on academic honesty ("Academic Integrity at Kenyon" in the on-line *Course Catalog* under "Academic Policies and Procedures": <http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/registrar/course-catalog-2/administrative-matters/academic-integrity-and-questions-of-plagiarism/>).

Disabilities. If you have a disability that means you may require academic accommodations in this course, please see me during office hours as early in the semester as possible. Please also contact Erin Salva, Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services.

Course content and Title IX. Literature addresses the range of human experience, and it sometimes includes content that causes discomfort or distress and raises issues that are troubling and contentious. Because I'm concerned about your well-being and intellectual development, I try to lead class discussion in a sensitive way and will make myself available for further discussion during office hours. However, please understand that I may be required to report any information you disclose about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. For confidential support, you may contact the following resources: the Health and Counseling Center, Sexual Misconduct Advisors (SMAs), and the College chaplains.

Required Texts.

Anderson, Sherwood. *Winesburg, Ohio*. New York: The Viking Press, 1996 (1919).
Dunbar, Paul Laurence. *The Collected Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. Ed Joanne M. Braxton. Charlottesville: U Virginia P, 1993 (1913).
Howells, William Deane. *The Leatherstocking*. N.P.: Jefferson Publication, 2015 (1916).
Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Vintage International, 2007 (1970).
----- . *Sula*. New York: Vintage Press, 2004 (1973).
Wright, James. *Above the River: The Complete Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1990.

Date	Reading & Classroom Activity	Individual Assignments Due	Team Tasks & Project Deadlines
16 Jan	Braxton, "Introduction: The Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar," Eble, "Howells: Years of my Youth," Goodman & Dawson, "Parallel Lives," Love, "Introduction" to <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> , Wagner-Martin, "Morrison's Early Years," Dougherty, "The Life and Times of James Wright," Blunk "That is my country, that river." Bernard, "Documentary Stories" (handout)		Assemble Team
18 Jan	Bernard, "Story Basics" (handout); Dunbar, selected poems	2 completed literary scavenger hunts (10)	
23 Jan	Dunbar, selected poems; Howells, <i>The Leatherwood God</i> , Chapters 1-10		20 item working bibliography of primary & critical sources: identify and assign 3 key primary sources (10)
25 Jan	Anderson, selections from <i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> : "The Book of the Grotesques," "The Philosopher," "Paper Pills," "Hands," "Queer," "Mother," "The Teacher," "Respectability," "Departure"		Continue researching/discussing writer, text, context, with eye toward narrative, visual, audio resources
30 Jan	Wright, selected poems Bernard, Interview with Ric Burns (handout)	3-4 p. (750-1000 words +/-) reader's discussion of primary source (25)	Continue researching/discussing writer, text, context
1 Feb	Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> , "Autumn"	Short (150 words +/-) pitch for interpretive video (10)	
6 Feb	Audio & Documentary Video Workshop Ashley Butler		Identify text for interpretive video
8 Feb	WeVideo Workshop, Ashley Butler	2 short (200 words +/-) pitches for documentary video (20)	Continue researching/discussing writer, text,
13 Feb	Continue discussion of Dunbar, selected poems; Copyright and Fair Use		Team meetings with Kim, times TBD
15 Feb	Continue discussion of Wright, selected poems; Bernard, "Narration"		Discuss individual documentary pitches
20 Feb	Anderson, all remaining stories from <i>Winesburg Ohio</i> ; team pitches for documentary video		Short (250-500 words +/-) pitch for video documentary to be presented to class (10)
22 Feb	Howells, <i>The Leatherwood God</i> (Chapt. 11-23)		Rough draft: Interpretive Video (25)
27 Feb	Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i> , "Spring" & "Summer"		
1 Mar	Workshop: Critique of Interpretive Videos		Rough draft: Documentary Script & Audio Voice-over (30); Field-work plan (including schedule, sites, contacts)
Date	Reading & Classroom Activity	Individual	Team Tasks &

		Assignments Due	Project Deadlines
3 Mar-18 Mar	Spring Break		Begin field-work if possible
20 Mar	Workshop: Critique of scripts & voice-over	Peer edit script (5); 5-page (1250 words +/-) rough draft of introduction to novel, poetry, stories (plus 5 hypertext links & 5 illustrations) (40)	30 item, annotated, bibliography/directory due (10); Fieldwork & Visual /Audio Development; Read & coordinate Intro essays;
22 Mar	Workshop: Critique of scripts & voice-over Dunbar, selected short stories		Revise script Fieldwork & Visual/ Audio Development
27 Mar	Morrison, excerpt from <i>Sula</i>		Fieldwork & Visual/ Audio Development
29 Mar	Anderson, selection from <i>Tar</i>		Fieldwork & Visual/ Audio Development
3 Apr	“lab” time with Ashley Butler		Documentary drafting
4 Apr	No formal class; “lab” time		Documentary drafting
10 Apr	Omeka Workshop with Jenna Nolt Chalmers Computer Lab		Rough Draft Documentary Video Due (50) Collate, rewrite, compile hypertext introduction (from 5-page individual drafts)
12 Apr	Workshop: Critique of Documentary drafts	<i>Two peer edits</i> Documentary due (10)	Collate, rewrite, compile hypertext introduction
17 Apr	Workshop: Critique of Documentary drafts		Rough Draft hypertext introduction due (25)
19 Apr	Howells, excerpt from <i>The Hazard of New Fortune</i>		FINAL draft interpretive video due (10) Revise Documentary!
24 Apr	Wright, selected poems		Revise! FINAL Bibliog./Directory Due
26 Apr	Lab time: Build Exhibits in Omeka		Revise!
1 May	Workshop: Revise & Edit Exhibits and Exhibition		FINAL Draft Documentary Due (20);
3 May	Workshop: Revise & Edit Exhibits and Exhibition Reflection: What’s Next (for you and for Culture Work)????	Team/Individual Self- Assessment Due (25)	FINAL Draft Hypertext Intro due (10) FINAL Omeka Exhibit due (20)

Gala Public Opening During Exam Week: “Script Ohio: A Digital Exhibition of Ohio Writers” (featuring five digital documentary videos and invitation to view other exhibits)