

GS/EN6000: Literary Research Methods
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(This seminar is a required 0 credit pass/fail course offered in the Fall term, for all entering M.A. candidates and those Ph.D. candidates who have not successfully completed such a graduate course or who have not had equivalent experience. The seminar will take place over 6 weeks in the Fall term in 3 hour sessions, dates still to be determined.)

Methodological questions animate 21st century humanities research and literary studies are no exception. For example, fierce contemporary debates challenge the propulsive force of the digital or computational turn in humanistic research, while others struggle to rethink what constitutes the archival and what is socially and politically at stake in archives. The question of how we study literature is intimately entwined with questions of why, where, when, or who.

The Literary Research Methods seminar is designed to introduce new MA and PhD students to some of the conceptual and/or methodological frameworks which characterize literary scholarship while we simultaneously make inquiries of the physical sites, technological platforms, and skills needed to do work in this discipline. Students will be introduced to specialized research and writing resources needed to perform both comprehensive and focused literature reviews at the graduate level, as well as to the skills needed to both use and critically interrogate those resources. We will learn to approach research projects with an attention to key methodological questions such as: how does the knowledge organization of a field shape or contribute to our understanding of it?

The seminar will also take up the question of digital humanities from a critical perspective and examine this method in the context of the bibliographic work in literary studies more generally. We will also situate literary research methods broadly in relation to the methods of other disciplines as we explore how and where humanities research differs from, and converges with, the questions of social sciences, fine arts, and sciences.

Guest lectures and workshops will be provided by faculty members in the GPE, as well as archivists and librarians. The seminar is led by Lisa Sloniowski, who is a humanities librarian in York University Libraries, a PhD candidate in Social and Political Thought, and an associate faculty member of the Graduate Program in English.

As this seminar is a pass/fail zero credit requirement, required reading will be no more than two essays per week. Students will engage in collaborative hands-on research workshops in the library, in the archives, and with bibliographic databases. Assignments will consist of seminar presentations, a short essay, and a collaborative editing project.