



Exploring Popular Genres with Scalar:

Three Steps for Introducing a Digital Humanities Project in an Undergraduate English Seminar

Link to slides: go.unc.edu/scalar-tilc



Students during a class visit from author Sandra Cisneros!

INTRODUCTIONS

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What is Scalar?



An open source platform for collaborative scholarship and multimodal composition

A screenshot of a digital composition page on the Scalar platform. The page title is "POPULAR GENRES: CONTEXTUALIZING KATE CHOPIN". The main heading is "Self Actualization and Oppression in The Awakening" with a sub-heading "INTRODUCTION TO THEMES IN CHOPIN'S WORK (3/5)". A quote from Kate Chopin is displayed: "Perhaps it's better to wake up after all, even to suffer, rather than remain a dupe to illusions all one's life." - Kate Chopin, The Awakening and Short Stories. Below the quote is a paragraph of text: "Another major theme of Kate Chopin's The Awakening is Edna Pontellier's revelation of the misogynistic box that her marriage and society put her in. The idea of questioning the authority of a man or the validity of marriage was a very radical thing in the late nineteenth century. Chopin uses imagery that captivates the reader and challenges them to". The page features a background image of several women covering their faces with their hands, and a small image of a landscape with a cloudy sky.

Scalar Assignment Sequence



PHASE ONE

1. Individual close reading essays translated into Scalar format
 - [Link to prompt and rubric](#)
 - Example student work:
 - [Samuel's project](#)
 - [Jungin's project](#)
 - [EmmaLi's project](#)
 - [Heidi's project](#)

Scalar Assignment Sequence



PHASE TWO

1. Class book about Kate Chopin and the romance genre
 - 5 chapters written by groups of 4-5 students
 - Example student work:
 - *Contextualizing Kate Chopin*
2. Individual reflection essays

Scalar Assignment Sequence



PHASE THREE

1. Collaborative essay or Scalar book (students' choice)
 - 4 groups of 5-6 students
 - Each group chooses one text and genre from the course
 - Example student work:
 - *Hotel Swampland - A Literary Review*

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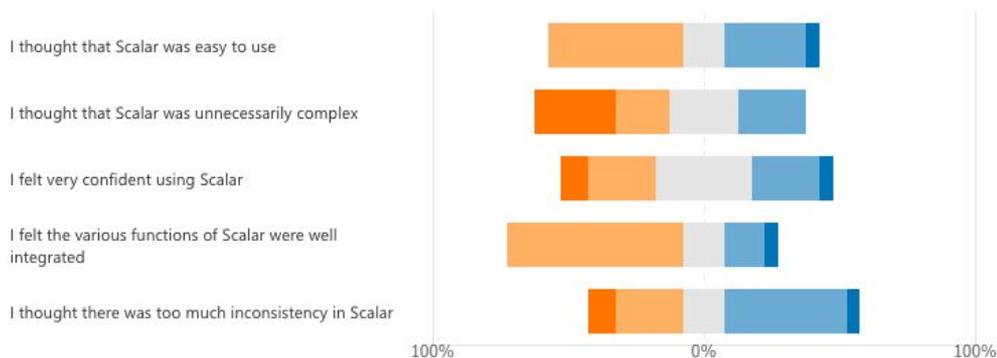
From this project, I learned how to use Scalar, which could likely be a tool I use in the future for presenting information. I also gained valuable experiences from working with group members, in addition to learning information about conducting research, gathering/finding sources, and citing information.

Digital Scholarship

4. Please rate your experience writing for a digital platform.

[More Details](#)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree



“I did not like scalar and I think it was unnecessary work. I think another presentation format should be used because it's unnecessarily difficult to use for the finished product which I believe is equal to other presentation formats.”

“I think it was explained well and I was provided a lot of help, but I think the platform is missing a lot of areas where it could be beneficial to learning. If I did not have others that helped me with scalar, there would be no way I could use it for this project.”

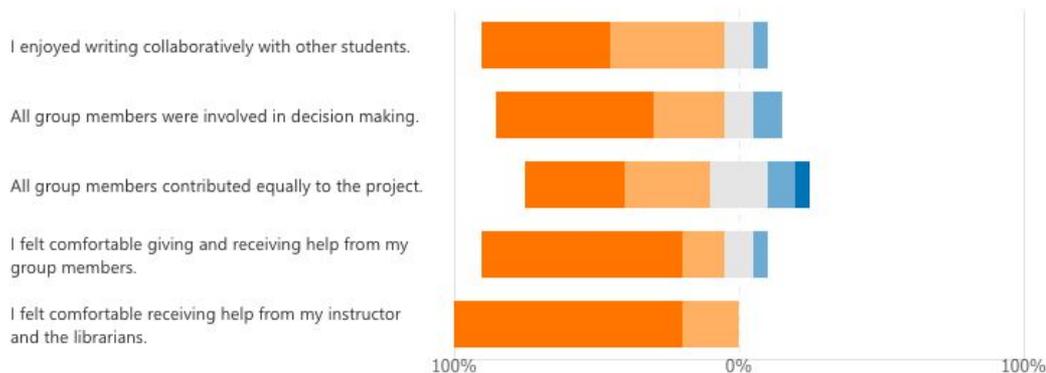
-Student survey responses

Collaborative Scholarship

1. Please rate your experience working in a group on this project.

[More Details](#)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree



“I learned that in group work it takes everyone to be on the same page with things so it takes a lot of communication and self-responsibility to make a group project work.”

“Writing with a group can often be difficult, but I really enjoyed observing the creative process of my group mates and reading their essays. It was fun to see all of our different styles of writing, and how they can be combined to make a final product.”

-Student survey responses

Research Skills and Information Literacy

7. Please rate your experience working with librarians.

[More Details](#)

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

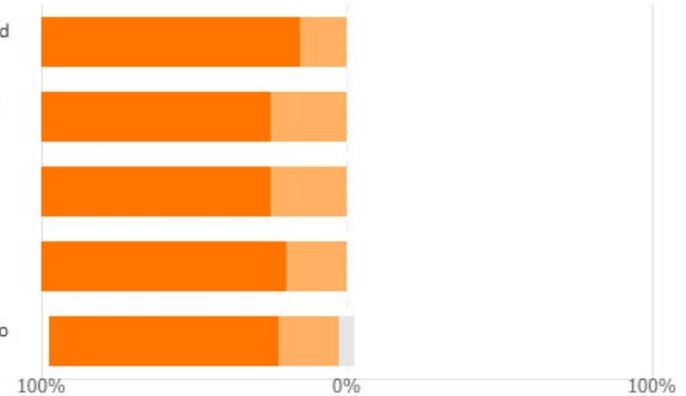
The librarians answered my questions in a prompt and helpful manner.

I felt comfortable asking the librarians questions and reaching out when I needed help.

The instructional materials (handouts, Google Slides) provided by librarians were useful and relevant.

The in-class instruction provided by librarians was relevant to my needs for this project.

Based on my experience in this class, I would return to the UL to get help from librarians.



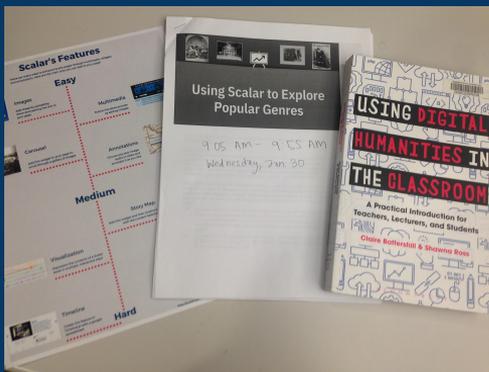
"I think it is wonderful when instructors provide opportunities like this for students to get to interact with librarians more in depth because it makes us more comfortable in seeking them out later for other issues, or outside of class. It is a way of empowering students far beyond the single class or project that is being worked on."

-Student reflection essay



Use Scalar in your undergraduate classroom...

- [Link to English 144 syllabus with Scalar assignments](#)
- [Link to Google Folder with our instructional materials](#)



Email us with your ideas!

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