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
INTRODUCTIONS

Cait Kennedy (she/her/hers)
Instruction Associate, Robert B. House Undergraduate Library

Devon Waugh (she/her/hers)
Instruction Librarian, NC Live

Geovani Ramírez (he/him/his)
Graduate Teaching Fellow, UNC Department of English

Students during a class visit from author Sandra Cisneros!
What is Scalar?

An open source platform for collaborative scholarship and multimodal composition
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
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
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*
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.
“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
"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
“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!
  - ckkenned@live.unc.edu
  - devon@nclive.org