

# White Paper Report

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Looking For Whitman:  
The Poetry of Place in the Life and Work of Walt Whitman - Level 2



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## Introduction and Contexts

“Looking For Whitman: The Poetry of Place in the Life and Work of Walt Whitman - Level 2” was a continuation of a project funded through a 2008 Level 1 Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant titled “Looking for Whitman: The Poetry of Place in the Life and Work of Walt Whitman” – the first project in the history of the Start-Up Grant competition to move from a Level 1 to a Level 2 award. The project sought to create an multi-institutional learning network that connected a series of classes on the work of Walt Whitman in three key geographical locations, with each class exploring the particular works written by Whitman in that place and sharing with students in other locations the particular elements of their local geography that continued to bear the traces of Whitman’s work.

During the 2008-2009 Level 1 grant period, project faculty members met to collaboratively plan a series of linked courses at four institutions that would engage students during the Fall 2009 semester in a concurrent, connected, semester-long inquiry into the relationship of Whitman's poetry to local geography and history. Initial funding also provided for an alpha version of the project website (<http://lookingforwhitman.org>).

Level 2 Funding, which was awarded just prior to the start of the Fall 2009 semester, was immediately put to use soon after the award notification for the following activities:

- Technical support for faculty and students was arranged at each college involved in the grant
- Additional web design and programming assistance for the project website

- A course release for the Project Director
- Pedagogical and technical support was given to faculty members by the project's director of technology
- Payments for travel, speakers, and tour guides for field trips to be taken during the Fall 2009 semester
- Employment of a community facilitator to encourage the development of community on the project website
- Arrangements for a student conference, which was held in the Spring 2010 semester
- Materials associated with courses taught and the conference.
- Weekly conference calls during the Fall 2009 semester.

All of these expenditures were in line with the grant proposal. Only a few changes occurred that necessitated a slight redistribution of funding:

- One of the faculty members involved in the grant, NYU faculty member Karen Karbiener, received a Fulbright Fellowship to the University of Novi Sad in Serbia during the 2009-2010 academic year. Since she had been part of our Level 1 Grant planning process and is a well-known expert on Whitman's work, we decided to include her students at Novi Sad in our project instead of a New York University class, as originally planned. Although this disrupted the neat symmetry of the original proposal, which had included classes taught

only in locations where Whitman had lived for an extended period of time, it added an international angle of collaboration that resonated with recent work in Whitman scholarship that has explored Whitman's work within global contexts.

- One of our proposed conference speakers (David Reynolds) was unable to attend the conference. His speaking fee was dispersed towards the above costs.

Aside from these small changes, there were no major changes to our budgetary allotments. After consultation with the NEH Office of Digital Humanities, we did allocate funding for the following activities:

- Payment for ongoing hosting of the project behind the end-date of the grant
- Payment for ongoing technical support, troubleshooting, and updating of the project website beyond the end-date of the grant

With these allocations, we seek to preserve the project beyond the delineated scope of the grant, ensuring that the resources created through this experiment will be available to future students and scholars and that the project stands as a living example of DH pedagogy during a key moment of the emergence of the field.

The project as a whole appears to have been a success, in that it is routinely named as a key

digital humanities pedagogy project.<sup>1</sup> A recently published article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* identified “Looking for Whitman” as a “landmark” digital humanities project.<sup>2</sup> Still the project was not an unqualified success and there is much to be learned from some of the mistakes we make while producing it, as will be detailed below in the “Project Evaluation” and “Future Directions” sections.

### **Project Participants**

Earnhart, Brady. University of Mary Washington.

Gold, Matthew K. New York City College of Technology, CUNY.

Gorges, Boone. CUNY Academic Commons.

Groom, James. University of Mary Washington.

Hoffman, Tyler. Rutgers University.

Karbiener, Karen. New York University.

Kelly, T. Mills. George Mason University.

Scanlon, Mara. University of Mary Washington.

Singley, Carol. Rutgers University.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, the essays by Lisa Spiro and Stephen Brier in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (Minneapolis: U. Of Minnesota Press, 2012). The project director was also invited to contribute a chapter to the forthcoming collection *Teaching Digital Humanities* (Open Book Publishers, 2013). Parts of this white paper were drawn from that contribution to the collection

<sup>2</sup> William Pannapacker, “No More Indiana Jones Warehouses.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 26 November 2012. <http://chronicle.com/article/No-More-Indiana-Jones/135884/>

## **Project Activities**

### *Technologies Behind the Project*

Utilizing popular open-source platforms, the project website consisted of a multisite installation of WordPress (<http://www.wordpress.org>), an open-source blogging platform that allows multiple blogs to be created from a single installation. A plug-in system called BuddyPress (<http://www.buddypress.org/>) helped transform the blogging platform into a customized social network, adding features such as profiles, friends, groups, and forums. The nexus of the entire project was a central page on the website which aggregated blog posts, digital images, videos, news feeds, wiki entries, and post tags from each of the classes, so that students from one location were able to follow the progress of students in other locations.

Indeed, the project made extensive use of aggregation to draw together student work into fluid and agile communal spaces. Building upon the model of the “personal learning environment” and a “domain of one’s own,”<sup>3</sup> the project asked each student to create a personal blog for the course and to post all course work in it. Once work was published in those individual spaces, course hubs pulled student posts together and re-published them together on the course homepage (see, for example, the course homepage for the UMW “Digital Whitman” course: <http://marywash.lookingforwhitman.org/>). When student blog posts were tagged with specific terms, they were also pulled together into project-wide spaces. For instance, if a student from UMW posted about a special event such as a field trip, the student could add the tag “fieldtrip” to her post. The tagged blog post would then

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<sup>3</sup> Jim Groom, “A domain of one’s own,” *bavatuesdays*, November 29, 2008, <http://bavatuesdays.com/a-domain-of-ones-own/>.



appear not just on her own blog and on the UMW class blog, but also on a third site that aggregated posts from across the entire project that had also been tagged “fieldtrip.” In that collective space, work from students in every class and every city would appear together, so that posts describing a University of Mary Washington field trip to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC would appear next to posts describing a Rutgers class trip to the Walt Whitman House in Camden and a CUNY trip to the Fulton Ferry landing in Brooklyn. For the student, all that was required was a single post on a single blog that was completely under her control, but that post was then repurposed and republished into various other parts of the site through tags, RSS feeds, and aggregation.

#### *Enabling Multi-Campus Connections: Assignments and Activities*

In addition to creating the site in which the project would take place, a central goal of the planning year of the grant involved the creation of assignments that could be shared among all classes involved in the project. These shared assignments formed the basis of connection among classes and fostered the creation of a project-wide community when the classes ran.

#### *Frontispiece Project*

In the landmark first edition of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, first published in 1855 in Brooklyn, Whitman famously left his name off of the title page, choosing instead to use an engraved frontispiece image as an introduction to his readers. In the “Looking for Whitman” project, all classes began their semesters by reading the 1855 edition, even

though they would all focus on different periods of the poet’s career in later weeks. As a way of having students introduce themselves to their classmates and to other project participants during the first week, students were asked to create a frontispiece of their own—an image of themselves, along with a few lines of from Whitman’s poem that they found meaningful. These posts were aggregated into a central course blog (<http://frontispiece.lookingforwhitman.org/>) whose home page showed images of the students. When readers “moused over” those images, the text chosen by the student would appear as an overlay. Clicking on the image would lead visitors to the blog post on the student’s personal blog. In this way, the frontispiece project became a kind of larger frontispiece mosaic for the project itself, introducing its participants to the open web.

### *Image Gloss Project*

In this assignment, which was due in the second week of the course, students chose a specific image or reference from the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* that seemed unfamiliar, intriguing, or historically distant to them. They were asked to write a blog post that would explain that image or reference and to contextualize it within mid-nineteenth century American history. Each blog post was required to include an image, an audio file, or a video related to the subject. The resulting blog posts appeared on individual student blogs and were aggregated into a project blog (<http://imagegloss.lookingforwhitman.org/>). Sample topics covered included “scrofula,”<sup>4</sup> “embouchure,”<sup>5</sup> “dray,”<sup>6</sup> and “accoucheur.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Adam B., “Image Gloss—Scrofula,” *Looking for Whitman*, September 28, 2009, <http://adamb.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/09/28/image-gloss-scrofula/>.

<sup>5</sup> Emily M., “Image Gloss: Embouchure,” *Looking for Whitman*, September 16, 2009, <http://emilym.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/09/16/image-gloss-embouchure/>.

### *Material Culture Museum*

In an effort to have students focus their research on material culture and to understand how history could be viewed through specific material artifacts, students collectively built a Material Culture Museum by writing posts that focused on a specific material and local context of a course reading.<sup>8</sup> Students posted their work on their own individual blogs, and those posts were then aggregated into a site that formed the virtual museum (<http://digitalmuseum.lookingforwhitman.org/>). Sample objects presented in the museum included “enfield rifles,”<sup>9</sup> “surgical saws in the Civil War,”<sup>10</sup> “hardtack,”<sup>11</sup> “wool,”<sup>12</sup> and “Lincoln lecture ticket.”<sup>13</sup>

### *Annotations Project*

Each course involved in the project examined a set of texts that Whitman had composed while living in that particular project location. In order to strengthen student skills in

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Dooley, “Image Gloss of ‘Dray,’” *Looking for Whitman*, September 15, 2009, <http://imageglossjoelemagne.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/09/15/hello-world/>.

<sup>7</sup> Meghan Edwards, “Meghan’s Image Gloss,” *Looking for Whitman*, September 8, 2009, <http://meghanedwards.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/09/08/meghans-image-gloss/>.

<sup>8</sup> This assignment was adapted from Jeffrey McClurken of The University of Mary Washington, who had created a similar museum in his *American History and Technology* course (<http://historyoftech.umwblogs.org/>).

<sup>9</sup> “Enfield Rifles,” *The Material Culture Museum*, October 20, 2009, <http://digitalmuseum.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/10/20/enfield-rifles/>.

<sup>10</sup> “Surgical Saws in the Civil War,” *The Material Culture Museum*, October 20, 2009, <http://digitalmuseum.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/10/20/surgical-saws-in-the-civil-war/>.

<sup>11</sup> “Hardtack and Other Indelicacies,” *The Material Culture Museum*, October 20, 2009, <http://digitalmuseum.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/10/20/hardtack-and-other-indelicacies/>.

<sup>12</sup> “Wool,” *The Material Culture Museum*, November 18, 2009, <http://digitalmuseum.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/11/18/wool/>.

<sup>13</sup> “Lincoln Lecture Ticket,” *The Material Culture Museum*, October 20, 2009, <http://digitalmuseum.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/10/20/lincoln-lecture-ticket/>.

performing close readings of literary texts, and as a way of creating resources that future students could build on, each course created an annotated version of one of Whitman's texts. The annotated texts were set up using digress.it (<http://www.digress.it/>), a WordPress theme forked from CommentPress (<http://www.futureofthebook.org/commentpress/>), which had been developed by The Institute for the Future of the book and used by a number of high-profile digital humanities projects.<sup>14</sup> Both CommentPress and digress.it allow comments to be linked to specific paragraphs of text in a sidebar, thus creating a hybrid document that combines text and marginalia in a single space. For the "Looking for Whitman" project, digress.it presented a few difficulties, since it was originally designed for prose rather than poetry. We configured it in such a way that comments could be attached to individual lines of poetry, thus allowing for very specific and targeted commentary on Whitman's work. Examples of annotated texts included The University of Mary Washington's version of *Drum Taps* (<http://annotations.lookingforwhitman.org/>), a selection of Camden-era poems annotated by graduate students at Rutgers-Camden (<http://notes.lookingforwhitman.org/>), an annotated version of *Sands at Seventy* and *Goodbye My Fancy* from Rutgers-Camden (<http://camdenannotation.lookingforwhitman.org/>), and selected passages from Whitman's early temperance novel *Franklin Evans* annotated by students from City Tech

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, the following set of academic texts that used CommentPress during the peer-review process: McKenzie Wark's *GAM3R 7H30RY* (<http://www.futureofthebook.org/gamertheory/>), Noah Wardrip-Fruin's *Expressive Processing* (<http://grandtextauto.org/2008/01/22/expressive-processing-an-experiment-in-blog-based-peer-review/>), and Kathleen Fitzpatrick's *Planned Obsolescence* (<http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/mcpres/plannedobsolescence/>).

(<http://franklinevans.lookingforwhitman.org/>). All of these annotated poems remain open to commentary by future students of Whitman's work.

### *Field Trips*

In each project location, classes partnered with prominent cultural institutions in their region to arrange for walking tours and hands-on student experiences with archival materials. Students from City Tech took a guided tour of Whitman's Brooklyn Heights led by Jesse Merandy, creator of the online critical edition of "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,"<sup>15</sup> and also toured Whitman's Fort Greene with Greg Trupiano, Director of the Walt Whitman Project. The University of Mary Washington took tours of the Fredericksburg battlefield and Chatham Manor under the guidance of the National Parks Service, and then had a tour of Whitman's Civil-War era Washington DC, with tour guide Kim Roberts. Students then visited the Special Collections Manuscripts Division at the Library of Congress, where they saw a range of Whitman artifacts including the haversack that Whitman carried with him as he visited injured soldiers in a Civil War hospital,<sup>16</sup> a pair of Whitman's eyeglasses, and a cane, as well as manuscripts of his poetry and letters.<sup>17</sup> The Camden classes visited the Walt Whitman House on Mickle Street and the mausoleum in Harleigh Cemetery, where

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<sup>15</sup> *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry: An Online Critical Edition*, edited by Jesse Merandy, accessed March 10, 2011, <http://micklestreet.rutgers.edu/CBF/index.html>.

<sup>16</sup> For a student's report on the experience, see: Mara Scanlon, "Free tickets to Ford's Theater for 19 people through Ticketmaster plus \$2.00 access fee? \$49.50. Thirteen hours of parking for three vehicles? \$30.00. Bodily presence? Priceless," *Looking for Whitman*, October 28, 2009, <http://mscanlon.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/10/28/free-tickets-to-fords-theater-for-19-people-through-ticketmaster-plus-2-00-access-fee-49-50-thirteen-hours-of-parking-for-three-vehicles-30-00-bodily-presence-priceless/>.

<sup>17</sup> Mara Scanlon posted a "Favorite Manuscript Moment" to her blog about the field trip: <http://mscanlon.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/10/28/favorite-manuscript-moment/> (October 28, 2009).

Whitman is buried. As with other projects, posts describing these visits first appeared on individual student blogs, and then were aggregated into both class blogs and project blogs (<http://fieldtrips.lookingforwhitman.org>).

### *Finding Whitman Videos*

At the end of a semester in which students had simultaneously explored Whitman's texts and his roots in the surrounding region, one of the final shared assignments of the project asked students to create a video of themselves reading a passage of Whitman's work in a local space that seemed to embody, or to be connected to, his oeuvre. These videos were collected and placed on a shared Google Map (<http://videomap.lookingforwhitman.org/>) that eventually encompassed entries from Fredericksburg to Camden to New York City to Novi Sad. Students filmed themselves reading Whitman's words in locations that included Times Square, Grand Central Station, Civil-War battlefields in Fredericksburg, Virginia Beach, and Friends Street in Camden.

### *Final Project Videos*

For their final projects, students in classes at the University of Mary Washington and Rutgers-Camden created a series of mashups and cinemoems that mixed Whitman's words with images and music or, in some cases, created entirely new narratives around his work. Standout videos included a creative short film titled "In Search of Wendall Slickman" (a mockumentary that purported to follow Wendall Slickman, a figure conceived of as a

mashup of Walt Whitman and Elvis Presley);<sup>18</sup> a moving mediation on Whitman's work titled "Whitman, Commercialism, and the Digital Age. Will Whitman Survive?";<sup>19</sup> and a cinepoem titled "City of Ships,"<sup>20</sup> among many others (<http://cinepoem.lookingforwhitman.org/>).

### *The Vault*

In an effort to stimulate greater communication between students in "Looking for Whitman" courses and the larger public community of Whitman scholars, a new blog called "The Vault" debuted late in the fall semester (<http://vault.lookingforwhitman.org/>).

Although it became active too late in the semester to make a strong impact on the project, it did host one important public discussion about the use of Whitman's work in a Levi's commercial that drew responses from students, faculty members in the project, Whitman scholars, and the wider public.<sup>21</sup>

### *Campus-Specific Projects*

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<sup>18</sup> Sam P., "In Search of Wendell Slickman," *Looking for Whitman*, April 8, 2009, <http://swords.lookingforwhitman.org/2010/04/08/sam-p-s-final-project-in-search-of-wendell-slickman/>.

<sup>19</sup> Virginia Scott, "Whitman, Commercialism, and the Digital Age. Will Whitman Survive?" *Looking for Whitman*, December 15, 2009, <http://lookingforwhitman.org/2009/12/15/whitman-commercialism-and-the-digital-age-will-whitman-survive/>.

<sup>20</sup> Tara Wood, "City of Ships," *Looking for Whitman*, December 8, 2009, <http://twood.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/12/08/t-woods-final-project-cinepoem-city-of-ships/>.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew K. Gold, "Walt Whitman and the Levi's Ad Campaign: A Provocation, A Challenge, and An Invitation," *The Vault*, November 11, 2009, <http://vault.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/11/11/walt-whitman-and-the-levis-ad-campaign-a-provocation-a-challenge-and-an-invitation/>.

In addition to the above projects that were shared across courses, several classes embarked upon projects specific to their location.

*The Address Project (City Tech/Brooklyn)*

Between 1823, when Whitman was four years old, and 1859, when he was forty, the poet and his family moved through a series of Brooklyn residences and boarding houses.

Whitman’s correspondence had given us the addresses of twenty-two of these homes, but biographers of Whitman had been able to provide only scant historical details about these locations. Students from City Tech each chose an address and then visited the Brooklyn Historical Society, where they received guidance on doing historic house research from a BHS librarian and began to explore archival materials, such as historical atlases and fire-insurance maps, land conveyances, and directories of Brooklyn residences in an effort to find out more about the address they had been assigned. When students were unable to piece together material related to the period of Whitman’s stay at a particular address, they compiled a “place history” of the address in an effort to track its development in subsequent years. This was the first experience that many of these students had had in an archive of any kind; as they ran into dead ends and made new connections, they learned the value (and the frustrations) of exploring history through primary documents. Among the unexpected results of this project was a guide to researching historical locations that one student made to help his classmates with their research—a nice example of student-led peer-to-peer learning.<sup>22</sup> Sample projects include “Johnson Street, North of Adams”

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<sup>22</sup> techwhit, “Some tips on working with your location,” *Looking for Whitman*, November 19, 2009, <http://techwhit.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/11/19/some-tips-on-working-with-your-location/>.



(<http://1824waltwhitmanshouse.lookingforwhitman.org/>), “91½ Classon Avenue” (<http://classonavenuebrooklynnewyorkwhitman.lookingforwhitman.org/>), and “99 Ryerson Street” (<http://99ryersonst.lookingforwhitman.org/>).

### *Visitor’s Center Scripts (Rutgers-Camden/Camden)*

The house that Whitman bought on Mickle Street in 1884—the only house he ever owned—and lived in for the last years of his life is now a national historic landmark. In concert with a planned expansion of the house that will include the construction of a new Visitor’s Center on a lot next to the home, students in Professor Tyler Hoffman’s course on Whitman at Rutgers-Camden worked with curator Leo Blake to create research materials that will later be adapted for exhibits in the Center (<http://visitorscripts.lookingforwhitman.org/>). Sample topics included “Whitman and the Beats,”<sup>23</sup> “Whitman and Socialism,”<sup>24</sup> and “Whitman’s ‘disciples.’”<sup>25</sup>

### *Translations (University of Novi Sad/Novi Sad)*

As a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Novi Sad, Karen Karbiener taught a graduate course titled “Walt Whitman: A Global Perspective.” Discovering that many of Whitman’s

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<sup>23</sup> lizmoser, “Visitors Center Script: Whitman and the Beats,” *Looking for Whitman*, December 3, 2009, <http://drumtaps.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/12/03/whitman-beats/>.

<sup>24</sup> Adam L., “Adam L’s Visitor Center Script,” *Looking for Whitman*, December 10, 2009, <http://adaml.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/12/10/adam-ls-visitor-center-script/>.

<sup>25</sup> Emily M., “Visitors’ Center Script: Whitman’s Disciplines, part three,” *Looking for Whitman*, December 3, 2009, <http://emilym.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/12/03/visitors-center-script-whitmans-disciplines-part-three/>; and, Adam B., “Adam’s visitors center script—Whitman disciples—Sadakichi Hartmann,” *Looking for Whitman*, December 3, 2009, <http://adamb.lookingforwhitman.org/2009/12/03/adams-visitors-center-script-whitman-disciplines-sadakichi-hartmann/>.

poems had never been translated into Serbian, Professor Karbiener asked her students to create translations of some of Whitman's most racy and homoerotic poems from the "Calamus" section of *Leaves of Grass*. Students then created visual cinemoems that mixed readings of Whitman's work in English and Serbian. Among the powerful creations to emerge from this course was Whitman's "To a Stranger," a short film by a student named Indira that consists of a series of lines of Whitman's poems being read by a cross-section of Serbian residents,<sup>26</sup> and "Walt Whitman, Calamus 9,"<sup>27</sup> a meditation by candlelight on Whitman's words.

### *Conference*

Despite the immense amount of work produced by students in the "Looking for Whitman" courses, the experiment was designed to last only one semester—the Fall of 2009. But in the Spring of 2010, a project-wide student conference was held at the campus of Rutgers-Camden that brought together students from Fredericksburg, New York, and Camden. Students had a chance to meet one another after a semester spent reading each other's work, and the group visited both the Walt Whitman House on Mickle Street and the Whitman gravesite.

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<sup>26</sup> Indira J., "To A Stranger," *YouTube*, December 30, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ56zonpOKA>.

<sup>27</sup> Elma Porobic, "Walt Whitman, Calamus 9," *YouTube*, December 27, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNG5MEiOv84>.

## Evaluating the Project

At the end of the Fall 2009 semester, students were asked to participate in a voluntary student survey that sought to canvas their opinions on the course, the project, and the technological tools that had brought their classes together. Participation rates were relatively low—roughly a third of all students answered the survey—in part because the necessity of acquiring institutional review board approval at all participating schools delayed the distribution of surveys until the Spring 2010 semester. But the 29 students who did respond to the extensive survey included representatives of each school involved in the project, and they provided a great deal of useful detail about the class.

Questions in the survey focused on a range of issues: how much experience had students had with Web 2.0 tools before the course, and how did they feel about them afterwards? Did their usage of blogs make them feel more or less confident in their writing and research skills? To what extent did they utilize the privacy options available to them for their blog posts? Which parts of the course website did they find most and least useful? To what extent did they benefit from each of the shared project assignments?

Respondents to the survey gave us much to feel good about: 63% of respondents felt more confident as writers after taking the course; 85% felt more confident as researchers after the course. Although 57% of respondents had never studied Whitman's work before the class and 92% of them indicated that they began the semester with little or no knowledge

of Whitman's work, 70% of respondents felt that they had expert or close-to-expert level knowledge of Whitman and of literature more generally after the course. 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "This course made me want to learn more about Whitman and/or nineteenth-century American literature." Though 56% of respondents had never blogged before the class, 48% of them felt that they had a great deal of "ownership and control" over their blog. One respondent remarked that "I pretty much viewed it as an extension of my intellectual being" and many indicated their pleasure at discovering that they could customize their learning environments to suit their preferences.

Of all the questions we asked of our students, perhaps the most salient for the project as a whole and for further prospects for digital humanities pedagogy involved the degree to which the project helped students in different locations learn from one another. The grant proposal originally submitted to the NEH suggested that there would be interaction between classes simply because all student posts would appear in the same space. In one section of the proposal, a specific form of interaction was envisioned:

In the course of this project, students and faculty members will be encouraged to follow Whitman's call, in *Leaves of Grass*, to "Unscrew the locks from the doors!/ Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!" as they move their learning outside of the four walls of the traditional classroom and into the geographical locations in which Whitman lived and worked. For example, students in the New

York/Brooklyn location will travel to the Fulton Ferry Landing at the base of the old Fulton Street. As they gaze across the East River and read aloud the words of “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” which have been etched into the railing encasing the landing, they will experience a scene much like the one Whitman experienced when he imagined future readers standing at the same spot. Students will take digital photographs of this location, add them to the image-sharing service Flickr, and geo-tag them so that they can be located on a map. They will then write blog posts that describe this experience and incorporate photos from it. Meanwhile, students at other project locations will notice a stream of posts and images related to “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” roll through the central site aggregator. A student studying Whitman’s *Specimen Days* in Camden, who has just puzzled over Whitman’s ruminations upon the “soothing, silent, wondrous hours” he spent aboard the Camden Ferry, will make an immediate connection to Whitman’s earlier experience at the Fulton Street Ferry. [...] In this way, the explorations of each class will inform and enrich the learning of the other classes. Site-wide tag clouds will provide an ongoing barometer of the issues, themes, and discoveries that students make during the course of the project.<sup>28</sup>

The degree to which the types of student interactions imagined in the grant proposal actually came to fruition can be seen in student responses to the survey. 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Shared projects created

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<sup>28</sup> Matthew K. Gold, “Looking for Whitman: The Poetry of Place in the Life and Work of Walt Whitman,” proposal submitted to the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant Program, the National Endowment for the Humanities, May 2008.

collaboration among students in the same course”; by contrast, 46% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Shared projects created collaboration among students in different courses” (31% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed). In answer to the question, “How often did you read material from other people in your class?” 74% of survey respondents answered “often,” while 26% answered “sometimes” and none answered “never.” When it came to other classes, results again were mixed: 11% of students said that they “often” read the work of students in other classes, while 81% answered “sometimes” and 7% answered “never.”

Several questions in the survey asked for comments on the types of interactions respondents had with other students in the project. In answer to the question, “To what extent and in what ways did you communicate with and learn from other students in the project,” students offered the following observations:

- “Honestly, I did not learn much from the other classes. Partially because their projects were either earlier or later than ours—if they had been timed simultaneously, then I might have had more interest.”
- “Perused some of their blogs to check out what kinds of things they were studying / how their focus differed from ours.”
- “Not much, just through reading their posts. Was hard to connect posts written on literature we weren’t studying and that I didn’t know.”

- “Some people, after reading my posts, sent me links that they felt [would interest me]. I read other people’s posts and commented on them. I had my posts commented on too.”
- “My interaction with other students mostly consisted of commenting on their blogs, adding salient points where appropriate complementing their respective posts, or noting when their research benefited my own.”
- “I thought the level of scholarship from other courses was pretty low. I quickly lost interest and quit reading their material.”
- “Aside from the occasional comment on someone’s posting, I did not really communicate with other students involved in the project. I felt that I did not have time to properly immerse myself in other students’ work. On one occasion, a student from another university reacted strongly to a posting of mine and I enjoyed the opportunity to respond to the student’s criticism of my work.”
- “I communicated with them in person, via email, Facebook and blogs. I learned from their insights, feedback and input.”
- “I communicated with a few colleagues from my course, commented their posts and sent messages. Also, I read posts from other courses, and I got ideas from all of these people for my work.”

Such comments reveal a range of attitudes, both positive and negative, towards students from other courses. While some students clearly enjoyed the ability to read the work of

students very much unlike themselves, studying related but different texts than those being read in their own classes, others clearly found themselves unable to connect meaningfully with students in other project locations.

The survey asked students to “describe some important or memorable exchanges with students from other courses.” Here, responses were more positive:

- “I enjoyed writing and reading the students work in Novi Sad. It was interesting to see their translations and how some of Whitman’s work was different in their language.”
- “It was fun meeting new people and seeing their work online. I loved the idea that it wasn’t just our school, but others as well [overseas even] who took part in this project. And the fact that everyone was a point and click away was awesome!”
- “Helping other students with their work was a rewarding experience. I also liked helping students with the technology issues they had all semester. The best part is when they become self-proficient and more confident because they have the skills to work on their own. This course promotes teamwork because we can help each other actively with the work. Reading and discussing other students posts give me additional insight. Having the students teach other was a wonderful idea.”



- “I think that some students who I interacted with during this course helped, encouraged, and gave advice on things that I was unsure of. It was fun getting to know how other bloggers felt during their Whitman experience.”
- “I found [it] interesting that other student in other universities were commenting on my blog and sharing information to what/where to find different materials.”
- “The other classes’ comments on our posts (UMW) seemed quite condescending. One person commented on a blog saying, ‘Interesting post and well written!’ That really bothered us, it was such a back handed comment and it may have not been meant that way. However, when you are not connected face-to-face with the other courses, tones of responses have to be interpreted, sometimes incorrectly.”
- “The best exchange I had was with students who were debating about the Levi’s commercials; before it had gone up on the Vault, a student had posted about the commercials, and I really enjoyed going back and forth about the differing opinions on Whitman’s views, whether the commercials were well done or not, etc.”
- “I also got to communicate with students from Novi Sad on my final project, which was working on modern global perceptions of Whitman. The fact that I got to speak with students from another continent (when I’ve never left the East Coast) was incredible. I also got to connect with someone from Qatar.”
- “Exchange with students from other courses was not really a big part of the course for me. They did not seem to take the work done by my class seriously.”

- “I can’t say that I had an exchange, but some of my posts found an audience in other classes. I was very pleased to read comments on my posts.”

Perhaps because the question itself invited more positive reflections on interactions between students in different project locations, the responses to this question reflect more serious engagement between classes than the previous question discussed above—though examples of disconnection still exist. While some tensions are evident (“[students in other classes] did not seem to take the work done by my class seriously”), learning within a networked environment seems to have been strengthened the course experience.

In answer to a survey question that asked students to reflect on the reasons why it was easy or hard to interact with students from other classes and what might be done to improve such interactions, respondents shared a desire to make face-to-face connections before engaging in extended online interactions. Sample comments included:

- “It was hard at first because I wasn’t quite sure what to say or how to respond to their posts. But over time, you get familiar with faces and it gets easier.”
- “It was hard to interact because I thought they were English majors and I felt a little timid.”
- “You’re not sure how to reply or how others might interpret your comment, you don’t know the person your responding to so there is no personal connection. Try having a conversation first to get to know people in other classes.”

- “When someone compared our writing to ‘text message level discourse’ I got hugely offended. Being the only undergrad program in the grant and feeling like we blew the other schools out of the water with our research, projects, and blogs ... to hear that was like a smack in the face and clearly affected my views of their projects. If we could Skype as a class to each other, it would help IMMENSELY!!!! Some sort of face-to-face or even voice-to-voice contact would seriously help create relationships through the courses.”
- “It was really easy to interact with students from other classes who used humor in their blogs; the humor lightened the mood and made it easy to comment or message without a sense of stiffness and formality.”

These responses indicate that the many divides between classes and schools involved in the study were not easily bridged, and that students sometimes felt apprehensive about crossing boundaries between classes. Though the project included a conference at the end of the project in an effort to bring students together, it might have been beneficial to have some kind of gathering at the beginning of the semester, either in person or through a video-conferencing tool, to allow students to get to know one another personally. These comments also suggest that community is not something that can be expected to develop on its own within a structured academic setting; it must be intentionally fostered and sustained through the duration of a project such as this.

In answer to questions about their overall feelings about the project and the way in which it had affected their future career plans, survey respondents expressed a great deal of enthusiasm:

- “It was probably the most influential class I’ve ever taken and I loved it!”
- “I took this course because I heard that we were going to the Library of Congress and I thought Whitman was all right. Now, I am nearly literally in love with Whitman, and I feel incredibly close to my professors and classmates who went through this course with me. [...] I’m incredibly happy to have participated in this project and connected with both students and teachers who I might never have gotten to collaborate with otherwise.”
- “I found this to be a really interesting experience. I sometimes felt as though our class was participating to a limited extent with the blogging; we’d often do our projects and then post on the blogs later. I think it might have been a nice forum in which to share works-in-progress (as opposed to only final products) and receive some feedback.”
- “I will never forget it.”
- ““This was the class that ultimately pushed me to decide that I wanted to be a professor; I was inspired by the discourse and teaching methods in this course, and although there is still a chance that I will change my path, I am fairly confident that lessons I have learned and the conversations that I have had in this course are ones

that I will carry with me always. Furthermore, it has made me a Whitman fanatic. My parents consider him my second boyfriend.”

- “I decided that I want to focus on the interdisciplinary approach to literature. The course introduced me to various possibilities for exploring literature.”
- “I want to pursue more study of 19th century US literature.”
- “It just made me even more sure that I would like to continue researching. I learned a lot of new things and a lot of new ways and tools to help me researching and it also made me more comfortable with sharing the results with others.”
- “I am interested in a career in library science and this course has solidified my belief in the usefulness of technology in academic work.”

Overall, the course appears to have had a very positive effect on the students who participated in it, though aspects of it could certainly be improved in future iterations of the project.

### **Future Directions: “Looking for Whitman” as a Model for Linked Courses Across Campuses**

“Looking for Whitman” was framed as a multi-campus experiment in digital pedagogy, but the experiment was relatively short-lived: the courses that were part of the project ran only for a single semester. The long-term value of the project is that it can serve as a demonstration of the possibility of connected courses across institutions and as a model for

linked courses. Certainly, other single-author/multi-campus projects that emphasize place-based learning might be easily imagined: paired courses on the work of T.S. Eliot with one course offered in St. Louis and the other in London; courses on the literature of the Harlem Renaissance that paired classes in Harlem with classes in Paris; and classes on Hemingway and Stein that paired courses in the US and Europe. And of course, such classes need not be single-author projects; many classroom projects would benefit from such inter-institutional connections.

As future projects based on this model of interconnected courses across institutions are planned, some of the lessons learned through “Looking for Whitman” might be useful:

1. As shown by student respondents to our survey, connecting students across institutions is difficult. Real barriers to connection—socio-economic differences between institutions and students, level of academic preparedness in the shared subject matter, and willingness to share material—must be dealt with openly. Students indicated that more active face-to-face social engagement with students from other classes, especially at the beginning of the semester, would have made them feel more at ease with one another.
2. The disruptive power of institutional scheduling should not be underestimated. In “Looking for Whitman,” for example, one school began its semester a week earlier than other schools involved in the project, which meant that it completed some project-wide assignments, such as the Frontispiece Assignment, before others.

Students cited the resulting lack of coordination between classes as a difficulty in connecting to other students.

3. Finding faculty members within constrained geographic regions who are both trained in the specialized subject matter of content-specific classes and who possess the requisite technical expertise to lead their classes through a semester of heavy technology use is no easy matter. In “Looking for Whitman,” we wound up prioritizing content expertise and location, which forced us to spend time and resources training faculty members in technology usage during our planning year.
4. Given the difficulty of securing funding for digital humanities projects like “Looking for Whitman,” future experimenters hoping to foster cross-campus projects should consider a number of options to reduce costs. These include the implementation of shorter periods of cross-campus collaboration and connection (week-long projects as opposed to semester-long ones), working with faculty members who are already proficient in the technologies to be used in the project, and building on the platforms for collaboration and shared learning activities that have already been developed for existing projects, such as “Looking for Whitman.”

Ultimately, the kinds of learning experiences that can be fostered through cross-campus collaborations are too powerful to be ignored. Consider the answers that students gave to the Looking for Whitman survey question, “How did you describe this class when you were talking to family and friends?”

- “I described this class to my family as an amazing learning experience. It was a lot of work but the discovery of the work and the unknown was great.”
- “I am taking an English class unlike any other English class I have ever taken.”
- “This was my bridge to the poet and place that I love, and the people and place I hoped to connect with.”
- “That I was totally blown away by the content and how the teachers presented the material, being pretty uncomfortable/inexperienced with poetry I felt accepted and learned a lot. It was great using the blog, but I did not connect with students from the other classes.”
- “The most nourishing, inspiring, incredible educational experience I’ve ever had.”
- “It was an amazing creative, innovative experience! It was an unforgettable experience collaborating with other universities across the globe—a perfect ending to my graduate school coursework.”
- “I was thrilled. I told them I have never taken a course where I could so freely express my own opinions.”
- “Innovative, interesting, dynamic, creative.”

In all of these responses, one sees the results of a kind of pedagogy that was articulated by Whitman himself in *Leaves of Grass*:



I am the teacher of athletes,  
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own proves the width of my own,  
He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy the teacher.<sup>29</sup>

While no teachers were harmed during the making of “Looking for Whitman,” they were certainly displaced from the center of the classroom by a network of students engaged in peer-to-peer learning. That these students, like the residents of Whitman’s beloved New York City, came from a diverse set of backgrounds and mingled successfully in a shared communal space, speaks to some of the ways in which students spending a semester looking for Whitman found his spirit embodied in their own collaborative efforts.

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<sup>29</sup> Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself,” *Leaves of Grass*, 7th ed (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1881-82), 74.

## Appendix A. Course Syllabi

### ENGL 455H: Digital Whitman Fall 2009

Dr. Mara Scanlon, Dr. Brady Earnhart, and Jim “The Reverend” Groom  
Tuesdays 6:00-8:45 p.m.  
Combs 322 and 349  
University of Mary Washington

<b>Scanlon:</b>	<b>Earnhart:</b>	<b>Groom:</b>
<b>Combs 331</b>	<b>Combs 355</b>	<b>DuPont 310</b>
654-1544	654-1525	654-1997
<a href="mailto:mscanlon@umw.edu">mscanlon@umw.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:dearnhar@umw.edu">dearnhar@umw.edu</a>	<a href="mailto:jgroom@umw.edu">jgroom@umw.edu</a>
<b>MW 11-1; F 11-12</b>	<b>MW 1-2:30</b>	
<b>and by appt.</b>	<b>or (preferably) by appt.</b>	

**Course Description:** This seminar is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the work of one of America’s most brilliant poets and in a collaborative project with students from three other universities under a National Endowment for the Humanities grant called “Looking for Whitman.” We will analyze Walt Whitman’s poetic and prose work deeply, focusing most specifically on the writings related to the geographic space in which we study—in our case, Fredericksburg and Washington, DC, where Whitman spent time in the Civil War years. The class, which will include visitation to appropriate local sites and archives, will situate Whitman historically, geographically, culturally, biographically--AND digitally. In collaboration with our partner classes, we will build a rich digital network of our thoughts, discoveries, and (critical, informative, interrogative, creative, reflective) writing. Come travel with us and Whitman on one more open road: that of distributed, collective learning.

**Texts:** *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose* (Library of America).  
Selected Readings on blog or Simpson Reserve.

**Course Requirements (additional details may be posted on course blog for some assignments):**

**a) Participation—Oral and Blog (25%).**

Like most seminars, this one relies on your deep engagement with the course material and active participation in several fora. The most obvious of these is oral participation in the discussion during our meetings each week. Come with your reading done carefully and your thoughts organized (or productively disorganized). Be ready to talk and to listen. You will not miss class.

Your writing on the blog, whether as original posts or in meaningful comments on other people's posts (whether from our class or our affiliated classes) will comprise part of this grade. Some of the writing you do on your blog will be required or prompted (more just below), but the blog is also fundamentally a place for you to reflect semi- or informally on our coursework through writing, pose questions, incorporate links and outside materials related to the course, etc. It is one place that you can make Digital Whitman your own. It is fluid and nearly limitless. Use it.

A bit of the writing you do for the blog will be in focused preparation for the week's class. Each week you will post a short piece of writing (about 500 words) *no later than Sunday at midnight* with the title "[Your Name] for [coming Tuesday's date]" (e.g., "Matt for Sept. 22") so we can easily distinguish it from other posts. You will see that each week on the course schedule includes one or two possible prompting questions that identify issues we are likely to raise in class. These may often provide your focus for the week's short writing, but they are not meant to be limiting, so if your interest takes you in a different direction, that's okay. Before class on Tuesday, you will also make a minimum of *three* comments on other people's posts (of any kind, not necessarily short writing). When the work from other courses becomes available on the Looking for Whitman home blog (for instance, under the projects tab), at least one of your comments should be for a non-UMW student from an affiliated course as a way to make sure our work is weaving together in meaningful ways.

Participation also includes reflection on and (audio, video, photo, or other) documentation of our shared field trips.

**b) Oral Report/Study Guide (10%).**

These projects represent a major way, in addition to class/blog discussion, that we will build a communal knowledge base. The oral reports will be handled in partners or groups and are designed to broaden our social and historical contexts for reading Whitman. Each report will involve doing outside reading on which you will be the class experts. You will have some flexibility with topic and due date, as the course schedule shows. Your findings will be distributed in two ways. First, on the assigned date you will present an overview of your information to the class in fifteen minutes, sharing the task equally with your partner(s). Second, you will produce a study guide of your information in a word document that will be posted on our website. It will be 1-2 pages (single-spaced) plus a bibliography of your sources and should be designed as a resource for your classmates that also shows your ability to step back from your research, identify its major points, and summarize them gracefully and accurately. It should not be a replica of your oral presentation. Within 24 hours of your presentation, the study guide must be emailed to Dr. Scanlon as an attachment. Our website will be used to gather this collective knowledge as we go.

**c) Image Gloss (5%, due Tuesday, September 8).**

This assignment on the 1855 version of “Song” will be shared by affiliated courses. You will simultaneously practice your technological skills and add to our communal understanding of the poem. Rather than focusing on your personal relationship to Whitman as you will for the first frontispiece digital project (see below), you will focus here on what is unfamiliar or historically distant. During your reading, you will choose one image or reference in the poem about which you think it would be helpful to know more (e.g., The Alamo). Then you will do some research on that term and will write an annotation or context or gloss for it. Your gloss should include image, audio, or video support, so choose something for which that is possible. What is the significance of your image or what does your research add to our knowledge base? **Your post must be tagged “imagegloss” to get to the right part of the Whitman network.**

**d) Material Culture Museum Entry (10%, due Tuesday, October 20).**

This assignment will be shared by affiliated courses. Building on the Image Gloss, this will be a more substantial historical research project and will relate specifically to the material context of Whitman’s years in Fredericksburg or DC. We will provide some suggestions and examples when the assignment is made in class. **Your post must be tagged “digitalmuseum” to get to the right part of the Whitman network.**

**e) Leaves Group Annotations (15%, due Tuesday, November 3).**

This assignment will be shared by affiliated courses; each will focus on text added to *Leaves of Grass* during the years that a university specializes in—in our case, the 1867 version of *Leaves*. It will also build on the Image Gloss and will involve close reading and historical or critical research. You will work in small groups on this over several weeks, during which your progress might be subject to review during class. More information will be given when the assignment is made in class.

**f) Digital Projects (each 5%=10%): Frontispiece and “Song” introductions (due Tuesday, September 1) and “Where I Found Whitman” video readings (due Tuesday, November 17).**

Both of these projects, which will be shared by affiliated courses, are about your own relationship to Whitman, whether early or late in the semester. In the first, an introduction of sorts, you will think about Whitman’s careful visual presentation of himself in the anonymous publication of the 1855 *Leaves*. What does he mean to convey by his stance, his clothing, his facial expression or eyes? Choose or make an image of yourself, attending to the same variables, that you would use for your own “frontispiece.” Now choose about 6-10 lines from “Song of Myself” that speak most deeply to you or that you identify with for whatever reason. Post all of these to the blog to introduce yourself to the world and to our Looking for Whitman community more specifically; you might title that post “**Song of [Your Name].**” **Your post must**

**be tagged “frontispiece” to get to the right part of the Whitman network.** We’d suggest thinking about using your frontispiece also for your avatar on the blog.

In the second project, due much later in the semester, you will produce a video that captures what you are coming to understand as the relationship between Whitman and the geographic space in which we study him (probably DC or Fredericksburg, but possibly elsewhere). Rather than explicate this relationship, you will demonstrate it by reading a (somewhat substantial) excerpt from Whitman’s prose or poetry out loud in a specific place that shows where *you* found Whitman. Some partner in crime will need to record this with one of our flipcams, and you will mount the video to the blog. You may use any props or other external supports that you wish. You will not read in a monotone; Whitman deserves better and so do all of us who will watch it. **Your post must be tagged “findingwhitman” to get to the right part of the Whitman network.**

- g) Final Project (25%): “My Walt Whitman” (12-15 page essay or digital equivalent like cinepoem or mashup, due Thursday December 10). All projects must be approved by instructors no later than November 10.**

## Provisional Course Schedule

**All work should be completed before class on the day listed.**

**Page numbers refer to the Library of America paperback edition unless otherwise noted.**

**“Blog” readings will be linked or scanned on Readings page of Digital Whitman blog. For class, you should bring a hard copy or a laptop so these readings are accessible.**

**Each week’s questions provide only one or two of the *many* possible issues for reflection and discussion each week.**

Tuesday, Aug. 25: Walt Whitman, A Kosmos

Introductions. Why Whitman? Overview of course and syllabus. Tech training with The Reverend.

Tuesday, Sept. 1: What I Give I Give Out of Myself

**Due (post before class): Frontispiece photo and “My ‘Song” lines**

**Readings:** Brief biography of Whitman (blog); Preface to 1855 *Leaves of Grass* and 1855 version of poem that will be “Song of Myself” (5-88); selected early reviews of *LoG* (blog) *What relationship does Whitman construct with the reader? Who is the speaker of Leaves of Grass, and how much does he have in common with Whitman the man?*

Tuesday, Sept. 8: Whoever You Are Come Travel With Me!

**Due (post before class): Image Gloss**

**Readings:** 1855 “Song of Myself” cont., excerpt from *Democratic Vistas* (1016-1018); “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (307-313), “Song of the Open Road” (297-307), “Song of the Broad-Axe” (330-341), “A Song for Occupations” (355-368); all the following on the blog: Whitman’s self reviews; Charvat, “James T. Fields and the Beginnings of Book Promotion, 1840-1855”; Reynolds, “Manahatta: The Literary Marketplace and Urban Reality”; Emerson’s “The Poet”; Melville’s “Hawthorne and His Mosses”; and Margaret Fuller’s “American Literature”

*What idea of the nation begins to emerge in Whitman’s poetry, and how does it relate to a national “American Literature”?*

Tuesday, Sept. 15: I Proceed for All Who Are or Have Been Young Men

**Readings:** “Children of Adam” and “Calamus” (248-287); Reynolds, “Calamus’ Love” (391-407, blog); Emerson letters appendix (1350-1361); and Gailey, “Publishing History of *Leaves of Grass*” (blog)

**Material Culture Museum Entry** assignment introduced.

**Oral Reports:** Fanny Fern; Ralph Waldo Emerson

*What models for union (of selves/souls, of the nation, of hetero- and homosexuals) can we trace in Whitman's poetry, and how do they intersect with one another?*

Tuesday, Sept. 22: I Speak the Word of the Modern, the Word EN-MASSE

**Readings:** "About" 1867 *Leaves* and 1867 e-text (blog)

**Annotation** project introduced.

**Oral Reports:** Matthew Brady and photography; publishing technologies

*What interests you about the changes to the 1867 edition of *Leaves* when you compare it to the 1855 edition? How does the 1867 edition show—in form or in content—the influence of Whitman's Civil War experience?*

Tuesday, Sept. 29: The Real War Will Never Get in the Books

**Readings:** Morris, "A Sight in Camp" (48-74, blog); Whitman's intro to *Memoranda During the War* (blog); *Speciman Days* excerpts (730-803); Clara Barton, "The Women Who Went to the Field" (blog); and Erkkila, "The Union War" (190-225, blog)

**Oral Reports:** Civil War medicine and hospitals; legal and ideological context for slavery 1820-1865

*Consider the lament of Whitman's that gives this week its syllabus title. How does Whitman meet the challenge he sets out in his own work, if at all? And how does the "real war" as it is represented in Whitman's writing compare with your own prior sense of the Civil War and/or of Fredericksburg?*

Saturday, Oct. 3 - Tours of Fredericksburg Battlefield and Chatham Manor. **Document!**

Watch excerpts from *Gods and Generals* (link on blog).

Tuesday, Oct. 6: My Book and the War Are One

**Readings:** "Drum-Taps" (416-458); selected letters of Whitman 1861-1865 (blog); and Reynolds, "My Book and the War Are One" (413-447, blog)

**Oral Reports:** Lincoln; other Civil War poetry

*Whitman asks in one poem, "Must I change my triumphant songs?" Comparing his Civil War poems with his earlier work, what answer do you find?*

Tuesday, Oct. 13 (Fall Break. Admit it—you miss us.)

Tuesday, Oct. 20: Straight and Swift to My Wounded I Go

**Due (post before class): Material Culture Museum Entries**

**Readings:** “Drum-Taps” cont.; selected letters of Whitman 1866-1872 (blog); Morris, “The Great Army of the Sick” (75-123, blog); Calder, “Personal Recollections of Walt Whitman” (blog); and “Whitman’s *Drum Taps* and Washington’s Civil War Hospitals” (blog)  
*How do Whitman’s interactions with the wounded resemble his relationship to the reader? How do both connect to his dreams for the nation?*

Saturday, Oct. 24 – Field Trip to Washington, DC. **Document!**

Tuesday, Oct. 27: And Thought of Him I Love

**Readings:** “Memories of President Lincoln” poems (459-468); “Death of Abraham Lincoln” from *Collect* (1060-1071); Erkkila, “Burying President Lincoln” (226-239, blog); and excerpts from Epstein, *Lincoln and Whitman: Parallel Lives in Civil War Washington* (blog)  
*In what way can we understand Whitman’s “love” for Lincoln, a man he did not know personally? Does it compare in any meaningful way with earlier models of love we’ve seen (e.g., Calamus love, patriotic love, or the nurse’s love)? What does Lincoln represent or provide for Whitman?*

Tuesday, Nov. 3: A Backward Glance O’er Travel’d Roads

**Due: Group annotations of 1867 *Leaves***

**Readings:** 1879 interview with Whitman (blog); “Walt Whitman’s Last” (1369) and 1891-92 “Song of Myself” (188-247)

*How does the speaker you encounter in this week’s readings compare with 1855 in tone, self-fashioning, purpose, language/diction, vision of the nation, philosophy, or other ways?*

Tuesday, Nov. 10: I Bequeath Myself to the Dirt to Grow from the Grass I Love

**You should have your final project plan approved by today!**

**Readings:** 1891-92 *Leaves* cont. (choose one piece we have not seen in an earlier edition and prepare to comment on its significance, interest, or lack thereof); Longaker, “The Last Sickness and the Death of Walt Whitman” and Whitman’s tomb design/funeral photo (blog)  
*How should we read *Leaves of Grass* as it exists across the years? Is there a definitive edition (and, if so, who or what decides it)?*

Tuesday, Nov. 17: Look for Me Under Your Boot-soles

**Due (post before class): “Where I Found Whitman” video readings**

**Readings:** Higgins, “The Poet’s Reception and Legacy” (blog); Pound, “How I Feel About Walt Whitman” (blog); selected readings of 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>-century poets (blog)

*What aspects of Whitman’s legacy seem evident to you in the later poets? Does it de-radicalize and enervate Whitman to see him as a canonical poetic elder statesman or fulfill his wildest dreams?*



Tuesday, Nov. 24: Sound Your Yawp I  
**Presentation of final projects.**

Tuesday, Dec. 1: Sound Your Yawp II  
**Presentation of final projects.**

Thursday, Dec. 10 (Final Exam): We Celebrate Ourselves  
**Due: “My Walt Whitman” projects. Celebration!**

**ENG 3403: ONE MAJOR AUTHOR:  
WALT WHITMAN**

Dr. Matthew K. Gold  
 Email: [mgold@citytech.cuny.edu](mailto:mgold@citytech.cuny.edu)  
 Phone: (718) 260-4972  
 Office: Namm 520  
 Office Hours: T 11:30am-1pm  
 and by appointment  
 Course Website: <http://lookingforwhitman.org>

Time T 1-3:30pm  
 Section 5555  
 Room: N601B  
 Fall 2009

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

In the 1855 edition of the poem that he later titled “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman advised readers to “look for me under your bootsoles.” This course, “Looking for Whitman: the Poetry of Place in the Life and Work of Walt Whitman,” will help us find Whitman’s continuing presence in the landscape that surrounds us. Utilizing open-source tools to connect classrooms across the country, we will participate in a collaborative, online website in which you can research Whitman’s connections to New York and share that research with students at other schools in a dynamic, social, web-based learning environment.

We will be joining classes at three other institutions—New York University; the University of Mary Washington; and Rutgers University, Camden—in a simultaneous, connected, semester-long inquiry into the relationship of Whitman’s poetry to local geography and history. Each class will explore Whitman’s poetry at the same time as it begins to research Whitman’s relationship to specific locales. In the New York location, students from City Tech and NYU will explore Whitman’s connections to the Brooklyn Waterfront, Lower Manhattan, and Long Island, and will focus particularly on Whitman’s early work, such as the landmark 1855 first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. At the University of Mary Washington, students will consider Whitman’s mid-career experience as a nurse in the Civil War, and will focus on his war-related writing of the 1860s. Students at Rutgers-Camden will explore Whitman’s late career as they explore the city in which Whitman spent the final decades of his long life.

At its core, the online components of this class are consonant with the major themes of Whitman’s poetry: attachment to the people and places that make the American nation strong; openness to new technology and new experiences; dedication to the diversity of the American people; and celebration and promotion of America’s valuable intellectual resources.

*Prerequisite:* ENG 1121/EG 121

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Explore the poetry, journalism, and prose of Walt Whitman in the context of mid-nineteenth century Brooklyn

- Use new-media applications to respond actively and creatively to course texts
- Interact with students at other universities in linked, collaborative projects that will take place on our course website
- Get out of the classroom and into the streets and archives in a semester-long search to find traces of Whitman under our bootsoles

#### **REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS:**

- Walt Whitman, *Walt Whitman: Poetry and Prose* (Library of America)
- Walt Whitman, *Franklin Evans, or The Inebriate: A Tale of the Times* (Duke U.P.)
- Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall and Other Writings* (Rutgers U.P.)
- Various Handouts and PDF files
- A reliable computer/internet connection at home or school

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES:**

- Formal essays and projects (20%)
- Midterm project (15%)
- Final project (25%)
- Online assignments (30%)
- Regular attendance and active classroom participation (10%)

#### **COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES/SITES WE WILL USE:**

Blogs (WordPress), Wikis (PBWiki), del.icio.us, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Facebook, Seismic, Pageflakes and others. Please begin exploring our course website as soon as possible.

#### **COURSE POLICIES:**

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory in this discussion-based course. Students who miss more than three classes for any reason other than a documented emergency will lose one-third of their final grade for each additional absence. Students who miss more than five classes are likely to fail the course.

If you miss class, you must contact your classmates to find out what you've missed. In-class writing assignments cannot be made up.

Please make every effort to arrive on time and to shut off your cell phone before entering the classroom. Arriving after roll has been taken will count as a lateness and one-third of an absence. Please do not read or write text messages in class unless asked to do so by Professor Gold, as this activity is distracting and disrespectful.

**Participation:** The success of this course depends upon your regular and active participation in class discussions. To receive full credit for participation, you must make constructive contributions to our classroom discussions. This includes the completion of all reading and writing assignments.

**Deadlines:** You must adhere to your assigned dates and times. All assignments must be prepared prior to the class meeting, according to the due date and time, and fully complete. Late work will not be graded. Period. All assignments are due by the start of class on the due date. After this time, they will be accepted with a "0" grade and are required to pass the course. Period.

If you need an extension, you must contact me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due to explain why an extension is necessary. If the assignment is due in less than 24 hours, do not waste your time or mine by asking for an extension.

You will be responsible for all assignments and deadlines regardless of absences. Hence, I strongly recommend that you have a contact person in the class from whom you can get assignments and notes in the event of an absence.

**Paper Format:** All papers must be typed and double-spaced. Use a legible 12-point font such as Times New Roman, and format your papers with 1" margins on all sides. Give your paper a creative title that sums up your argument. Citations and title formatting should conform to the MLA guidelines that we will discuss in class.

**Revisions:** Revision is an essential part of the writing process. Real revision involves a re-visioning and re-fashioning of the original paper, not just the completion of superficial corrections. Hand in revisions with the original essay and the original grading sheet. On the heading, indicate "Revision of Essay #" and the date on which you are handing it in.

**Personal Conferences:** Meeting with me during office hours is one of the most important things you can do to improve your work. If you cannot make it to my office hours, we can set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time. Email is the best way to reach me; I will attempt to respond to all messages within 24 hours.

**Email Etiquette:** In your email messages to me, please observe the rules of formal letter-writing etiquette: begin each message with a greeting ("Dear Professor Gold") and end each message with a closing ("Sincerely, Model Student"). Avoid texting language ("yo whattup prof. g? How r u?"). Use standard punctuation and capitalization. Messages that do not comply with this etiquette will be deleted.

**Incompletes:** Incomplete grades will not be given except under extraordinary circumstances, and even then, the student must have completed course work at a

passing level and must complete a written agreement with me regarding the completion of the work.

**New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity:** Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

**Plagiarism:** DON'T DO IT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!!!! Know that the penalties for plagiarism in this course include failure of the course and additional academic sanctions. I will report all incidences of plagiarism to City Tech's Academic Integrity Officer. If you are confused about what plagiarism is or have questions about how you should avoid it, please contact me before your paper is due. Do not, under any circumstances, hand in plagiarized work.

**Students With Disabilities:** Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. I will work with the Student Support Services Program (Atrium 237 – 718-260-5143) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Syllabus Disclaimer:** Any part of this syllabus may be revised during in the semester at the sole discretion of the instructor.

## **COURSE RESOURCES:**

**City Tech Learning Center:** Atrium G-18, (718) 260-5874

The Atrium Learning Center provides a wide range of free academic support services to City Tech students, including computer facilities, tutoring assistance, and workshops. Tutors in the Learning Center can help you focus and develop your papers; please visit the center as often as possible this semester.

**The Ursula C. Sherwin Library:** Atrium Fourth Floor, (718) 260-5485

It is my hope that you will become intimately familiar with the library this semester. During the semester, we will meet with a librarian for a session on the effective use of online resources and literary databases.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change):**

**Week 1 - Intro to the course, to each other, to the course website**

**Week 2 - 1855 *Leaves of Grass* Preface**

- First Shared Assignment:

Introduction of self through sections of *Leaves of Grass*/"Song of Myself" — find six lines from our Whitman course text that resonate with you. Explain why those lines resonate with you. Comment on at least one blog from each class in the project.

**Week 3 - 1855 *Leaves of Grass***

- Cultural Contexts/Cultural Artifacts Shared Assignment

Choose an item that you see described in *Leaves of Grass*. (possibilities: scalpel, surgical instruments, train, ferries, bucket full of feet, slippers, hospitals, hats, plumbing, lincoln lecture, laurel creek, shoemaking, printing press, penny paper/newspaper, Horace Traubel, Ford's theater, slouch hat, opera, art/realism, Eakins, daguerreotypes, Fred Gray society, phrenology, painting (someone's NY), Pfaff's beerhall, omnibus, diet food, lincoln's funeral, cemeteries, rural park/cemetery unit, carpentry tools)

Each student responsible for providing cultural context of that object

Research that material object in mid-nineteenth century New York. What did it look like? How did people use it? What did people write about it? Post a blog entry about your object and include an image that shows it or people using it. Highlight the connection you see to Whitman's writings.

**Week 4 - Emerson, "The Poet," selections from *Nature***

- Third Shared Assignment

Begin annotating online class edition of 1855 *Leaves of Grass*.

- NYC - 1855/1856/1860 // Journalism/ Franklin Evans

- UMW/Fredericksburg - 1865 (Drum Taps)/1867/1871-2 // Memoranda During the War

- Camden - 1876/1881-2/1892 Deathbed // Two Rivulets

**Week 5 - Whitman journalism 1 - self reviews/self promotions**

- Class trip to *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in Brooklyn and Newspaper Row in Manhattan

**Week 6 - Whitman journalism 2 - cultural topics**

**Week 7 - *Franklin Evans; or, The Inebriate***

**Week 8 - Midterm Project Presentations**

**Week 9 - 1856 *Leaves of Grass***

**Week 10 - 1860 *Leaves of Grass***

**Week 11 - "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"**

**Week 12 - Cinemoem project 1**

**Week 13 - Cinemoem project 2**

**Week 14 - The Civil War**

**Week 15 - Final Project presentations  
- Shared Final Video Project**

Every student in every location will be required to film herself reading a Whitman text/poem in a specific locale. Think about the relationship of place to text. But the video should just consist of you reading the poem.

**NOTE: For all field trips, you will be required to do the following:**

- document your experience of the trip through photos and videos
- post images/videos/blog entries about those trips on the course website
- check out trips that students from other schools/classes have taken and comment upon them
- use class maps to geo-locate experiences.



**Walt Whitman:  
The Global Perspective**

University of Novi Sad, Fall 2009

Dr. Karen Karbiener  
US Fulbright Scholar and  
Master Teacher of Humanities,  
New York University  
kk55@nyu.edu  
Office and hours:  
FF 112, Fridays 2:30-4:30

**Objectives**

Does poetry matter? What can it do for us as 21<sup>st</sup>-century citizens of the world?

Over 150 years after the first publication of *Leaves of Grass*, Walt Whitman stands as a key representative for poetry as an agent for social, artistic, and political change. His progressive and expansive vision of humanity, experimentation with literary form and poetic voice, and raw, radical politics continue to astonish and impact his readers. “This is what you shall do,” he tells his readers in the “Preface” of the 1855 edition:

Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul, and your very flesh shall be a great poem...

From the global perspective afforded by the special circumstances of this course, we will explore and re-evaluate Whitman’s boundary-breaking constructs and concepts.

Besides the unusual circumstances that enable me to offer this class to you, “Whitman: The Global Perspective” is part of a revolutionary pedagogical experiment linking five different Whitman courses this fall. “Looking for Whitman” (as the project is called) is sponsored by America’s National Endowment of the Humanities and has helped us create an enhanced digital learning environment, procure and utilize Flipcams and digital cameras, and hire technical support. This also means that you will develop your computer literacy by making regular contributions to our class blog, and learning to use our equipment and to apply it to your Whitman studies. If time allows, you will be introduced to websites and programs such as Flickr, Delicious, and Twitter. It is our hope that your knowledge of such innovation will enhance your own work, and allow you to think more innovatively about the classroom experience.



Another aim of this course is to provide you with guidance in the “professionalizing” of your nascent academic career. Your term project—a translation, close reading and commentary on one of the poems in the third edition (1860) of *Leaves of Grass*— will be submitted for consideration to the 2010 Transatlantic Whitman Symposium, a week-long conference that will be held this June at the University of Macerata, Italy. If your essay is accepted, you will be permitted to participate in the conference free of charge, and be given free housing at the university for the week. The Symposium attracts major Whitman scholars and standout graduate students from around the world; it’s a remarkable opportunity in so many ways, and it is my sincere hope to reunite with you there in June!

### **Procedure**

1. Term project: An essay of 8-10 pages plus a visual component is due at the end of the semester. You will also be required to submit your essay for consideration to this year’s Transatlantic Whitman Symposium (“Paths Untrodden in the 1860 *Leaves*” University of Macerata, Italy, 14-20 June). I will provide you with instructions and coaching on how to apply.
2. “Looking for Whitman” blog responses: on the Sunday after each of our sessions, I will post an assignment. By Friday midnight before our next class, please post your response on the site. Though you’re required to do this minimum, please feel free to post as often as you like; you might want to respond to your classmates’ postings or extend your own comments, for example. A total of five blog posts are required.
3. Participation and effort: you’re under no obligation to participate in class discussions—though I hope to create a classroom environment that will encourage you to share your ideas and opinions. Your observations and insights are more important to your classmates and myself than you think.
4. Attendance: because of this semester’s late start and the duration of the Fulbright grant, our class meets only five times. No absences from these sessions without a valid and serious excuse will be permitted (and any unexcused absences will jeopardize your final grade).

### **Conferences and Instructor Accessibility**

Please feel free to come by office hours to extend our conversations, or to discuss other issues or questions; if my hours are inconvenient, we’ll try and find time in both of our schedules for a meeting. Suggestions are welcome. It is important to me that you both benefit from and enjoy this class!

### **Texts and Resources**

Please bookmark our project website on your computer:

<http://lookingforwhitman.org>

Here you'll find information on "Looking for Whitman", and the blogs for all institutions participating in this digital humanities project: Rutgers University (NJ), City University of New York (NY), and Mary Washington College (VA).

To go to our class blog directly, go to:

<http://unovisad.lookingforwhitman.org>

This is our information board, where you will find and post your assignments, and download many of our course readings, and find links to information that will enable and enhance your studies and writing.

The following required texts will be made available to you this semester, thanks to the generosity of their publishers:

Karbiener, Karen. *Walt Whitman and the Birth of Modern American Poetry* (Modern Scholar; 14 lectures on cd with accompanying book)  
 Lopate, Philip, ed. *Writing New York: A Literary Anthology* (Library of America)  
 Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass (1860): The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Facsimile Edition* (University of Iowa)  
 Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass: First and Death-Bed Editions*. Ed. Karbiener (Barnes & Noble)

I've donated the following critical sources to the University of Novi Sad Library, where they are available for public use:

Allen, Gay Wilson, and Ed Folsom. *Walt Whitman and the World* [University of Iowa]  
 Burns, Ric, James Sanders, and Lisa Ades. *New York: An Illustrated History* (Knopf)  
 Kerley, Barbara, and Brian Selznick. *Walt Whitman: Words for America* [Scholastic]  
 Loving, Jerome. *Walt Whitman: The Song of Himself* (University of California)  
 Perlman, Jim and Ed Folsom, eds. *Whitman: The Measure of His Song* (Holy Cow)  
 Reynolds, David, ed. *A Historical Guide to Walt Whitman* (Oxford)  
 Reynolds, David. *Walt Whitman's America* (Knopf)

Other suggested readings on Whitman's life and writing can be found at under the "Reading" and "Specimen Days" links on the top of our web page (many of the materials are available to you immediately online). On the "Blogroll" on the right hand side of the page, you will find indispensable links for Whitman studies. These include the Walt Whitman Archive, an indispensable database that we'll be using regularly.

### **Tentative Schedule**

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31 Oct	<b>Walt Whitman, an American, one of the Roughts, a kosmos</b> Readings: "Song of Myself" and "Preface" to 1855 <i>Leaves of Grass</i>
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(Whitman text pp. 29-91, 7-27); textual introduction, "Whitman and the Promise of America" (xiii-xlv); critiques of the *Leaves* (881-890); excerpts of Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha" (handout); NYC map (handout). Online readings: Whitman's book designs for *Leaves of Grass*, and Ed Folsom's essay "Whitman Making Books/Books Making Whitman":

<http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/current/anc.00150.html>

7 Nov

**The sexual revolution of the 1860 edition**

Readings: From the 3rd edition, "Children of Adam" cluster (p.252-273) and "Calamus" cluster (p.274-294); "The Sleepers", "I Sing the Body Electric"; "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." From "Poems Excluded from the Death-bed Edition": "Enfans d'Adam.11" (754), "Calamus. 16" (754), "Calamus.8" (755), "Calamus.9" (756), "Calamus.5" (769).

14 Nov

**Radical resistance to division: the wartime Whitman**

Readings: *Specimen Days* (see the special "Specimen Days" link on our class website); "To the States." "To the States, to Identify the 16th, 17th, or 18th Presidentiad," "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun", "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," "O Captain! My Captain!", "The Wound-Dresser", "Hush'd Be the Camps To-day," "Come Up From the Fields Father", "Ethiopia Saluting the Colors", excerpts from Civil War letters (see the "Civil War Treasure" link on the "Blogroll" of our website).

28 Nov

**Poets to Come!**

Readings: "So Long!" and the Whitman recording of "America" (recording found at Whitman Archive). Selected works of writers in *Walt Whitman: The Measure of His Song*, including Allen Ginsberg ("Howl", "Supermarket in California", "America"), Langston Hughes ("Theme for English B", "Old Walt", "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", "I Too Sing America"), Federico Garcia Lorca ("Ode to Walt Whitman"), Sherman Alexie ("Defending Walt Whitman"), Chou Ping ("Whispers of Heavenly Death"), Jorge Luis Borges ("Camden 1892"), Bruce Weigl on Charles Simic and Whitman, and others TBA.

12 Dec

**Absorbing, translating...**

Readings: selections from *Walt Whitman and the World*; translations and commentary by Ljiljana Babic, Sonja Basic, Ivan Lalic, Dragan Purešić, and Mario Susko; Ed Folsom, "Whitman in Translation: A Seminar", "Song of Myself, Section 1, in Fifteen Languages", and other readings TBA.

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**Walt Whitman seminar**  
**Dr. Tyler Hoffman**  
**Fall 2009**

***Schedule of readings***

- M Jan 24 *Song of Myself* (pp. 27-88)
- M Jan 31 *Song of Myself*; 1855 *Preface* (pp. 5-26)
- M Feb 7 *Song of Myself*; 1855 *Leaves of Grass* (pp. 89-145)
- M Feb 14 New York: Starting from Paumanok (pp. 176-88); Crossing Brooklyn Ferry  
 City of Orgies; To a Stranger (p. 280); A Broadway Pageant (pp. 383-387); A Paumanok Picture (p. 574); Mannahatta (p. 613); Paumanok (p. 613); From Montauk Point (p. 613); Broadway (p. 624); *Specimen Days* (pp. 713-730, 844-848, 862-872, 931-935); The Old Bowery (pp. 1209-16)
- M Feb 21 New York /New Orleans: New Orleans in 1848 (pp. 1223-1228); Silva Gruesz,  
 from *Ambassadors of Culture*
- M Feb 28 Washington, DC: *Drum-Taps* and *Memories of President Lincoln* (pp. 416-468);  
 By Broad Potomac's Shore (pp. 591-92); Old War-Dreams (p. 593); Thick-Sprinkled Bunting (pp. 593-594); What Best I See in Thee (p. 594); Ashes of Soldiers (pp. 598-600); *Specimen Days* (pp. 730-803); *Death of Abraham Lincoln* (pp. 1060-71); A Lincoln Reminiscence (p. 1096); An Indian Bureau Reminiscence (pp. 1194-1197); Some War Memoranda (pp. 1202-1208)
- M Mar 7 Camden/Philadelphia: *Children of Adam* (pp. 248-267) and *Calamus* (pp. 268-281; 684-688); *Specimen Days* (pp. 803-843, 848-862, 872-874, 898-900, 908-910, 923, 939-945)
- M Mar 14 Camden/Philadelphia cont.
- M Mar 28 Field trip to Whitman house museum and gravesite

- M Apr 4 The West: The Prairie Grass Dividing (p. 281); A Promise to California (pp. 282-283); To a Western Boy (p. 285); Song of the Red-Wood Tree (pp. 351-355); Pioneers! O Pioneers! (pp. 371-375); Others May Praise What They Like (p. 517); The Prairie States (p. 524); Night on the Prairies (p. 566); From Far Dakota's Cañons (pp. 592-593); Spirit That Form'd This Scene (pp. 594-595); *Specimen Days* (pp. 874-896; 933-35); "Custer's Last Rally" (pp. 933-35)
- M Apr 11 Canada: *Specimen Days* (pp. 901-908); *Beautiful Dreamers*
- M Apr 18 Camden/Philadelphia cont.
- M Apr 25 Camden/Philadelphia cont.
- M May 2 Retrospective

Dr. Carol J. Singley  
Fall 2009

**Introduction to Graduate Literary Study**  
**56:350:503:01**

Class: W 6:00-8:40, Robeson 205 and basement instructional room

Office: 479 Armitage Hall  
Tel: 856-225-6629 off. 610-328-9522 hm.  
Fax: 610-328-9522  
E-mail: [singley.camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:singley.camden.rutgers.edu)  
Office Hours: W 5-6 and by appt.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Welcome to Introduction to Graduate Literary Study!

This course introduces you to current issues in the fields of literary theory and criticism and to the aims and methods of literary analysis. The course provides a foundation for future graduate study by reinforcing the important skills of close reading, literary interpretation, and research, and introduces you to literary studies as a possible profession. You will become familiar with past and present developments in literary studies, learn how to identify and assess critical and theoretical approaches, and select approaches that best match your interests and the texts studied.

This course has a special component. It is aligned with a “Looking for Whitman” project funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. The aim is to help students at multiple universities engage in a concurrent, connected, semester-long inquiry into the relationship of Walt Whitman's poetry to local geography and history. So, students in New York City Institute of Technology are exploring the relationship of Brooklyn to Whitman's early career; students at the University of Mary Washington are exploring resources in Fredericksburg and Washington, D.C., as they consider Whitman's Civil War-era writings; and students at Rutgers-Camden are examining Camden resources as they consider Whitman's late career. The class will utilize open-source software to collaborate in an online learning environment and to produce digital media that will enlighten and inform readers beyond our own campus.

We will use the Whitman's writing, especially poems and prose produced in Camden, to explore critical and theoretical approaches to literature, and to practice research. Major assignments include an explication, a bibliographic essay, and a final critical project. These and shorter assignments will have digital components.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Whitman, Walt. *Whitman: Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Justin Kaplan. Library of America. ISBN-10: 1883011353. ISBN-13: 978-1883011352  
Reynolds, David. *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*. Vintage. ISBN-10: 0679767096. ISBN-13: 978-0679767091  
Wharton, Edith. *Summer*. Bantam. ISBN-10: 0553214225. ISBN-13: 978-0553214222

- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Anniversary ed. Blackwell. ISBN-10: 0816654476, ISBN-13: 978-0816654475. (Second edition will also suffice).
- Hall, Donald. *Literary and Cultural Theory*. Houghton Mifflin. ISBN: 0-39592919-9.
- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Thomson Wadsworth. ISBN 1-4130-0218-8.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. Modern Language Association. ISBN: 9781603290241 (if you purchase on line at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org), you also have free access to the book on-line, and can obtain permanent e-access to the book)

### RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

- Whitman biography. "Walt Whitman" by Folsom and Price; minimal "Chronology of Whitman's Life": <http://www.whitmanarchive.org/biography/index.html>
- Fussell, Paul. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*. McGraw-Hill, ISBN-10: 0075536064, ISBN-13: 978-0075536062
- Arp, Thomas R., and Greg Johnson. *Perrine's Sound and Sense*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Thomson Wadsworth. ISBN 083840746-3.
- LeMaster, J. R., and Donald D. Kummings, ec. *Walt Whitman: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Garland, 1998. (Reference, Robeson Library **PS3230.W35 1998**)
- Readings on electronic reserve (marked "e")  
Books are available in the Campus Store.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Jamie Gibbs [jmgibbs@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:jmgibbs@camden.rutgers.edu)  
At the Looking for Whitman site, please join [Tech Support Group](#) to ask questions. Also, [Tutorials Blog](#) offers tips and tricks.

**ELECTRONIC SITE:** Looking for Whitman <http://lookingforwhitman.org/>  
Tag: ww2

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Regular class attendance and participation.
2. Reading of assigned texts on time.
3. Completion of writing assignments, blog postings and other e-projects on time.

### ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Frontispiece due 9/9. Upload a photo of yourself and caption of several lines from 1855 edition of *Song of Myself*
2. Image Gloss due 9/16. Select an image from 1855 edition of *Song of Myself* to annotate in brief (50 words)
3. Explication/Annotation due 9/30. Close reading of a poem (4-5 pp. written), with on-line posting and an oral presentation (10 min.).
4. Digital Museum due 10/14. Select an image from the poem you explicated and digitally annotate it (500-600 words).
5. Bibliographic Essay due 10/28. Comprehensive review, in essay form (5-6 pp.), of the

- published criticism on a given text, with e-posting and oral presentation (7 min. max.).
6. Group Annotation due 11/18. Work alone or with a partner to post commentary on a passage from *Specimen Days* or lines of poetry published during the Camden years (1-3 pp.)
  7. Final project. Oral Presentations due 12/2, 12/9. Critical Essay due 12/14: Critical essay (12-15 pages) with digital support: video, cine-poem, on-line museum, MP3 interpretive reading, or other project that takes a scholarly, fresh approach to your text and is informed by critical theory and criticism. With oral presentation (10 min.).

**GRADING:**

Attendance, class discussion, blogs	20%
Explication (incl. oral presentation)	20%
Bibliographic essay (incl. oral presentation)	30%
Final project/critical essay (incl. oral presentation)	30%

**OFFICE HOURS:**

As posted above. Please come by discuss the readings, class discussion, blog postings, written assignments, or any aspect of the course.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS:**

UPPERCASE = topic

**bold** = written, oral, and e-assignments

regular type = reading assignments.

- |   |        |   |
|---|--------|---|
| 1 | W 9/2  | INTRODUCTION<br>Course goals and methods<br>“Looking for Whitman” ww2 NEH project: Log on and set up your blog<br>Explication introduced and poem assigned.   |
| 2 | W 9/9  | PHENOMENOLGY, HERMENEUTICS, RECEPTION THEORY<br>Eagleton, ch. 2<br>Hall, ch. 2<br>Reynolds, Prologue and read through chs. 1-9 (NY)<br>Whitman, <i>Song of Myself</i><br><b>Due: Frontispiece</b>                     |
| 3 | W 9/16 | HISTORY OF LITERARY CRITICISM, RISE OF ENGLISH,<br>NEW CRITICISM<br>Bibliographic Essay Introduced<br>Eagleton, ch. 1<br>Hall, ch. 1<br>Reynolds, Read through chs. 13, 14 (Wash DC). Read carefully ch. 15 (Camden). |



**Due: Image Gloss****Respond to at least one blog this week and weekly**

- 4      Th 9/23      POLITICAL CRITICISM, NEW HISTORICISM, PLURALISTIC  
CULTURAL ANALYSIS  
Eagleton, Conclusion  
Hall, ch. 10  
Reynolds, Read carefully ch. 16 (Camden)  
Betsy Erkkila, fr. *Whitman the Political Poet* (e)
- 5      W 9/30      LIBRARY RESEARCH: TOOLS AND METHODS  
Tour of Whitman House, 3 p.m. 328 Mickle St. (Martin Luther King Blvd.)  
Alternative Tour: Wed. through Sat 10-12 & 1-4. Sun 1-4. Closed Mon. & Tue.  
Gibaldi, acquaint yourself with research sections, citation style  
**Due: Explication; Oral Presentations (15 min. max.)**
- 6      W 10/7      FEMINISM, GAY AND LESBIAN STUDIES  
Eagleton, pp. 182 ff.  
Hall, chs. 7, 8  
"Women as a Theme in Whitman's Writing," fr. *WW: An Encyclopedia* (e)  
**Explication Oral Presentations cont'd**
- 7      W 10/14      STRUCTURALISM, SEMIOTICS  
Eagleton, ch. 3  
Hall, ch. 5  
**Explication Oral Presentations cont'd**  
**Digital Museum Due**
- 8      W 10/21      REVIEW, CONFERENCES
- 9      W 10/28      POST-STRUCTURALISM, DECONSTRUCTION  
Eagleton, ch. 4  
Hall, ch. 6  
Final Project Introduced  
**Bibliographic Essay due; Oral Presentations (7 min. max.)**
- 10     W 11/4      PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM  
INFLUENCES

Eagleton, ch. 5  
 Hall, ch. 4  
 Edith Wharton, Summer  
 Fr. Justin Kaplan, *WW: A Life* (e)  
 Fr. Paul Zweig, *WW: The Making of the Poet* (e)  
**Bibliographic Essay Oral Presentations cont'd**

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|----|----------------------|---|
| 11 | W 11/11              | MARXIST CRITICISM<br>Eagleton, Afterword<br>Hall, ch. 3 |
| 12 | W 11/18              | <b>Group Annotation Due</b>                             |
| 13 | Thanksgiving Holiday |   |
| 14 | W 12/2               | <b>Final Project Oral Presentations (10 min. max.)</b>  |
| 15 | W 12/9               | <b>Final Project Oral Presentations cont'd</b>          |
|    | M 12/14              | <b>Essay Due (written)</b>                              |

Dr. Carol J. Singley  
Introduction to Graduate Literary Study

### Guide to Assignments

#### **FRONTISPIECE: Due 9/9**

Take a picture of yourself using a digital or cell phone camera. Choose at least 6 lines from the 1855 edition of "Song of Myself" and post the image of yourself and the lines in your blog. Add a short personal statement about the lines. Your inspiration should be Whitman's frontispiece for the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. This photo can also serve as your avatar on the ww2 site.

#### **GLOSS OF AN IMAGE: Due 9/16**

Choose an image from the 1855 edition of *Song of Myself* that has literary and/or cultural resonance, for example, "omnibus," "Alamo," "daguerreotype," or "b'hoy." Explore the meanings of the image in the poem and in the larger context in which Whitman wrote. Post your findings in a blog. Enrich your posting with sound, video, or images.

Respond to at least one person's blog

#### **EXPLICATION OF A TEXT:<sup>30</sup> Due 10/7**

(Also referred to as "Annotation" in Looking for Whitman www2 project)

An explication is a commentary revealing the meaning of a text. Explication is a fundamental skill for anyone engaged in interpreting texts--whether teacher, critic, editor, historian, attorney, clergy, or any professional involved with written language. It consists of two parts: the detailed reading and analysis of the linguistic, compositional, and expressive parts of a text; and the synthesis of these parts into a coherent meaning for the whole. Performance of an explication in class will help you develop skills in verbal analysis and in the presentation of information.

You will select your text by lot from a list that I provide. Some "swapping" within a class will be allowed if both parties agree. Published explications of some of these texts are available, but they should not be used except as a last resort, and then only if the source is properly credited. The explication should be an original reading, though standard references (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, literary handbooks) should be consulted for the meaning of obscure words, phrases, or allusions.

In addition to posting your explication online on Looking for Whitman site, use visual, video, or sound media to present your explication of the poem. These media can:

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<sup>30</sup>Adapted from Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Literature* (Boston: Little, 1968) and Drs. Berkey, Lutz, and Sill.

- explore one or more aspects of the poem,
- connect the poem to Whitman's life in Camden, or
- provide historical context for Whitman and/or the poem

Method:

1. Read the text sensitively and carefully several times. Jot down random impressions as they occur to you. Look up words that are unfamiliar or carry more than one meaning. Consider the function of words or phrases in terms of the whole passage, as well as in a particular line or stanza. Paraphrase (reword) in order to make sure you understand the text thoroughly.

2. Arrive at an overall impression of the subject and structure of the text, the voice and tone of the speaker or narrator, the implications of any ironies or ambiguities. Justify your impressions by reference to specific linguistic signs in the text.

3. Construct a meaning for the text based on these impressions. Your meaning should not be imposed upon the text without regard for its limitations; but neither should it be restricted to a literal statement or paraphrase of the text. Remember that you are *creating* a reading that can be supported by references to the text.

4. Reconstruct this creative process in a written explication that can also be delivered in an oral presentation. The explication as a whole should move from the beginning to the end of the text, with opportunity for you to refer to words or phrases that gain additional meaning as the text develops. Begin with your impression of the text's meaning. Proceed in such a way that you discuss persona, voice, and tone, demonstrating the way specific words and phrases support your reading. The written explication should be about 5 pages. The oral presentation, prepared in outline or note form, should take 15 minutes maximum, including time for discussion.

Resources and Models for Explication:

New Critical Print:

Coffman, S. K. "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry": Note on the Catalog Technique in Whitman's Poetry," *Modern Philology* 51 (May 1954): 225-32.

Fussell, Paul. "Whitman's Curious Warbel: Reminiscence and Reconciliation," in *The Presence of Walt Whitman*, ed. R. W. B. Lewis. New York: Columbia UP, 1962. 28-51.

Lovell, John. "Appreciating Whitman: 'Passage to India,'" *Modern Language Quarterly* 21 (June 1960): 131-41.

Rountree, Thomas I. "Whitman's Indirect Expression and Its Application to 'Song of Myself,'" *PMLA* 73 (December 1958): 549-55.

Sutton, Walter. "The Analysis of Free Verse Form, Illustrated by a Reading of Whitman." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 18 (December 1959): 241-54.

Electronic:

*Mickle Street Review*, an <http://micklestreet.rutgers.edu/>

Merande, Jesse. "'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry': An Online Critical Edition," *Mickle Street Review* 19/20. <http://micklestreet.rutgers.edu/CBF/closereading/closereading.html>

Poems for Explication

By Whitman, Walt (1819-1892).

1. "Eidolons" fr. *Inscriptions* [1876]
2. "To Thee Old Cause" [1871, 1881]
3. "Song of the Redwood-Tree" fr. *Calamus* [1874, 1881]
4. "Song of the Universal" fr. *Birds of Passage* [1874, 1881]
5. "The Dalliance of the Eagles" fr. *By the Roadside* [1880, 1881]
6. "Out from Behind this Mask" fr. *Autumn Rivulets* [1876, 1881]
7. "The Prairie States" fr. *Autumn Rivulets* [1880, 1881]
8. "Prayer of Columbus" fr. *Autumn Rivulets* [1874, 1881]
9. "Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood, fr. *"Whispers of Heavenly Death"* [1872, 1881]
10. "To a Locomotive in Winter" fr. *From Noon to Starry Night* [1876, 1881]
11. "As at Thy Portals Also Death" fr. *Songs of Parting* [1881]
12. "Mannahatta" fr. *First Annex: Sands at Seventy* [1888, 1888-90]
13. "With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea!" fr. *First Annex: Sands at Seventy* [1884, 1888-89]
14. "Yonnondio" fr. *First Annex: Sands at Seventy* [1887, 1888-89]
15. "Old Age's Lambent Peaks" fr. *First Annex: Sands at Seventy* [1888, 1889]
16. "To the Sun-set Breeze" fr. *Second Annex: Good-Bye My Fancy* [1890, 1891-92]
17. "Osceloa" fr. *Second Annex: Good-Bye My Fancy* [1890, 1891-92]
18. "Good-Bye my Fancy!" fr. *Second Annex: Good-Bye My Fancy* [1891, 1892-92]

### ***DIGITAL MUSEUM Due 10/14***

This project builds on the image gloss and involves historical and cultural research on an artifact or event that relates to Whitman's years in Camden. Your post must be tagged "digitalmuseum" to arrive at the proper place in Whitman network.

### ***BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY Due 10/28***

The bibliographic essay is a comprehensive review, in essay form, of the published criticism on a given text. This assignment will familiarize you with research sources and bibliographic methods.

Method:

1. Read and/or refresh your recollection of the assigned text.

2. Locate the most recent comprehensive bibliography of articles and books about your text or author. This bibliography might have been published as an article in a journal, or as a separate volume, or as an appendix to a recent critical biography of the author, as part of the proceedings of a conference on that author, or as part of a multi-author critical study of a period or genre. Ask a reference librarian about the advisability of searching databases (such as MLA) as a way to turn up this bibliography. Obtain a copy of the bibliography, through interlibrary loan if necessary.

3. Use this bibliography as your baseline. Do not include critical or biographical works published before this bibliography except for those few standard works that are always mentioned when your author is discussed, or the highly significant works that have taken critical discussion of the author or text in a new direction. Locate articles and books that have appeared since the baseline bibliography was published. (If the bibliography appeared in 1993 or 1994 and there is little new material to research, see me.) Use indexes of research, review articles at the end of journals, and databases to locate these recent publications. Obtain copies, or at least reviews, of as many of these items as you can.

4. Read, annotate, and summarize each of the items you locate. Aim not only to recapitulate each writer's argument, but comment upon it. As you read, look for some logical pattern or order according to which the items may be discussed. Identify trends in the scholarship--where it stands in relation to earlier work, where it seems to be heading. How has it prospered or suffered from new critical or theoretical approaches or from recent efforts to reconstruct the canon? What problems of philosophy, history, social meaning, or artistic value or technique are being addressed by commentators about the text? Provide your own opinion of the quality of recent work and opportunities for further research that have recently emerged because of new discoveries, new critical methods, or new historical information about your author.

5. Write the bibliographic essay (5-6 pp.), keeping in mind two purposes: to provide factual information such as would be found in a bibliographic citation, and to provide an interpretive guide to this scholarship. It is best to begin the essay with biographical information followed by criticism, ending with future trends or developments. Follow the essay with a list of all the recent research you found (MLA style), whether discussed in the essay or not. Also e-post the information and prepare it for oral presentation (7 min. maximum).

### **GROUP ANNOTATION Due 11/18**

This assignment will focus on text added to *Leaves of Grass* during the years that a university specializes in—in our case, the 1881 edition or 1891-92 “deathbed” edition representing the Camden years. You may work with the poem you explicated or with another poem or prose passage. Questions this assignment might address include: what happens when a text is altered? How does the order of placement affect a group of poems?

What is the composition history of the poem? How does the poem relate to its group? The annotation will reflect your close reading and historical or critical research, and it can serve as a foundation for your final project.

**FINAL PROJECT Due: Oral Presentations 12/2, 12/9. Critical Essay due 12/14:**

Your final project will be a critical work in the form of an essay accompanied by a video, cinempoem, on-line museum, mp3 interpretive reading, or some combination of the above that makes an original contribution to the understanding of the writing and life, career, and/or times of Walt Whitman, especially as they relate to Camden.

The critical essay combines analysis and argument to present a judgment or assessment of some aspect of a literary text. This skill, like that of explication, is useful in all aspects of graduate literary study, including essays and exams in seminars and the M.A. Comprehensive Examination.

The text for the critical essay may be the same as for the explication and annotated bibliography. You will not need to summarize research in this assignment, nor should you think of the essay as a "research paper." It should be an original, largely creative indulgence of your imaginative as well as critical sensibilities, informed by the critical theories studied this semester and by the recent research on the text with which you are now familiar. Some sources should be used and cited according to MLA style, but these should relate to the specific focus of the essay. You should concentrate on taking an interesting, fresh approach to the text, one that opens up some new dimension of the critical discussion. The essay should be 10-12 pages.

**Method:**

1. Reacquaint yourself with the literary text. What issues or topics stand out as provocative or intriguing? Which of these have not been adequately covered in the research you discovered?
2. Consider the research on this text and identify any gaps, deficiencies, or blind spots. Decide whether you can make a contribution in any of the areas already covered, or whether you can set out in a new direction. Be conscious of the critical approach or methodology you are taking with respect to the text and its contexts.
3. Prepare a draft of the essay; set it aside; have someone whose opinion you value read and comment on it; revise; revise again; check for stylistic accuracy and MLA form. And/or prepare a digital equivalent of a critical essay. Prepare notes or an outline for an oral presentation. Note that the presentations begin the week before the written essay is due; half of you will present then and half you will present when the essay is due.

## Appendix B. Participant Biographies

MATTHEW K. GOLD, NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, CUNY

Matthew K. Gold is Associate Professor of English at New York City College of Technology. At the CUNY Graduate Center, he serves as Advisor to the Provost for Master's Programs and Digital Initiatives and Acting Executive Officer of the M.A. Program in Liberal Studies (MALS), and he is a faculty member in both the MALS Program and the Doctoral Certificate Program in Interactive Technology and Pedagogy. He serves as Director of the GC Digital Scholarship Lab, Director of the CUNY Academic Commons, Co-Director of the CUNY Digital Humanities Initiative, and Director of the "Looking for Whitman" project. He is editor of *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (Minnesota, 2012) and has published work in *The Journal of Modern Literature*, *Kairos*, and *On the Horizon*, as well as in the edited collections *From A to <A>: Keywords of Markup* (Minnesota, 2010), *Learning Through Digital Media: Experiments in Technology and Pedagogy* (iDC, 2010), and the forthcoming collections *Teaching Digital Humanities* (Open Book Publishers, 2012) and *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media and Textuality* (Johns Hopkins, 2012). His digital humanities projects, including "Looking for Whitman" and "The Commons In A Box," have been supported by grants from the NEH Office of Digital Humanities, the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and the Ford Foundation. He was recently elected to the Executive Council of the Association for Computers and the Humanities.

CAROL SINGLEY, RUTGERS-CAMDEN

Carol J. Singley (Ph.D. Brown University, M.A., B.A. Pennsylvania State University) is an Associate Professor of English and a Fellow at the Center for Children and Childhood Studies at Rutgers-Camden. She directs the Graduate Program in English and the Undergraduate Liberal Studies Program. She co-directs the American Studies Program, which includes an option for interdisciplinary studies of Walt Whitman. She serves on the board of the Walt Whitman Association, which helps to support historic preservation, education, and tourism at Whitman's home in Camden. She co-organized two scholarly conferences on Whitman and American culture. She is the recipient of grants and fellowships from the New Jersey Council on the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, the American Antiquarian Association, and the Center for Critical Analysis of Contemporary Culture. A scholar of Edith Wharton, Carol Singley is author of a book about religion in Wharton's fiction, *Edith Wharton: Matters of Mind and Spirit* (Cambridge University Press, 1995) and editor of three volumes on Wharton: A New Riverside Edition of *The Age of Innocence* (2001), the *Oxford Historical Guide to Edith Wharton* (Oxford University Press, 2003) and *The House of Mirth Casebook* (Oxford University Press, 2003). She is past president of the Edith Wharton Society. She is co-editor of *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader* (Rutgers University Press, 2003) as well as co-editor of two anthologies on feminist theory and American Calvinism. She has published numerous articles on nineteenth- and twentieth-century American writers, feminist theory, composition, and childhood studies. She is currently finishing a book on the centrality of adoption in the American literary experience entitled: *Building a Nation, Building a Family*:



*American Adoption, Literature and Culture.*

TYLER HOFFMAN, RUTGERS-CAMDEN

Tyler Hoffman is author of *Robert Frost and the Politics of Poetry* (New England, 2001). He has written articles on Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Vachel Lindsay, Elizabeth Bishop, Gary Snyder, Thom Gunn, and contemporary slam poetry. His book in progress takes up the subject of American public poetry and the performance of culture. Tyler is Editor of *The Mickle Street Review* (a peer-reviewed journal of Whitman Studies), Associate Editor of *The Robert Frost Review*, and member of the Executive Committee of the Robert Frost Society.

MARA SCANLON, UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

Mara Scanlon, an Associate Professor of English at UMW, received a Ph.D. (1998) in 20th-century literature and an M.A. (1992) in English language and literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, after earning a B.A. (1991) in English from the University of Virginia. Her articles on poetry and poetics have been published in *College Literature*; *LIT: Literature, Interpretation, Theory*; *Bucknell Review*; *World Literature Today*; *The Virginia Review of Asian Studies*, and *Asian American Novelists*.

BRADY EARNHART, UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

After receiving an MFA in Poetry from the University of Iowa, Brady received a PhD in English Literature from the University of Virginia. He has published several articles on Whitman's work in journals that include *The Mickle Street Review* and *The Walt Whitman Quarterly*. He is also well-known as a singer-songwriter whose song *Whitman in 1863* is an adaptation of several letters Whitman wrote while working as a nurse during the Civil War. He currently teaches Creative Writing, Composition, and American Literature at the University of Mary Washington.

JAMES GROOM, UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

James Groom is an instructional technologist whose work at UMW has been covered by *The New York Times*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Educause Quarterly*, among others. A key figure in the growing movement towards open education who is widely credited with coining the term *edupunk*, Jim has presented extensively at conferences sponsored by Educause, the New Media Consortium, The Association of Collegiate Computing Services of Virginia, University of Mary Washington, and CUNY.

KAREN KARBIENER, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

A well-known Whitman scholar who is preparing a book-length treatment of Whitman's New York, Karen Karbiener has edited several Whitman texts, including *Leaves of Grass: First and Death-bed Editions and Additional Poems* (Barnes and Noble) and *Encyclopedia of 20th-Century British Writers* (DWJ Books). Her articles on Whitman have appeared in *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, *Comparative Romanticisms*, and *The Walt Whitman Encyclopedia*. Karen curated a 2005 exhibit on Whitman at the South Street Seaport Museum in New York and was a narrator and editorial consultant for *Walt Whitman, Boisterous Voice of America* (PBS 2008).