

# Integrating Digital Humanities Projects with Undergraduate Courses in Area Studies: 2 Case Studies

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## 1. Empowering Students and Transforming Instruction

Integrating digital humanities projects into undergraduate instruction in area studies classes can further both instructors' and students' engagement with the material, resulting in final projects that are useful to both researchers and students. These projects increase the amount of area studies-related scholarship available online, can be shared with professors' colleagues and added to their portfolios, and serve to expose students to higher level writing requirements while increasing their knowledge of trends and tools in digital scholarship. This poster presents two case studies of undergraduate courses in the Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies at UT Austin.

## 2. Why Digital?

These projects were designed to take full advantage of Scalar and Omeka. Students, faculty, and the librarian used the possibilities of digital projects to create something new and inviting while contributing to public scholarship. Examples of these digital features include:

- Interactive network maps, created in Kumu, that map the global literary avant-garde
- Exhibits featuring embedded images and videos related to Yugoslav punk history
- Custom CSS and design elements to personalize research
- Innovative ways of exploring the work, such as non-linear reading methods

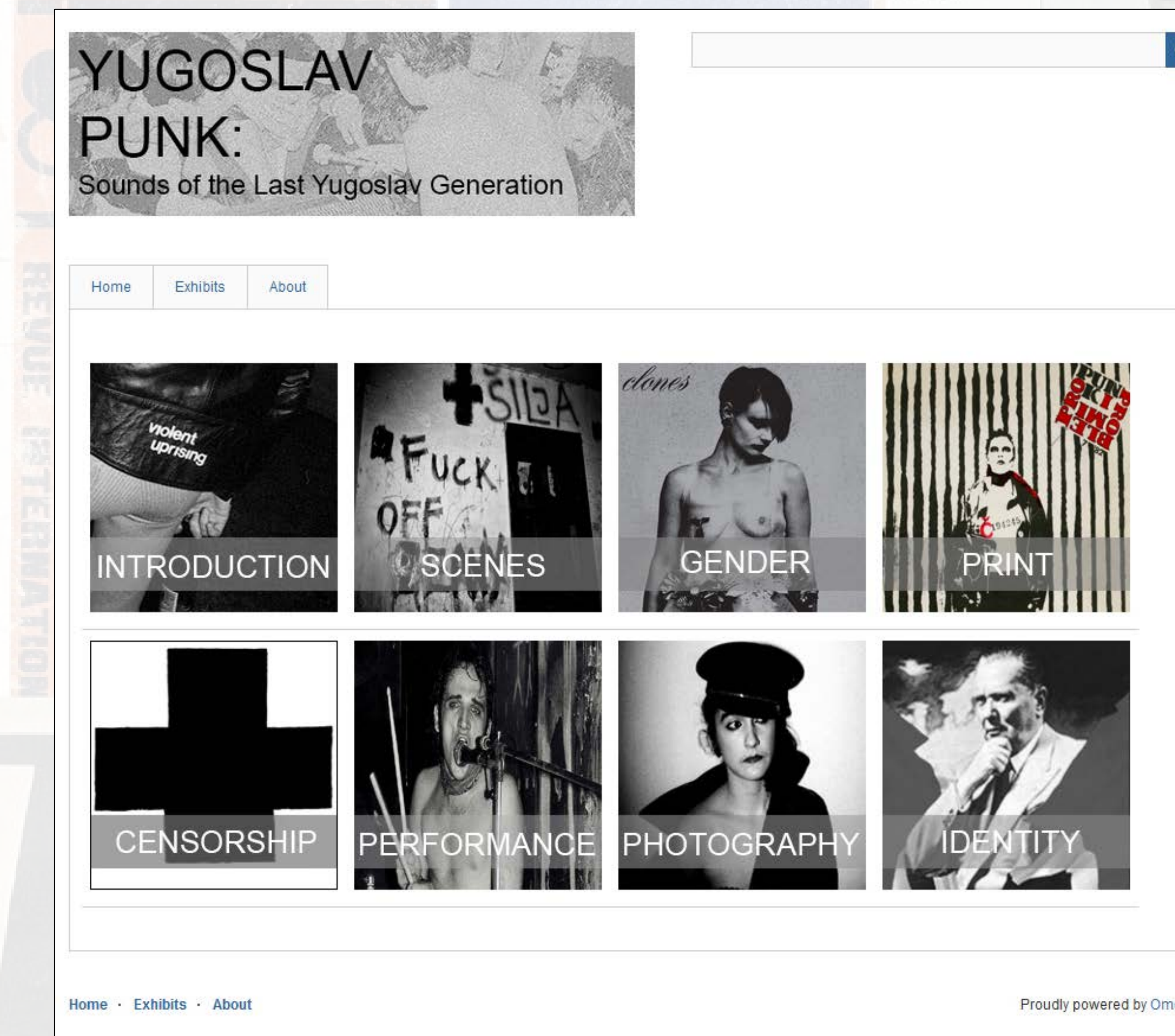
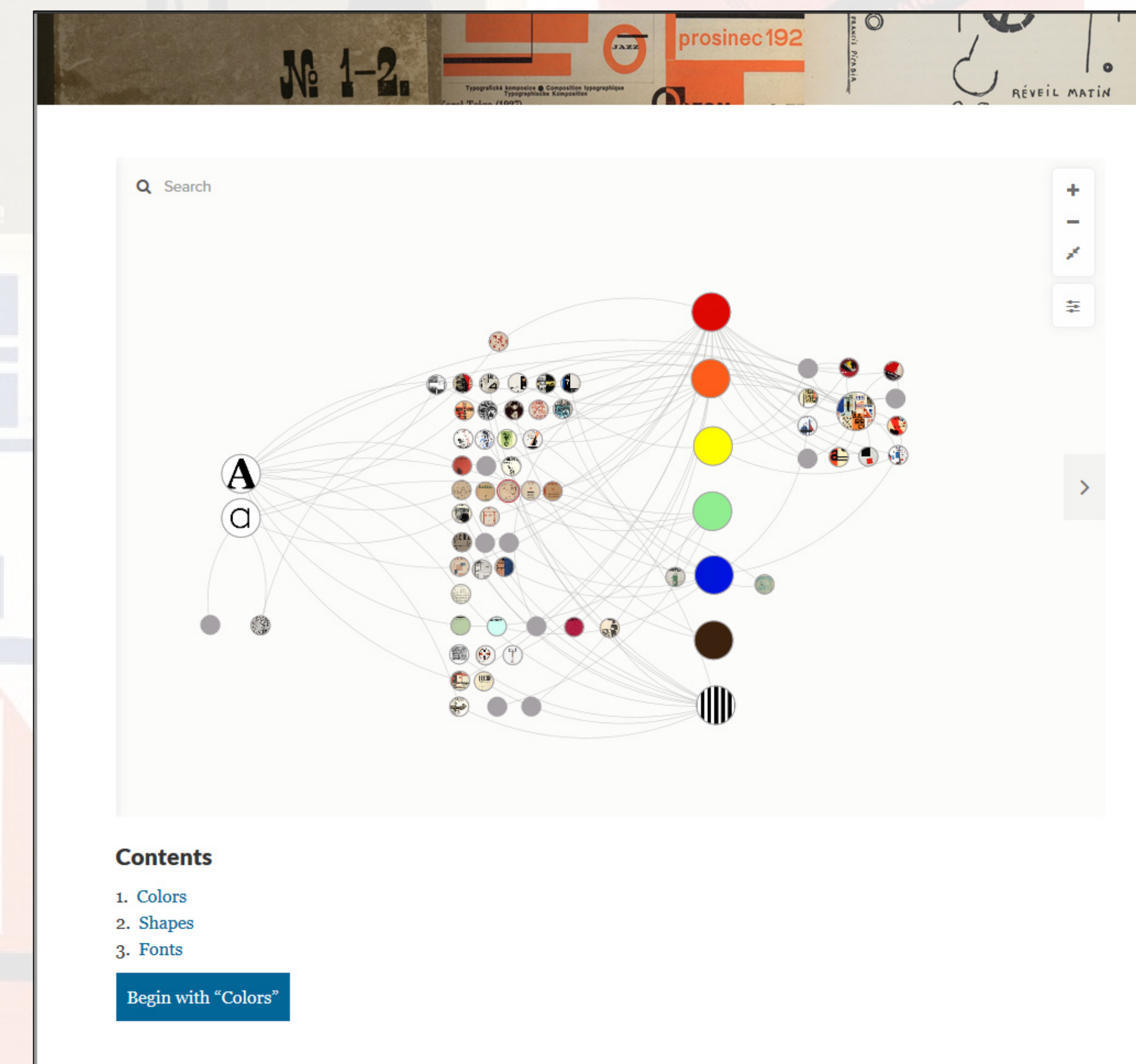
## 3. Copyright and Student Work

### Copyright?

We took care to avoid copyright issues with these projects. We used images in the public domain or already hosted elsewhere (e.g., YouTube). The use of this media in an educational setting, and the fact that potentially copyrighted material is hosted on another site, helps mitigate copyright concerns.

### Student Work

Obtaining student permission before making their work available online is paramount. The faculty members involved in these projects worked to follow their department's guidelines when using student work.



## 4. Pros and Cons of Embedded Digital Projects

Integrating digital projects into classroom instruction can be immensely beneficial to librarians, faculty, and students, but there are potential drawbacks to consider. Benefits of the approach in the two examples highlighted here included:

- Increased student engagement
- Successfully teaching new skills related to digital literacy and digital scholarship
- Creating digital products that contribute to public scholarship
- Aiding students' professional development

Potential cons are:

- Digital project work can be very time intensive for librarians and instructors
- Imbalances in students' technical ability might limit student involvement (e.g., in group work)
- Digital work is not always recognized as being as valid as traditional scholarship

## 5. Embedded Librarianship, Results and Steps Forward

These projects were successful in large part due to the embedded librarianship approach taken in organizing the structure of the project-related assignments, in planning instruction and support for students, and in working to finalize the project after students had completed their work. The librarian led workshop-like sessions in classes, returned to the class for multiple support visits, actively worked with and communicated with professors, and was available for help with the projects throughout the semester. The response from students and faculty was overwhelmingly positive, and the professors who taught the courses plan to continue similar digital work in the future. The librarian will be working with one of these professors on a project in the coming semesters, and through word-of-mouth generated within the department has been contacted for help with similar projects by other professors.

