



The Praxis Program

at the University of Virginia Scholars' Lab

A year-long, hands-on training program for graduate students in digital humanities methodologies.

The Praxis Program is a 2011-13 pilot project of the Scholars' Lab at the University of Virginia Library in which six graduate students of varied disciplines spend a year in a collaborative, hands-on, digital humanities apprenticeship. The Program realigns graduate methodological training with the demands of the humanities in the digital age, and better equips knowledge workers for emerging faculty positions and alternative academic careers at a moment in which new questions can be asked and new systems built.

Prism: Our Practicum Project



The 2011–2012 cohort developed Prism, a Web-based tool for "crowdsourcing interpretation," done by color-coding passages from literary and historical documents. Prism users share a color palette with which they can highlight a common set of documents, offering their own interpretations according to constrained, shared vocabularies. Its expressive power becomes evident at scale, when individual markings of many readers are compiled, analyzed, and visualized, generating spectra of similarity and difference. Prism produce aesthetic provocations—visualizations which provoke further discussion.

prism.scholarslab.org

Realigning Graduate Training



Recognizing that up-to-date methodological training is often absent or catch-as-catch-can for humanities graduate students, we are using these two pilot years of the Praxis Program to experiment with an action-oriented curriculum live and in public. Topics for discussion were added to the program website, and the cohort regularly reflected on group and individual progress throughout the year.

Selected Topics

Praxis students explored: Project Charter; Programming; Requirements gathering; Design; HTML and CSS; Collaboration and Communication; Project Management; Budgeting; Outreach and Support

praxis.scholarslab.org

Future of Praxis

We welcome a second cohort of six Praxis fellows in 2012-2013 and expect to extend the functionality of Prism. Also under way, with support from UVa's Scholarly Communication Institute, is the creation of an international Praxis Network. This effort will connect digital apprenticeship programs at other institutions willing to share materials and articulate possible institutional models for training the next generation of humanities scholars.