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Digital Exhibit Of Human Monstrosity

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Final Project: Digital Exhibit of Human Monstrosity

General Description:

The final project for SPAN/LITRS 058 is a digital exhibit of human monstrosity. Each student will identify a topic or theme related to human monstrosity in any form and choose several examples to present (the exact number will vary but variety within the unifying topic or theme is fundamental in order to avoid repetition and to give a representative sample of the possibilities that exist).

This project will be presented using an online tool (Scalar) that enables the creation of multimedia exhibits. Students will search for and collect text, images, video and sound recordings of their topic/theme and examples. Students should think of themselves as curators of the exhibit, considering what to present where and in what context, how much information to provide for each example and for the overall exhibit, how to emphasize variety while also establishing cohesion among the various items on display, etc.

Curating an exhibit entails the following steps:

- **Conceptualizing** (exploring possibilities)
- **Choosing** (a topic or theme)
- **Researching** (possible examples to include in the exhibit and background information on each and on the topic/theme)
- **Selecting** (materials, items, examples for display)
- **Writing** (the information - descriptive, explanatory, contextual, interpretive - you want to share with your audience regarding particular items on display, their relationship to each other or the overall topic/theme, etc.)
- **Designing** (the visual arrangement of your exhibit, the way you want your audience to experience it)

Topics and Themes

The options for topics or themes are nearly limitless: anything you think relates in some way to human monstrosity. You might want to create an exhibit presenting examples of a certain kind of human monster (vampires, war criminals, psychopaths, etc.); you might choose to look at a particular medium through which human monstrosity has been explored (film, television, song, text, photography, etc.); you might look at the relationship between genre and human monstrosity (i.e., short science fiction stories or horror films); another option would be to explore the use of terms such as monster or monstrous in a given context (such as sports, or politics), or to examine the historical evolution of those concepts with a particular sociocultural context or across time and space. You should choose a topic that you are interested in and that you feel you have something to say about. When you think you have a good topic or theme, perform some preliminary research to see if it looks like something robust enough to build an exhibit around.

Content

Think carefully about what sort of content you want to include in your exhibit. Scalar permits the use of a variety of forms of media, so you should consider what works best for your particular examples and overall topic. In terms of the written component, while some museum or gallery exhibits just have brief labels identifying author, title, date and materials, your text should be more substantive. You should identify, describe, contextualize and interpret your examples, establishing both links between them (cohesion) and links to the overall theme (coherence). For each item included in your exhibit, you should consider its details and explore its significance (individually, with regard to its context, and with regard to your exhibit). The exact extent of the material and information included will depend on the particular nature of each individual example and overall exhibit.

If you use images, text or recording belonging to others or for which others have the rights, please be sure to provide suitable attribution whenever possible.

Designing your Exhibit

You should think carefully about how you want your audience to experience your exhibit, both in terms of each individual item or example and in terms of your audience's movement through the exhibit as a whole. Scalar provides different options (paths, tags, etc.) for designing and arranging your exhibit. In terms of the individual examples, consider what diverse forms of media you want to incorporate; this will be determined by both your creativity and the internal logic or requirements of the example itself.

Presenting your Exhibit

Our course will have a publicly accessible website which will have a link to each individual exhibit. Please keep this mind when you are creating, populating and designing your exhibit.

Evaluation

Your digital exhibit will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Clarity and pertinence of overall topic or theme
- Conceptual creativity (overall idea and variety of examples; quality is more significant than quantity here, though a critical mass of examples will be important)
- Design creativity (creative and apposite use of Scalar's capacities; a balance of quality and quantity)
- Quality of research (breadth and depth of information provided)
- Creativity and quality of written content including the following characteristics:
 - Effective and logical communication that tells a full narrative of your example and situates it appropriately in its broader context, as well as in relation to the overall topic
 - Engagement with critical and theoretical perspectives, along with material from primary sources
 - Writing that is not merely an accompaniment to the other components of the exhibit, but is itself a central aspect of the project
 - Clarity and focus of the narrative
 - Organization of ideas
 - Thought-provoking and insightful commentary

SPAN/LITRS 058. Human Monsters

Creating your digital exhibit

Useful links:

[Scalar login](#)

[Getting Started with Scalar](#)

[Scalar Quickstarts](#) (brief instructions for specific actions you can take in Scalar)

[Scalar User Guide](#) (complete instructions for using Scalar)

A. Setting up your exhibit

Step 1: Register for an account on Scalar (<http://scalar.usc.edu/>)

Registration key: XXXXXXXXXX

Step 2: Create your book

[Scalar projects are called books; when you create your book, you can change the genre to article or project, but there is no practical difference between these options]

1. From your account, create a new book.
2. Give your book a title.
3. Roll over the title of your book in your list of books (on the right side of the screen) and select "Dashboard" when it appears.
 - You should be taken to the new version of the Dashboard, with tabs for Properties, Editorial, Styling, Content, Users, and Utilities, and you should see in the upper right an option for "Revert Dashboard" (you do not need to select this, it just shows that you are using the newest version of the Scalar Dashboard).
 - If you instead see a Dashboard with tabs for My Account, Book Properties, Book Users, etc., please select the "try it out" link in the notice about the upgraded Dashboard which should appear at the top of your window.

Step 3: Create pages

1. Navigate to your book (from the Dashboard, select "Return to book").
2. Your project (book) automatically has one page. You can edit this page (see below) like any other page. You will also be able to rearrange pages later on.
3. Select "+" (top right) to create a new page.
4. Give your new page a title.
5. Select "Layout" and choose from the options available (I would suggest limiting yourself to the options listed under "General" and "Interactive").
6. Select "Save" to save the page.
7. You should create a page for every item (or sub-group of items; you can be creative with how you present the items you include in your exhibit).
8. When you have finished creating all your pages (you can always add more later), return to the "Dashboard" by selecting the wrench in the top right.

Step 4: Create your Table of Contents

1. Navigate to "Properties".
2. Under "Table of Contents", select "Add item".
3. Select "Pages" and select all the pages you want to add to your table of contents.
4. Select "Add selected".
5. You can manually change the order of the pages in your table of contents (drag & drop).
6. Select "Save".

B. Editing your exhibit

You now have the basic structure of your project in place. You can now proceed to add content to your pages and to establish relationships between them.

Editing page content

1. On the page you want to edit, select the pencil symbol (top right).
2. Give your page a title and description (optional; the description will be used as a caption for the media).
3. Use the text editor function to add text, html code, media links and files, etc. You can also link directly to other pages in your book and insert widgets (more on this below).

Adding content (media)

In order to add media links or files, you must first import media.

1. On the page on which you want to import, roll over the import button (top right) and select the type of media you want to import. You can import from specific archives, using a URL or using a local media file.
2. You can annotate your media if you would like, and you can establish relationships between particular media and other parts of your exhibit (more on relationships below).

Using widgets

1. Scalar's widgets allow you to insert specific types of content such as timelines, maps, etc. into pages in your book.
2. In the text editor, select the widget option (it looks like a puzzle piece).

Creating relationships between pages, media, etc.

1. In addition to creating hyperlinks to other pages in your book, there are two basic types of relationships you can establish between pages and specific content (text and media): **paths** and **tags**.
2. **Paths** create routes by which the content of your exhibit can be navigated. You already have made one path: the table of contents. You can also make other paths, other routes or threads which the viewer of your exhibit can follow through the content you have gathered and arranged. A path starts on a particular page (any page) and moves along a specified route through other pages (some or all of them; this is one way, for example, to establish sub-groups within your exhibit).
 - To create a path, select the edit function on the page you want the path to start on and, below the text editor, select "Relationships" and "Paths".
 - Then select the other pages you wish to include in the path
 - If you wish to create a sub-group and establish a path through that sub-group, I recommend making a separate page that describes the sub-group and serves as the point of departure for the path.

2. **Tags** establish a relationship between different parts of your project that follow no particular order. It is a means of grouping content according to shared characteristics.

- To create a tag, select the edit function on a page you want the tag to identify and, below the text editor, select "Relationships" and "Tags".
- I recommend creating a new page for each tag on which you describe the characteristic; you can then link the other pages with that characteristic using the tag.

You now have the basic structure of your exhibit ready to go. You should continue to add content and explore Scalar's capabilities as you gather your material and begin to curate your exhibit.