

Brief description of the study group on

Digital Literary Studies

Instructors: Prof. Frank Fischer (HSE Moscow) & Prof. Peer Trilcke (UP Potsdam)

One person can read 3,000 books in their lifetime, give or take, if they really set their mind to it. That is not much, given that in Germany alone more than 100,000 books are published every year. If we want to research larger structures, the literary output of epochs or centuries, we need new, bespoke tools.

In the Digital Literary Studies (or, Digital Philology), computational approaches are applied to literary texts or collections of texts (corpora). By doing so, researchers do not seek to replace the more traditional literary studies, but try to address their shortcomings and complement them. By the help of computers, we are simply able to scale up research questions.

Under the umbrella terms "Distant Reading", "Scalable Reading" and "Macroanalysis", the Digital Literary Studies have developed a vivid practice in the past decade. In this group, we will learn about the landscape of digitised literary texts, the precondition for any digital approach. We will then look at methods like stylometry, topic modeling and network analysis to learn more about style and authorship attribution, genre and topics, and about social networks extracted from fictional texts.