



## EXECUTIVE BRIEF: MA IN HISTORICAL & CULTURAL VISUALIZATION

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### INTELLECTUAL SCOPE

The Wired! Group at Duke brings digital visualization to the fields of Art, Architectural, and Urban History through a number of research and teaching initiatives. To prepare our students for 21<sup>st</sup>-century humanistic research, Wired! integrates visualization technologies into the regular curriculum, which represents structural and systemic change in the way knowledge is interrogated. Wired! projects fuse questions in the Humanities (as traditionally construed) with social, economic, and political issues and engage the viewer in novel ways that revolutionize the role of learning in relation to the public. As is the case with the other labs in Bay 11-10, Smith Warehouse, the Wired team is committed to making scholarship available, interactive, and engaging to a broad audience.

The faculty-based Wired! Lab research projects are collaborative, vertically integrated research communities. Our aim is to help students envision how to think critically, how to problem solve, how to innovate, and how to develop a critical imagination, not only as a solitary researcher but also more importantly as a member of a larger team. As an active participant in the collaborative research labs, students will gain a clearer idea of how to develop and pursue ideas and projects of their own: undergraduates, for example, will be better able to visualize how they might go about developing an independent thesis project for graduation with distinction; graduate students will be better able to imagine and to plan for the “what next” after the MA.

### OUTLINE OF THE MA IN HISTORICAL & CULTURAL VISUALIZATION

The MA requires a total of 30 credit hours of graduate level coursework, divided over three semesters and allowing the students to conduct intensive research and project development during Summer I & II, which in the traditional 4+1 would not be possible. Required courses include *Visualization Core* and *Pro-seminar 1 and 2*; and a core methodology course. Up to 6 graded credits (2 courses) can be advanced undergraduate course credits of Level 200-499. The final thesis product will demonstrate mastery of context appropriate historical visualization techniques, supplemented by a rigorous methods section and explanation of the project’s significance to the relevant historical field. Students are expected to produce a project suitable for dissemination in a public, scholarly, museum, or other educational context, as would be appropriate for the individual student’s anticipated career path.

When applying to the MA program, the applicant will identify a historical period and a research project (see full list in Appendix 1 of MA proposal) in which they would like to participate. An aspect of this larger research project will form the basis for their MA thesis, and will inform the courses they take to fulfill their MA requirements.

Although there are numerous programs in the Digital Humanities, few universities offer what we propose: a program to train the next generation of scholars in the humanities with hands-on experience in digital technologies integrated with advanced research in historical material culture. Excavations, city museums, and tourist offices are increasingly producing digital reconstructions, but most scholars themselves are not yet being trained to make and critically use three-dimensional digital technologies. At Duke we are deeply committed to the idea that new media permit us to *think differently* about historical and cultural materials; it is the integration of this new conceptual practice with Historical and Cultural Visualization that we seek to promote in this MA degree and its associated courses.

#### WIRED! RESEARCH PROJECTS

Some of the common themes that unite our various projects are the visualization of process, the representation of change over time, and object biographies. We are interesting in telling stories about places and things. We also view digital visualization as a way of actually *doing* research, and not simply as a means of illustrating research results. Two examples:

**Visualizing Venice Mobile App and Virtual World Environments.** Alongside the Digital Durham project, Szabo is leading the development of a mobile app and virtual world system focused on sharing original research about Venice, its past and present, with a wider public, with a strong orientation to place as a key organizing feature of the system. This project currently exists in an alpha form as an iPad app developed in conjunction with the FHI GreaterThanGames Lab and the Wired! Lab. The project takes original research on San Giovanni e Paolo and displays information about the facade, architectural history, placement of monuments, traffic within the space, and architectural stages of a particular location as proof of concept of a larger site-based approach to digital city exploration.

**Reconstructing Sculptors' Workshops in Ancient Athens.** The nearly 3,000 sculpted funerary monuments preserved from Athens provide a rich source of raw material that, while well published, have yet to be analyzed using digital tools. Through detailed digital photographic recording of the tool marks left behind by sculptors in the process of carving these marble reliefs, one should be able to analyze and reconstruct the process of carving. A hypothesis is that sculptors and by extension workshops would have approached the carving of marble in a similar, consistent manner. By identifying patterns of tool marks and ways of working, we may be able to group reliefs together to begin to reconstruct workshop outputs. A related aspect of this component will be a study of the 19th century marble sculptors, mostly from the island of Tinos, who made many of the monuments in the First Cemetery, as well as a survey of the contemporary sculptors' workshops that are now located near the entrance to the First Cemetery. Tinos is still a major center of marble quarrying and stone carving, and is home to one of the largest colonies of marble sculptors in Greece.