

Project Year

2010

Project Title

Writing Seminars Recording Digitization Project

Project Team

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Audience

Students in Writing Seminars courses, especially those in the Introduction to Fiction and Poetry classes (approximately 1,000 students per year) and in undergraduate and graduate poetry courses

Pedagogical Issue

Students in the Introduction to Fiction and Poetry classes not only read and critique poetry, but write it. The curriculum covers poems in a wide range of subject matter and styles, allowing students to learn some of the many ways in which to transform their ideas into poems. Instructors, writers themselves, teach students to read texts as a series of choices the writer has made. Hearing poets read their work provides another valuable learning resource to the understanding of the writer's craft. However, finding appropriate material is not easy as such recordings are limited in number and often difficult to obtain.

Solution

Dave Smith, Chair of the Writing Seminars, has hundreds of audio cassette tapes recorded over the past forty years of poets reading and discussing their work, and being interviewed. This digitization project will bring poetry and poets' discussions of craft off the page and into the ears of undergraduate students. Digitizing the tapes will allow greater accessibility and more efficient delivery of the content.

Technologies Used

Digital audio, Excel, Metadata Schema Development

Project Abstract

This digitization project will address the pedagogical issue of bringing poetry and poets' discussions of craft off the page and into the ears of undergraduate students. The primary course this will benefit is Introduction to Fiction and Poetry (IFP), a two-semester course taken yearly by approximately 1,000 undergraduates. It will also serve undergraduates in advanced courses the Writing Seminars Department offers.

An issue instructors face is making poetry, often seen as inaccessible by students who have studied very little, if any, poetry, accessible. Students often, particularly at the beginning of the semester, see poems in the hefty Norton Anthology of Poetry as finished and sculpted products, as accessible to critique as the Parthenon. Listening to poets they study read, discuss, and joke about their poems will help

students place themselves in the writing process. While useful sites such as poets.org and poetryarchive.org have some recordings by poets IFP covers, there are gaps.

Dave Smith, Chair of the Writing Seminars, has hundreds of audio cassette tapes recorded over the past forty years of poets reading and discussing their work, and being interviewed. Fast forwarding and rewinding through these tapes is time-consuming. Only five minutes spent searching through a tape equates to ten percent of class time lost in a Monday-Wednesday-Friday class, the days on which over half of IFP sections are taught.

This project proposes to convert these recordings from cassette tape, to CD, and finally to MP3. As many courses at Hopkins already offer MP3 recordings of lectures, this would be an extension of a delivery method Hopkins' iPod-wielding undergraduates would already be familiar with. This project would be completed by the end of the summer of 2010.