

ANNOTATION STUDIO

User's Guide

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1.

Annotation Studio and How you can use it to improve the classroom experience

Annotation Studio is an easy-to-use web application that allows readers to write notes in the margins of digital texts. Readers have been writing marginalia in texts for centuries, as a way of engaging with an author, an approach to learning and remembering, and a process of note-taking for their writing. But the large-scale migration of texts from print to digital forms in the past two decades has made annotation difficult, if not impossible, for many readers.

Annotation Studio is a suite of tools for collaborative web-based annotation, currently under development by MIT's HyperStudio. Annotation Studio actively engages students in interpreting primary sources such as literary texts and other humanities documents. Currently supporting the multimedia annotation of texts, Annotation Studio will ultimately allow students to annotate video, image, and audio sources.

In our use of annotation in the classroom, we have found that it stimulates in-depth reading, strengthens student comprehension and memory, enables many new reading options, supports student discussion groups, and provides a highly useful note-taking method that supports writing. With Annotation Studio, students can develop traditional humanistic skills such as close reading and textual analysis, while advancing their understanding of texts by comparing original documents with their sources, adaptations, and variations in different media formats. Annotation Studio promotes active reading, in which students will discover, annotate, compare, sample, illustrate, and represent - activities that John Unsworth has dubbed "scholarly primitives."

Annotation Studio has also proved to be "intuitive" – that is, useful with modest instructor and student learning. It may be added to an existing syllabus or curriculum with only minor changes. Students typically start working with it as a note-taking system almost immediately, and it may be integrated into your teaching with a modest amount of alteration in your syllabus and teaching materials.

To have a look at the Annotation Studio website, go to:

<http://www.annotationstudio.org/>. If you are interested in using Annotation Studio, download our [Levels of Involvement document](#), which explains some of your options.

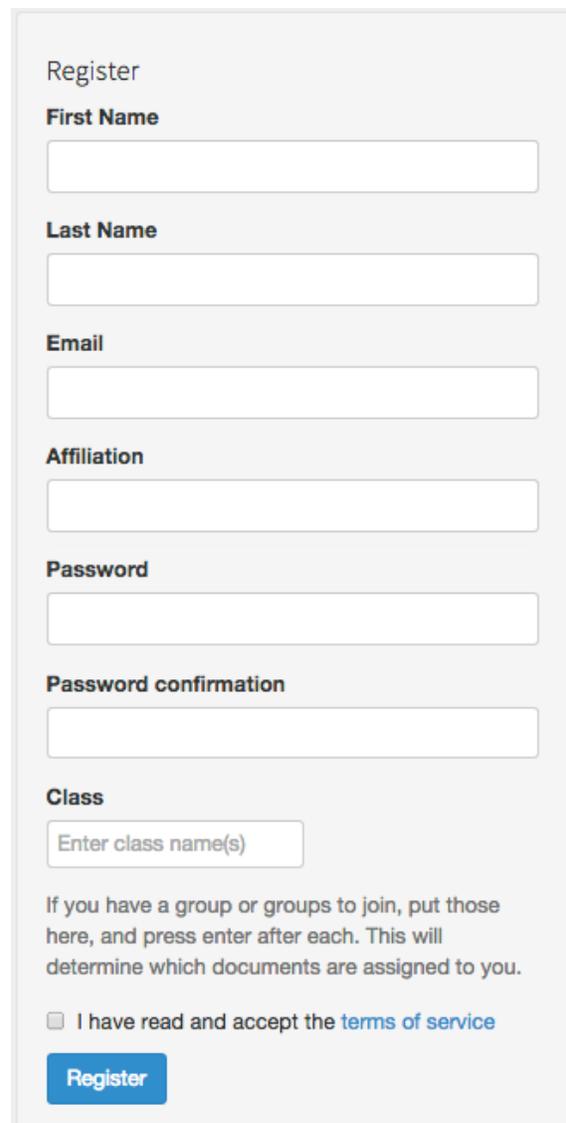
Annotation Studio, unlike many annotation systems, is free to the public and is built collaboratively by humanities educators for other humanities educators. It is supported by Digital Humanities Start-up and Implementation Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Annotation Studio is currently being used in several classes in composition, literature, media studies, and foreign language classes at MIT, as well as classes at a number of universities, community colleges, and high schools. Annotation Studio is currently freely available to educators, its code is open source code and available on [GitHub](#). Annotation Studio itself is based on the excellent open source [Annotator](#) from the [Open Knowledge Foundation](#).

2. Description and terminology

Annotation Studio activities take place in five main user interfaces or screens: (1) a registration interface for registering and signing in, (2) a dashboard (i.e. file system) for keeping track of available documents and annotations, (3) a user profile interface for managing group membership, changing passwords, and providing user information, (4) an annotating interface (Viewscreen) in which a document is read and annotated, and (5) a document creation form for adding new documents to the system.

2.1 The registration interface

The registration interface prompts you to enter your name, password, and working group (if assigned) and, when you sign in, takes you to the Dashboard, where available texts are listed. If you would like to try out Annotation Studio, you can register at: <http://app.annotationstudio.org/> and use the public documents that are available there, to get an idea of what's possible.



The screenshot shows a registration form with the following fields and elements:

- Register** (Section Header)
- First Name** (Text input field)
- Last Name** (Text input field)
- Email** (Text input field)
- Affiliation** (Text input field)
- Password** (Text input field)
- Password confirmation** (Text input field)
- Class** (Text input field with placeholder text "Enter class name(s)")
- Instructional text: "If you have a group or groups to join, put those here, and press enter after each. This will determine which documents are assigned to you."
- Checkbox: I have read and accept the [terms of service](#)
- Register** (Blue button)

2.2 The Dashboard

Each user has a dashboard for managing documents and group activities. At the Dashboard, you may select a document that you wish to read and annotate, and the document will appear in a new window, the Document Viewscreen. Note that the Dashboard has three lists for Documents, Annotations, and People. Each of these lists has multiple tabs.

The screenshot shows the Annotation Studio Dashboard. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Annotation Studio' on the left and 'My Profile', 'Help', and 'Logout' on the right. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is divided into three sections: Documents, Annotations, and People.

Documents Section: This section has two tabs: 'Assigned' (62) and 'Created' (21). The 'Assigned' tab is active, showing a list of documents with their titles and dates. The list includes: 'The Bucket and the Rope' (09/25/2014), 'Indiana Jones and the University' (09/23/2014), 'The Bucket and the Rope' (09/22/2014), 'Video Test' (09/16/2014), 'Sappho's Hymn to Aphrodite - Annotation Plan' (09/10/2014), 'But What If College Were Free?' (09/08/2014), 'The Perils and Promises of Praise' (09/07/2014), 'Annals 2-3, the death of Germanicus' (08/26/2014), 'Earliest Film Clips' (08/26/2014), and 'The Artist Bronzino (Images)' (08/26/2014). At the bottom of this section are links for 'Go to document list' and 'New document'.

Annotations Section: This section has three tabs: 'Mine', 'Groups', and 'Classes'. The 'Mine' tab is active, showing a list of annotations. The list includes: 'I don't think it's cabin fever...', 'this is what i'm writing', 'John Brown', 'Slowly', 'That's the question implicitly asked by this socia...', 'The world', 'Fear', 'Cabin fever?', 'Why almanac version?', and 'Some comment'. At the bottom of this section is a link for 'Go to annotation list'.

People Section: This section has two tabs: 'Groups' (0) and 'Classes' (17). The 'Classes' tab is active, showing a list of classes. The list includes: 'EGL204s14', '393A', 'GDMS', 'ENG 230 (4)', 'CCR2SP14', '154 AMerican Lit', 'usability', '21F.416', '21W.747.02', 'RNSTest', 'isbell', 'english', 'public', 'tacitus', 'MW 0410', and 'ENGL 1203-1'.

Under Documents, you will find two tabs: Assigned, which alphanumerically lists the documents that you have been assigned as part of a Class or Group, and Created, which lists documents that you have uploaded to Annotation Studio. In the Dashboard above there are 62 assigned documents and 21 documents created by the user.

Under Annotations, you will find three tabs: Mine, Groups, and Classes. Each tab presents the user with a snapshot of the annotations in each category.

Under People, you will find two tabs indicating which Classes and Groups you are a member of. The current user in this dashboard is a member of 17 Classes and 0 Groups.

2.3 Profile interface

The Profile Interface allows you to manage your Annotation Studio account. You may select or change membership in Classes and Groups, and change your password. To add a new Class or a Group, you must have the group's designation (e.g. 21L.448J). Please note you must enter your current password to confirm your changes.

Annotation Studio My Profile Help Logout

Dashboard / Editing: Oreo Gregory ⚙️

Edit Profile

First Name

Last Name

Classes

EGL204e14 x 393A x GDMS x ENG 230 (4) x CCR2SP14 x 154 American Lit x usability x 21F.416 x 21W.747.02 x RNSTeet x label x english x public x taotus x
MW 0410 x ENGL 1203-1 x English 498 x Enter Classes

Enter the names of any classes you're in (or want to join), and press ENTER after each.

Groups

Enter the names of any groups you're in (or want to join), and press ENTER after each

Email

Your email is your username, and cannot be changed.

Affiliation

Current password

(we need your current password to confirm your changes)

3.

How to work with Annotation Studio

After registering and/or signing in, you will be taken to the Dashboard, which will display a snapshot of the documents available to the user. You may select, read, and annotate these documents. The following steps provide an overview of the main stages of any annotation.

3.1 Select a document

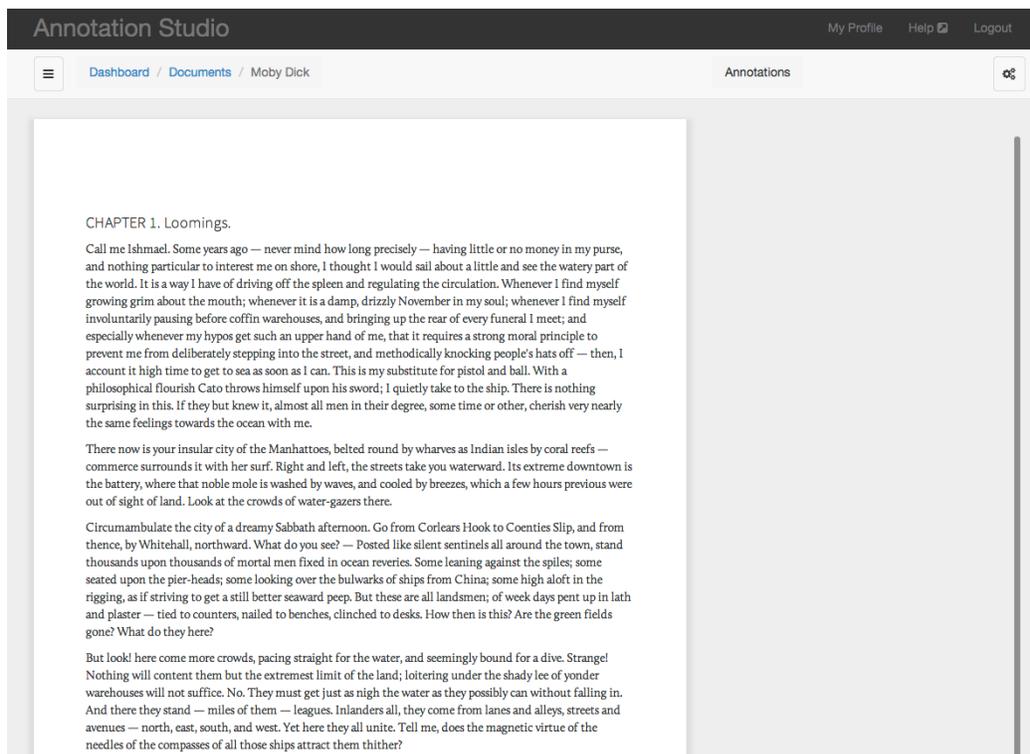
After logging in, you will arrive at your dashboard. Click on the link to the Documents list, which will take you to the complete list of documents you have been assigned to or uploaded. Select a document by clicking on one of the document titles. Note there are a number of columns. One identifies all the groups assigned to each document. Another identifies the document's status, i.e. whether the document is published or in draft mode.

The screenshot shows the Annotation Studio interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Annotation Studio' on the left and 'My Profile', 'Help', and 'Logout' on the right. Below this is a breadcrumb trail 'Dashboard / Documents' and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Documents' and features a table with the following columns: Title, Author, Created, Groups, Status, and Actions. There are also two summary boxes: '82 Assigned' and '21 Created'. The table lists various documents, including 'The Bucket and the Rope', 'Indiana Jones and the University', 'Sappho's Hymn to Aphrodite - Annotation Plan', and others. Each row includes a 'Status' column with a checkmark or a trash icon, and an 'Actions' column with an 'Edit' button.

Title	Author	Created	Groups	Status	Actions
The Bucket and the Rope		09/25/2014	English 499	✓	
Indiana Jones and the University	Laura Witherington	09/23/2014	ENGL 1203-1	✓	
The Bucket and the Rope	T.F. Powys	09/22/2014	public English 499	✓	
Video Test		09/16/2014	RNSTest	✓	Edit
Sappho's Hymn to Aphrodite - Annotation Plan	E Moll	09/10/2014	public	✖	
But What If College Were Free?	Yessenia Funes	09/08/2014	MW 0410	✓	
The Perils and Promises of Praise	Carol S. Dweck	09/07/2014	MW 0410 TR 8:30 0410 TR 11:30 0410	✓	
Annals 2-3, the death of Germanicus	Tacitus	08/26/2014	factus	✓	
Earliest Film Clips		08/26/2014	public	✓	Edit
The Artist Bronzino (Images)		08/26/2014	public	✓	Edit
Montenegro: A Sketch	William Gladstone	08/24/2014	ENG 230 (3) ENG 230 (4)	✎	
Yale University Press Poetry Month Sampler		08/07/2014	RNSTest		

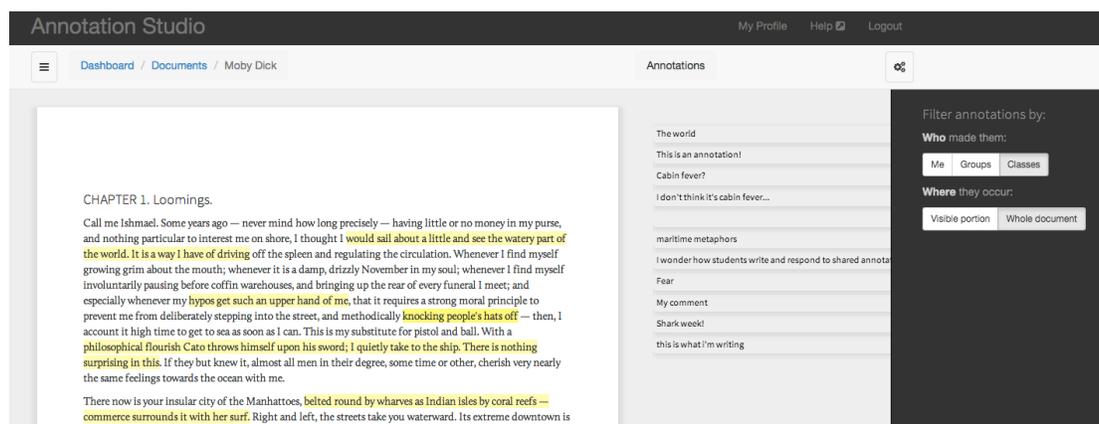
3.2 The annotation screen (Viewscreen)

You then arrive at the document Viewscreen in a separate window. The document Viewscreen consists of the document in the center of the screen.



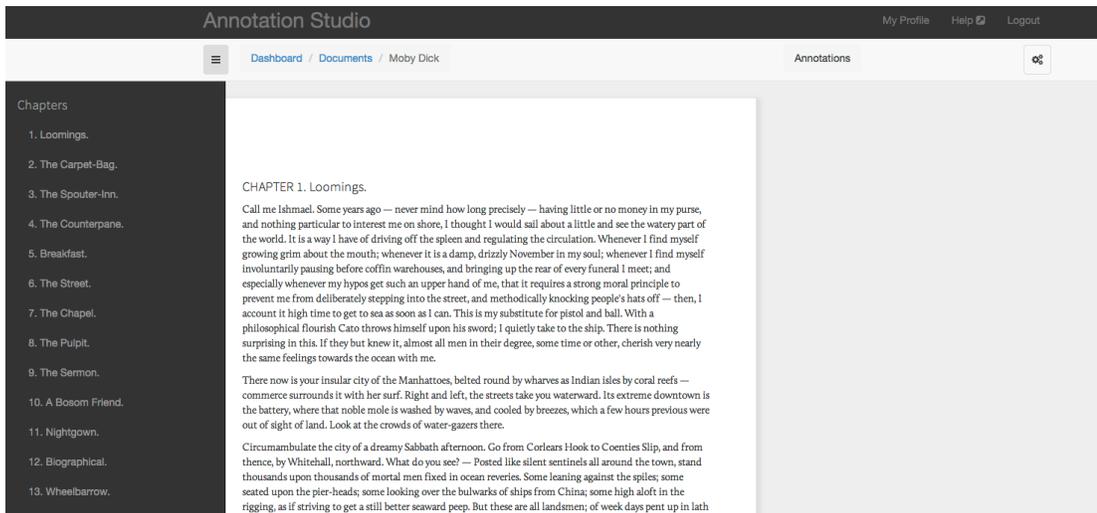
3.3 The Annotation Tool Menu

The Annotation Tool Menu can be accessed by clicking the upper right hand gear icon. It allows you to filter annotations made on the document. You can filter annotations by who made them and where they occur in the document.



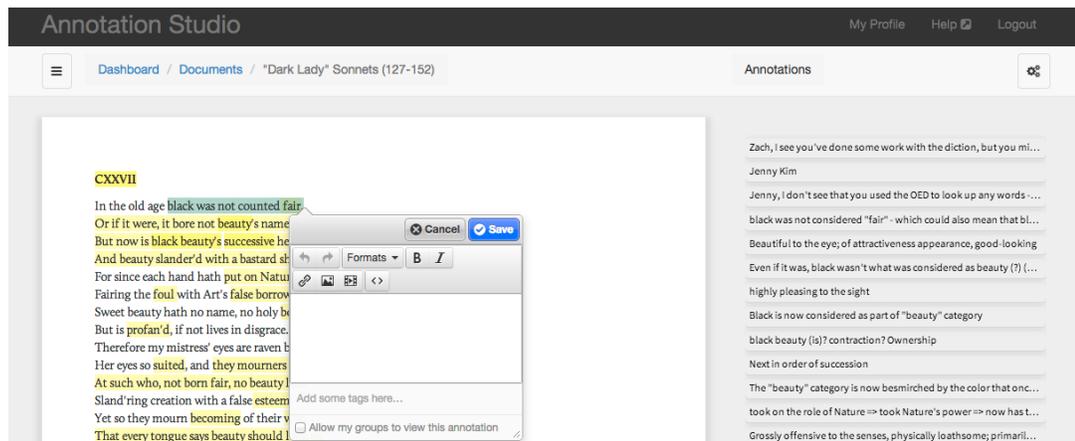
3.4 The Document Navigation Menu

The Document Navigation can be accessed by clicking on the small “Hamburger” icon in the upper left-hand corner. Besides the documents bibliographic metadata, the Document Navigation Menu allows you - if a document has chapters - to quickly move throughout the document by clicking on the chapters in the sidebar.



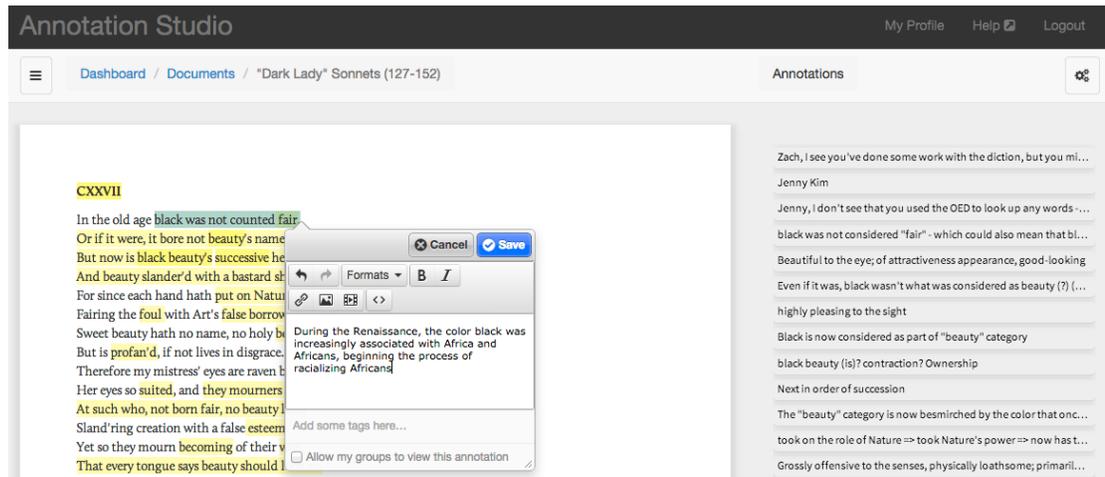
3.5 Select the text you would like to comment on

Select any amount of text (from one word to multiple paragraphs) you wish to annotate by highlighting it with your mouse. The annotate icon will automatically pop up above the highlighted word or phrase. Click on it. The Annotation Editor will appear.



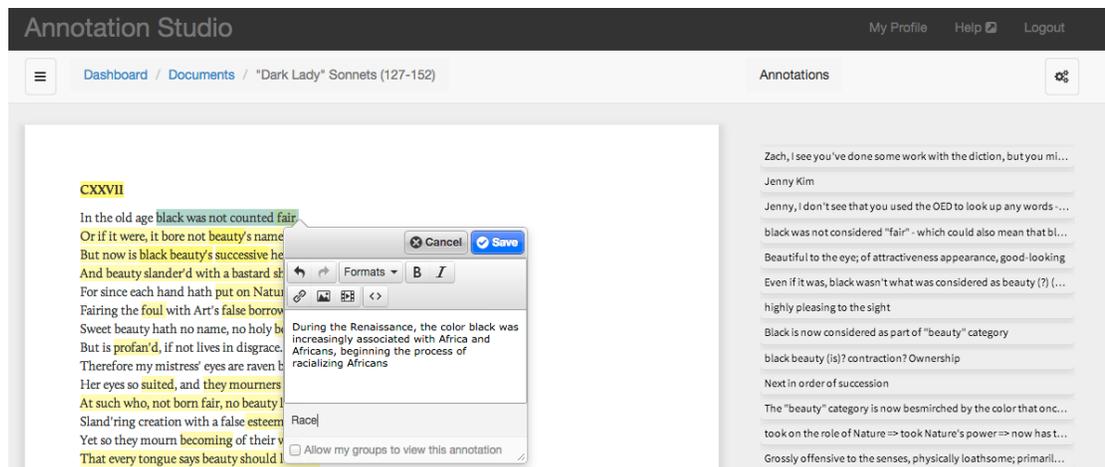
3.6 Write the annotation

Type your annotation into the Annotation Editor.



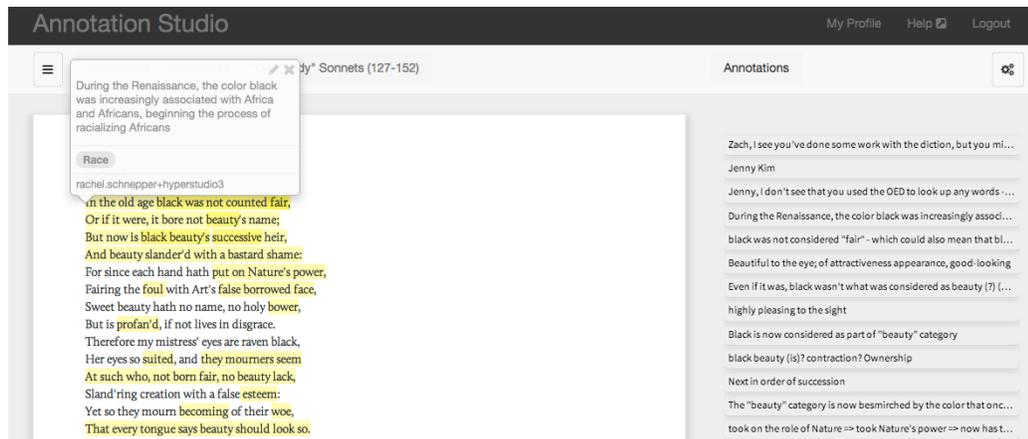
3.7 Tags and privacy options

Below the annotation field in the Annotation Editor is the tag field, which will allow you to establish your own, unique classification system to organize and manage your annotations. You may also decide whether or not to share your annotation with others by checking the checkbox, which will allow your annotation to be viewed by others in your class and/or group (i.e. classmates or an instructor).



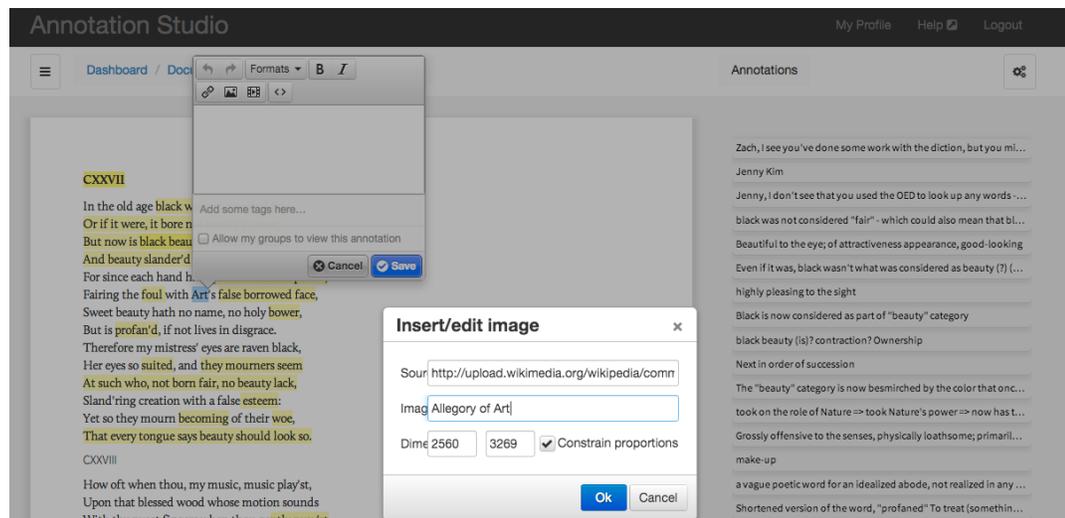
3.8 Save the annotation

After you click Save, your annotation can be accessed and filtered through the Annotation Tool Menu.



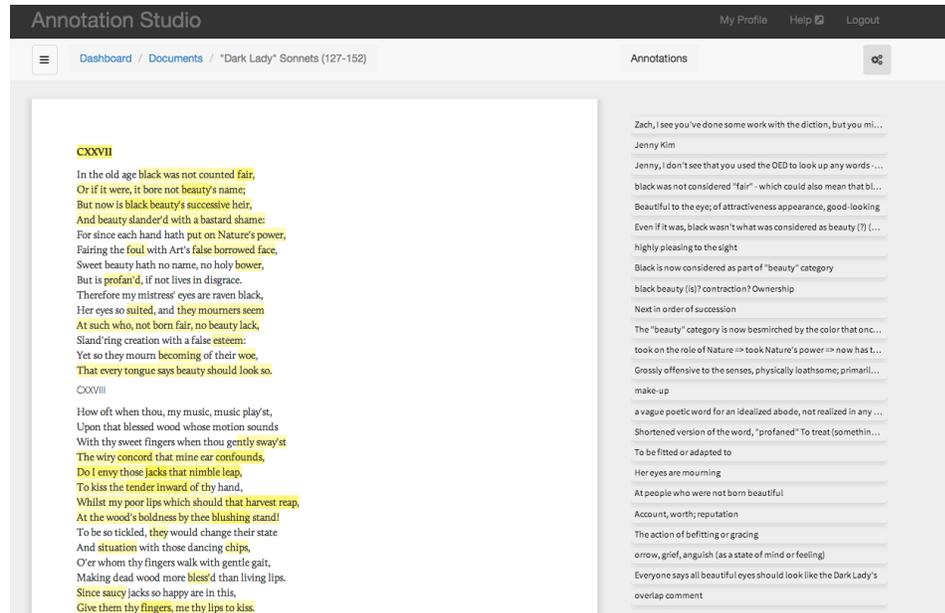
3.9 Additional options

You may also add links or web-based images and videos to your annotation. For example, to insert an image in the Annotation Editor, click on the insert image button at the top of the annotation box. Paste the URL to the image in the Source field and add a description of the image. Then click Ok.



3.10 Reviewing Annotations

As you generate a list of annotations, only the first line of your comment appears in the Annotation Sidebar on the right. To view the full annotation and its source text, click on the line. In addition to the list of annotations in the Annotation Sidebar, Annotation Studio's roll-over feature creates a pop-up with full annotation content and lets you interact dynamically with your source text.



The screenshot displays the Annotation Studio interface. The top navigation bar includes "Annotation Studio", "My Profile", "Help", and "Logout". The breadcrumb trail shows "Dashboard / Documents / 'Dark Lady' Sonnets (127-152)". The main content area on the left shows two sonnets, CXXVII and CXXVIII, with several words highlighted in yellow. The right sidebar, titled "Annotations", contains a list of annotation comments, each with a small icon to its left. The comments include:

- Zach, I see you've done some work with the diction, but you mi...
- Jenny Kim
- Jenny, I don't see that you used the OED to look up any words ...
- black was not considered "fair" - which could also mean that bl...
- Beautiful to the eye; of attractiveness appearance, good-looking
- Even if it was, black wasn't what was considered as beauty (?) [...
- highly pleasing to the sight
- Black is now considered as part of "beauty" category
- black beauty (is)? contraction? Ownership
- Next in order of succession
- The "beauty" category is now besmirched by the color that onc...
- took on the role of Nature => took Nature's power => now has ...
- Grossly offensive to the senses, physically loathsome; primari...
- make-up
- a vague poetic word for an idealized abode, not realized in any ...
- Shortened version of the word, "profaned" To treat (somethin...
- To be fitted or adapted to
- Her eyes are mourning
- At people who were not born beautiful
- Account, worth; reputation
- The action of befitting or gracing
- orrow, grief, anguish (as a state of mind or feeling)
- Everyone says all beautiful eyes should look like the Dark Lady's overlap comment

4. Uploading documents

The interface for uploading documents to Annotation Studio is through the link to the Documents list on the Dashboard. To upload a document, go to the Dashboard and click on the Documents link at the top of the screen, which will take you to the Documents list.

Title	Author	Created	Groups	Status	Actions
The Bucket and the Rope		09/25/2014	English 498	✓	
Indiana Jones and the University	Laura Witherington	09/23/2014	ENGL 1203-1	✓	
The Bucket and the Rope	T.F. Powys	09/22/2014	public English 498	✓	
Video Test		09/16/2014	RHS Test	✓	Edit
Sappho's Hymn to Aphrodite - Annotation Plan	E Moll	09/10/2014	public	✗	
But What if College Were Free?	Yessenia Funes	09/08/2014	MW 0410	✓	
The Perils and Promises of Praise	Carol S. Dweck	09/07/2014	MW 0410 TR 8:30 0410 TR 11:30 0410	✓	
Annals 2-3, the death of Germanicus	Tacitus	08/26/2014	tacitus	✓	
Earliest Film Clips		08/26/2014	public	✓	Edit
The Artist Bronzino (Images)		08/26/2014	public	✓	Edit
Montenegro: A Sketch	William Gladstone	08/24/2014	ENG 230 (3) ENG 230 (4)	✍	

Click on New document to upload a new document.

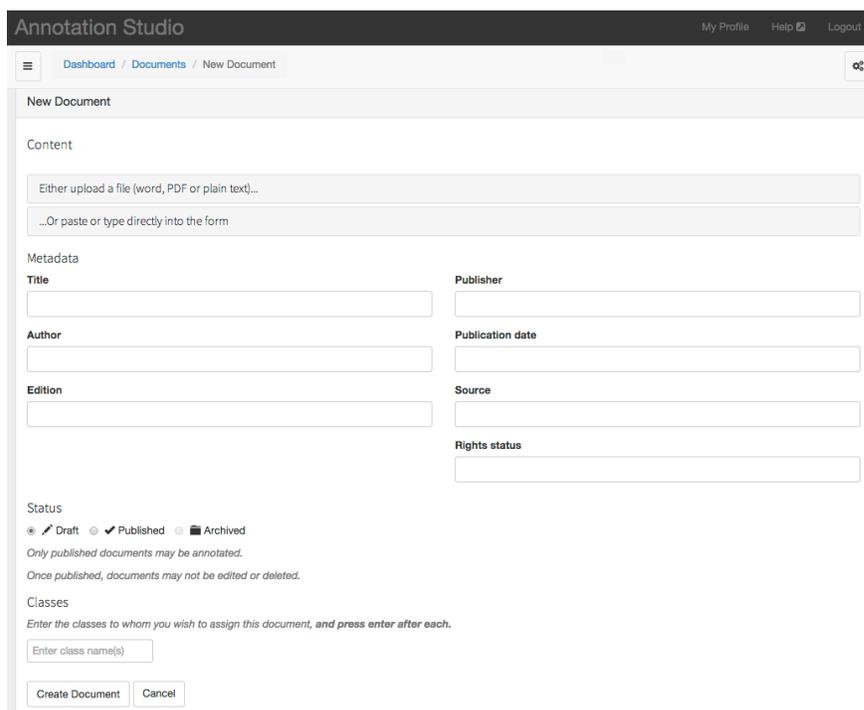
The European Reformation	Euan Cameron	01/22/2014	RHS Test	✓	Edit
Homecoming at Howard	Ta-Nehisi Coates	11/15/2013	public	✓	
Out of Hand	Nick Salvato	09/24/2013	isabel isabel	✓	
THE AMATEUR SPIRIT	Bliss Perry	08/26/2013	isabel isabel	✓	
Moby Dick, Chapters 1-5 (MEL Camp 2013)	Herman Melville	03/25/2013	MEL Camp public	✓	
Is yawning a tool for wakefulness or for sleep?	Dmitry Arbutk	03/03/2013	public	✓	
The Politics of 'Real Names'	danah boyd	03/03/2013	public	✓	
La Divina Commedia	Dante Alighieri	01/30/2013	workshop one-lap public	✓	
Der Besuch der alten Dame (Bahnhofszenen)	Friedrich Dürrenmatt	01/30/2013	public	✓	
Hamlet	William Shakespeare	01/26/2013	public	✓	
Письмоеник	Михаил Павлович Шлишкин	01/26/2013	public	✓	
Origin of Species	Charles Darwin	01/26/2013	public	✓	
Moby Dick	Herman Melville	01/26/2013	public gordon-bernard	✓	
Frankenstein	Mary Shelley	01/26/2013	public	✓	
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 8-9, 11-12	Lewis Carroll	07/25/2012	public	✓	
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 1-5, 7	Lewis Carroll	07/25/2012	public	✓	

New document

4.1 Uploading a new document

As shown on the New Document screen shot below, you may click on one of the two links under *Content* to add documents in two ways: 1) by uploading a Word, basic PDF, or HTML file, or 2) by pasting or directly typing into the form.

You will be prompted to provide metadata on the document, including title, author, edition, etc., of the document. This information will appear the Document Navigation Menu in the Document Viewscreen.



The screenshot shows the 'New Document' form in Annotation Studio. The form is divided into several sections: 'Content', 'Metadata', 'Status', and 'Classes'. The 'Content' section has two options: 'Either upload a file (word, PDF or plain text)...' and '...Or paste or type directly into the form'. The 'Metadata' section includes fields for 'Title', 'Author', 'Edition', 'Publisher', 'Publication date', 'Source', and 'Rights status'. The 'Status' section has three radio buttons: 'Draft', 'Published', and 'Archived'. Below the status section, there is a note: 'Only published documents may be annotated. Once published, documents may not be edited or deleted.' The 'Classes' section has a text input field for 'Enter class name(s)'. At the bottom, there are 'Create Document' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Whether you check draft or published under Status determines if the document can be seen by others. You may continue to edit the document while it is in draft mode. Once the user checks the published box, the user can no longer edit the document. However, only after the published box is checked will the document appear in its assigned group. Then it is ready to be annotated.

Uploading a document is also the process by which both Classes and Groups are created. **When you upload a document, you must enter a Class for the document to be visible to others.** You can invent your own names for Classes and Groups, and the document is automatically assigned to them when it is uploaded. Don't forget to hit RETURN when you add a Class or Group name.

Any document you upload is automatically added to the Created tab under Documents in the Dashboard. Documents are only listed under the Assigned tab if you are a member of the Class or Group to which the document has been assigned.

5. Setting up Annotation Studio for your class and student signup

There are two actions the classroom instructor needs to take in order to use Annotation Studio in his or her class: 1) class setup, and 2) student signup.

5.1 Class setup

To set up your class for using Annotation Studio, you must first register for Annotation Studio. Once you have registered for Annotation Studio, you can upload documents, which will make them available to the students assigned to Classes/Groups (see also 4.1).

5.2 Student signup

Annotation Studio is best introduced to your class by adding a paragraph about it near the front of your syllabus, with a URL to Annotation Studio and a brief description of

- how to access Annotation Studio
- how to sign up and log on to Annotation Studio using the registration interface
- which assignments will use Annotation Studio

As students log on to Annotation Studio, they will arrive at the Dashboard and find the documents that you have loaded for the class. Generally, students learn quickly how to use Annotation Studio and only a minimum of instruction is required by the instructor.

6. Introducing Annotation studio to your students and some pedagogical suggestions

There are many pedagogical uses of Annotation Studio, and no instructor will make use of the application in the same way. Some instructors prefer just to offer the application as a note-taking device for uploaded documents, images, and videos, while others like to use the application in more directed ways. Here are some suggestions:

6.1 Unstructured student annotation

With a minimum of direction, students may simply use Annotation Studio as a note-taking application, annotating at will in order to develop reading notes on items or patterns of interest such as themes, images, and other narrative or analytical elements they detect on their own. This kind of annotation may emerge as a reading log or notebook and may later provide the basis for a paper, or notes in preparation for an exam.

6.2 Directed reading, with tagging

The instructor may wish to direct students' annotations by asking them to read for specific key terms, phrases, or concepts. A directed reading approach may be requested in the reading assignment in a syllabus.

Examples of reading for key words and phrases include

- key words in the text (eg. "rules" in *Alice's Adventures*, "variation" in the *Origin of Species*)
- metaphors and other figurative language
- key words/phrases used in other class readings
- allusions to literary antecedents
- key concepts
- actions such as historical events

6.3 Instructor contextualized readings

An instructor may wish to add his or her own context to a given reading. This may be accomplished in two ways – 1) by adding material directly to the document itself and 2) by providing instructor commentary or imagery in the Annotation Sidebar. Material such as instructor comments may be added directly to the document by simply typing it in, or it may also be provided as an instructor-created annotation. For example, if you wish to ask students to answer specific questions or to look for key words or concepts, you may simply alert them at the start of the reading in the text itself or in the Annotation Sidebar.

You may also add other forms of media, such as images and video, to the document itself via HTML code or copy and paste from a web page when you upload/create a document. However, please note that at this time, Annotation Studio does not support the direct annotation of images and video, only text.

6.4 Monitoring student reading

The instructor has access to all the annotations for the class (i.e. those which students have checked for general viewing) and may read through student comments as a way of exploring student reactions to the readings.

6.5 Creating class and working groups

Annotation Studio may also be used to form student working groups, in which a subset of the class exchanges comments with each other. Working Groups are an excellent way to stimulate discussion of the readings and Working Groups may be used effectively to get students to work on projects together.

6.6 Supporting and evaluating student writing

Annotation Studio is an excellent application for supporting student writing. It is an effective note-taking tool that students can use to prepare quotations of and comments on the readings.

Annotation Studio may also be used by the instructor to upload and comment on student papers. To do this, the instructor asks students to submit their papers in MS-Word format. Commentary on papers by annotation in the margins is a standard procedure that educators have been using for generations.