HIST79500, Digital History
Fall 2023
Thursdays, 4:15-6:15 PM
GC Room 4422

For better or worse, digital technology and media are changing every aspect of historians' work. From AI, epubs and blogs, to mobile-app tours, online exhibits, podcasts, and digital archives, the ways that historians conduct research, share their findings, communicate with students and colleagues, and learn have transformed. This course examines the impact of digital technologies on the historian's craft. We will focus on the theoretical and practical impact of new media and technology on history, considering how digital media has influenced (and is still influencing) how we research, write, preserve, present and teach history.

In addition to historical content, this class will ask you to experiment with methodological applications and become familiar with a number of digital tools. The weekly readings and assignments will encourage you to discover, evaluate, and implement digital tools and digital sources for analysis, production and presentation. All digital tools used in the class will be available for free and come out-of-the-box ready to use. No coding or programming knowledge is required! However, if you are already fairly technically adept, I am happy to work with you to adapt the assignments to meet your skills and interests.

At the end of this course you should have a clear understanding of the potentials and pitfalls of Digital History, both in practice and theory, and be able to evaluate and implement a number of different tools to support historical scholarship. You will also have a chance to apply your knowledge by producing a digital project or research paper that considers the implications of digital scholarship for historians’ work.

Readings: In addition to articles and online explorations, you will need to get access to the following books. All are available for free, online, via the GC library.
1. Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein, Data Feminism (2020).
2. Gabrielle Forman, et. al., eds., The Colored Conventions Movement: Black Organizing in the Nineteenth Century (2021)

Overview of Assignments:
**Blogging** (40% of class grade): You must post at least six times to the course blog. Each of your posts should be between 500-1000 words. These six posts must include:
   - Intro post (due before our first class meeting): introduce yourself by sharing a biography of your life as a digital user and creator: what do you do/not do? What do you like/not
like? How has your use of digital tools changed over time and why? And what do you hope to get out of this class?

- Two reading response post (due by Tuesday at midnight the week that you lead discussion)
- Two digital tool or resource reviews post (due by Tuesday at midnight the week you demonstrate to class)
- One post based on your assessment of 2-3 digital history resource reviews published in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. Your post should consider the criteria that reviewers employ in assessing the quality and value of digital sources. What do the reviews reveal about the ways that professionals/practitioners are assessing digital resources and understanding their contributions? Among the journals that regularly publish digital/media reviews are: Journal of American History, Radical History Review, the Public Historian, the Oral History Review (due by midnight October 31)

**In class participation** (30% of grade):

- Demonstration of a tool/resource: present two 10 minute demonstrations of a tool or resources which you reviewed for the class blog
- Lead discussion on two sets of readings: what are the arguments of the readings that you blogged about? Where do they overlap/align and where are they in conflict? Come to class with questions to stimulate discussion and encourage classmates’ engagement with the readings
- Class attendance and active participation. Although I expect you to make your own decisions about whether to miss a class, your participation grade will be significantly affected if you miss more than two class sessions.

**Final project (30% grade):**
Research paper (5,000-7,000 words) OR digital project (create a digital resource and write a 500-750 word project statement)

- **Research paper that studies something digital**: you should think about digital media and content as a historian, picking something digital to investigate that has to do with history.
  - For example, you could engage with a set of primary sources that you’ve already collected, analyzing or visualizing them using one of the tools discussed in the class. Or, you could select wikipedia entries on a given topic, looking at how the text has changed over time over subsequent rounds of editing. Or, look at specific educational history games to investigate how they open new avenues for understanding a topic and also create silences.
  - Your goal should be to push yourself to use digital resources or tools in order to understand a historical topic in a new way.

- **Digital project that creates something for scholarship or teaching**: take one of your interests and develop a digital resource around it. This should NOT be putting an essay online. There should be a compelling reason to make this project a digital one (some added value because of new insights or new audiences). It would be best to use one of the tools that we worked on in class and to avoid complicated technical decisions or
labor. You will not be graded on your technical competence but on how well you have designed your project to meet the needs of your audience and to make use of the resources that are available.

- For example, you could use StoryMaps to create a site to use in your teaching, gathering historical sources and prompts to guide students’ understanding. OR you could build an Omeka exhibit to complement the work of a historical archive/organization (in consultation with that repository). Or you could use HistoryPin to create a historical tour of a particular neighborhood. In addition to the project/resource, you should write a short project statement (500-750 words) that describes your goals and audience, reflects on your accomplishments and considers shortcomings and possible next steps.
- Since most digital projects are developed by teams, you may collaborate with a classmate to develop a project together. If you pick this option, you each will be expected to individually write and submit a reflection paper to accompany the completed project and project statement.

Part 1: Collecting - ethics, methods, digital archives, oral history
Part 2: Researching - collaborations, data analysis
Part 3: Publishing – ebooks; blogging; social media; alternative dissertation formats
Part 4: Teaching – interactive educational games; plagiarism/ChatGPT; online teaching resources

Class schedule:

August 31: Introduction to the class and orientation to library’s digital services by Stephen Klein

September 7: digital history definitions and critiques
Michael Mandiberg, "Wikipedia's Race and Ethnicity Gap and the Unverifiability of Whiteness," Social Texts (2023)
Sharon Leon, Completing a Great Man Narrative of Digital History in the US

September 14: postcolonial digital history
Risam, New Digital Worlds
September 21: finding data sources
icpsr.umich.edu/webpages
https://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/storymaps.html [many available with CSV data files]

September 28: creating digital archives - ethics and methods

October 5: text analysis, data visualizations

October 12: spatial history
Guldi, “What is the Spatial Turn?” and Spatial Turn in History
Social Text, special issue on mapping and digital history, v. 33 no. 4 (2015) – read editors’ introduction and articles by Brown, Saunt, and Dillon
Palladio
Storymaps – e.g., https://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/storymaps.html

October 19: oral history

October 26: alternative publication modes; reimagining research outputs – making the case for digital work as scholarship:
Ann Rigney, “When The Monograph Is No Longer The Medium: Historical Narrative In The Online Age,” History and Theory (2010)
Colored Conventions Movement and omeka.coloredconventions.org

November 2: [assessing and evaluating digital exhibits, podcasts, presentations, etc. and digital dissertations – Roxanne Shirazi


https://gcdi.commons.gc.cuny.edu/digital-dissertation-resources/

https://nextgendiss.hcommons.org/resources/

November 9: digital public history – Jonathan Thayer, Queens College
Shelia Brennan, Public, First”

November 16: educational games

November 30: teaching strategies and approaches
Young, et al, Quick Hits for Teaching with Digital Humanities
ChatGPT/AI

December 7: research presentations

Part 1: Collecting


Metadata standards and power of description:
Documenting the Now white paper

Part 2: Researching/Interpreting/Analyzing
Big data/using data sets – slave voyages project? https://www.slavevoyages.org/
Colored Conventions project

Collaborations and collaborative tools
Collecting - and ethics, metadata, crowdsourcing

Jo Guldi - Paper Machines; book/work on data analysis and importance of humanities (also History Manifesto)


Part 3: Engaging with Academic and Public Audiences

Part 4: Teaching
https://www.dukeupress.edu/a-primer-for-teaching-digital-history

Open pedagogy – https://opencontent.org/blog/archives/2975

Crowd-sourced syllabi
Games
Other courses

https://digitalpublichistory.wordpress.com/modules-spring-2020/ Theories
  ○ 1. Digital History/Public History (2020)
  ○ 2. What Does the Digital Have to Do with Public History? (2020)
  ○ 3. theoria/poiesis/praxis (2020)
  ○ 5. Postcolonial Digital Humanities

  ● Skills
  ○ 7. Creating a Website, Part 2 (2020)
  ○ 8. Multimodal Analysis/Communication (2020)
  ○ 10. HGIS, Part 2 (2020)
  ○ 11. Introduction to Social Network Analysis (2020)
  ○ 12. Preparing Data with Regex and Open Refine (2020)

  ● Practice
  ○ 13. In-Class Laboratory
  ○ 14. In-Class Laboratory
  ○ 15. Presentations

UMass Amherst: 693B Digital History
This course on digital history examines both the theoretical and practical impact of new media and technology on history, especially in the field of Public History. We will examine how digital media has influenced (and is still influencing) how we research, write, present and teach history. We will draw on theoretical readings as well as analyze the potential benefits and drawbacks of online resources, such as websites, wikis, and podcasts. A major component of the course will be a semester-long project that will require each student to develop a proposal for a digital historical resource and construct a home page for it. The semester project is an opportunity to experiment with new technologies and to overcome any anxieties students might have regarding the use of new media.


Assignments
Hands on could be OMEKA, podcast, blogging, Manifold
Assignments: reviews of digital projects; short blog posts and presentations about specific tools - showing class how they work and an example related to your own work

Attend NML meetings and/or workshops offered online, etc.

Final Project: Pitch idea for SHEC collection, Picturing History or Closer Look; or draft proposal for an NEH-Mellon Publication Fellowship or Digital Humanities Advancement Grants; or extended review of multiple projects; or your own research using Paper Machines (Zotero plugin) or other data analysis or presentation tool; or resource for your own current or future teaching

Reviews in Digital Humanities journal, https://reviewsindh.pubpub.org/ [the Reviews describe/assess a lot of projects that could be a good focus for class discussion – also possibly have students contribute a review?]


Bring in some speakers for class - can also open to NML and/or DH students:
Jo Guldi
Robert Lee  Land Grab Universities  https://www.landgrabu.org/#about
Digital Trans Archive
Clarissa Ceglio or others from UConn
NEH program officer?
Michelle Moravec
1977 National Women’s Conference, Un of Houston
Colored Conventions Project
GC resources:

Roxanne Shirazi - digital dissertations
Matt Gold - Manifold

https://qcdi.commons.gc.cuny.edu/guides-tutorials/

Set up course site on digital commons

Manifold? DH program holds manifold drop in hours

Digital Humanities Center at SDSU has series of YouTube video tutorials:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbsjQnZdzhODduq_ZUW7gdLbbokYMIv3A

Voyant – voyant-tools.org
helpful tutorial:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqtA9Mel9KY&list=PLbsjQnZdzhODduq_ZUW7gdLbbokYMIv3A&index=18
Also: https://voyant-tools.org/docs/#/guide/tutorial [I highly recommend the videotaped tutorial - less than 1 hour and demonstrates many of the functions]

Your text/corpus - could be one or more primary sources from your own research; digitally available materials such as UNC slave narratives or LOC.gov…; or something that you yourself have written [remember, cannot be handwritten or an image] – see possible list of text sources here: https://libguides.und.edu/digitalscholarship/text-corpora

Description of various text analysis tools, with some examples:

StoryMaps.com – and examples of StoryMaps (and some data) at http://loc.gov/rr/geogmap/storymaps.html

Readings from Steve’s syllabus:
“Neoliberal Tools (and Archives): A political History of the Digital Humanities” [For WEEK 1 - critiques]
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/neoliberal-tools-archives-political-history-digital-humanities/