New technologies are transforming how historians research and interpret the past and communicate our ideas. This course provides an introduction to the field of digital history and to digital tools for text analysis – text mining, topic modeling – mapping and visualization, and online presentation. We will also explore new forms of historical writing, such as blogs and wikis, and the questions digital history raises about the nature of historical arguments and the means by which history is distributed, evaluated, taught, and made accessible – or not.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- You will have an understanding of the development and nature of the field of digital history and its intersection with other fields of history
  - Reading Blog

- You will have a working knowledge of the methods and basic tools used in digital history
  - Practicum Blog
  - Project

- You will have established an online scholarly identity
  - Blogs

- You will have an understanding of how new technologies are transforming historical teaching, research, writing, and publishing
  - Reading Blog
  - Practicum Blog
  - Project

- You will have created a piece of digital scholarship
  - Project
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

• You need to bring a laptop to every class – you will need a device to do the required work with digital tools or materials. Remember to bring your power cord with you; each class is two hours and forty minutes in length!

• You are required to sign up for a domain hosting with Reclaim Hosting; the cost is $25 for a year. There is no required textbook. All the readings are online.

• All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code: “not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work.” If you are uncertain what that policy covers, see the information provided by the Office of Academic Integrity. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

• If you are copying and pasting text that someone else wrote, you might be plagiarizing. Pasted or manually retyped text is not plagiarized only when all of the following three conditions are true: 1) the pasted text is surrounded by quotation marks or set off as a block quote, and 2) the pasted text is attributed in your text to its author and its source (e.g., “As Jane Smith writes on her blog . . . “), and 3) the pasted text is cited in a footnote, endnote, and/or a bibliography (e.g., “Smith, Jane. Smith Stuff. Blog. Available http://smithstuff.wordpress.com. Accessed August 1, 2012.”)

• Late work will not be accepted.

• No incompletes will be issued.

• Any student who requires special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me to make necessary accommodations (before February 1, please). Students should present appropriate verification from the Office of Disability Services, (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 703-993-2474). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

• If you are forced to miss either an examination or the due date for an assignment either as the result of an illness or a family emergency, fairness to all students in the class requires the proper documentation, without which your excuses will not be accepted.
ASSIGNMENTS

Participate in Class [10%]
Seminar participation begins, obviously, with attendance, but it requires more than attendance. You need to come to class prepared to exchange ideas about the documents or texts assigned for that meeting and the topics they raise, to raise questions and to speculate. Your grade does not depend on providing the ‘right answers’ in seminars; it will reflect what you contribute to our discussions. That does not mean that you can get a good grade solely by having something to say in class, regardless of what you say. You will earn a good grade for this part of course by making thoughtful contributions that reflect careful reading and consideration of the questions raised by what you have read.

Lead Discussion [10%]
You will be responsible for leading the discussion for a week of the class (Depending on numbers, you may collaborate with another student on this assignment). Prepare a set of discussion questions. Your questions need to be open-ended, and to address topics and themes rather than individual readings. After the class, you will write a blog post reflecting on the class discussion: how effective were your questions in engaging the class; what issues emerged in the discussion; did the discussion change your thinking on any topics?

- Discussion questions due by midnight on the Sunday before the class meeting
- Blog post reflecting on the discussion due by midnight on the Friday after the class meeting
- No late work will be accepted.

Blog the Readings [20%]
Before each class, complete a blog post that reflects on that week’s readings. Do not summarize the readings. Rather, your post should explore your reactions to the texts: what questions did they raise? What themes or issues emerged across the different readings? As the semester proceeds, you should also consider how the week’s topic and readings relate to those from preceding weeks.

- The post is due by midnight on the Sunday before the class meeting.
- No late work will be accepted.

Blog the Practicums [20%]
After each of the first 9 classes, complete a blog post discussing your work on the practicum for that class. Describe what you found, and, when you used a digital tool,
your process (was the documentation clear? did you have any problems in using the tool?)

• The post is due by midnight on the Friday after the class meeting
• No late work will be accepted.

Project [40%]

Complete a historical analysis using digital methods. You should work on a topic and sources related to your research interests. You can use any of methods we cover in the course. Writing an essay and putting it online in WordPress is not using a digital method. You could build an online exhibit in Omeka or Scalar, or use mapping, text mining, topic modeling or network analysis. The entry-level tools that we are examining in this course lend themselves to discovery rather than investigation; hence, your project will be testing whether a digital method offers a new perspective rather than offering an explanation or argument.

In addition to the project, you are required to complete a blog post reflecting on the process of completing the assignment: what problems, if any, did you have in applying your chosen method and using digital tools?

• You will give a 3-minute presentation of your work-in-progress in the final class on December 1
• The project and blog post are due by midnight on Friday, December 12
• No late work will be accepted
SCHEDULE & READINGS
Subject to change – check the website

1. (8/25) Getting Started:
   a. Internet Basics
      ii. 40 Maps that explain the internet, Vox (2014)
      iii. WWW Timeline (Pew Research Internet Project, 2014)
   b. Your Web Presence
      ii. Jim Groom, "How the Web was Ghettoized for Teaching and Learning in Higher Ed" (2014)
      iii. Seth Zweifler, "For Professors, Online Presence Brings Promise (and Peril)," Chronicle of Higher Education (4/21/2014)
      iv. Heather Cox Richardson, "Should Historians Use Twitter, PT 1 & 2" (2013)
      v. Ryan Cordell, "How to Start Tweeting (and Why You Might Want To)," ProfHacker (August 11, 2010)

PRACTICUM: Set up Reclaim Hosting; Install WordPress
   • Assess your online presence & outline what presence you think you need

2. (9/8) What is Digital History?

h. Mills Kelly, “Clio, Eight Years On,” edwired (December 6, 2013)

**PRACTICUM: Assess the digital history of your research field/topic**

3. **(9/15) Digitization**
   a. Digitization

   b. Digital and Material

   **PRACTICUM: Google Drive OCR; Chronicling America**
   - Assess the OCR of a digital resource in your research field

4. **(9/22) Databases & Search**


PRACTICUM: Examine the use of databases of digital sources in articles in the last three years of issues from a journal in your field: how does that usage relate to the arguments made in this week’s readings?

5. (9/29) **Text mining & Topic Modelling**
   a. Ted Underwood, “Theorizing Research Practices We Forgot to Theorize Twenty Years Ago,” (Representations, forthcoming 2014)
      i. Cameron Blevins, “Mining and Mapping the Production of Space” (2014)
   e. Robert Nelson, “Mining the Dispatch”
   f. Miki Kaufman, “‘Everything on Paper Will Be Used Against Me’: Quantifying Kissinger” (2014)

PRACTICUM: Compare results from the four ngram viewers below — and then compare those results with what does Voyant tells you about a text
   • Google Ngram Viewer
   • Bookworm + Bookworm: Vogue
   • NYT Chronicle
   • Voyant Tools

6. (10/6) **Visualization & Networks**
   a. John Theibault, "Visualizations and Historical Arguments," Writing History in the Digital Age (2012), eds Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki


d. Mapping the Republic of Letters: Case Studies

e. Elena Friot, Go Go Gadget, Gephi! The (Mis)Adventures of a Newbie DHer (2013)

f. Scott Weingart, When Networks are Inappropriate (2013)

PRACTICUM: Palladio; Gephi

7. (10/14*) Mapping

a. Tim Hitchcock, “Place and the Politics of the Past” (2012)


i. Visualizing Emancipation


iii. ORBIS

e. Stephen Roberson, “Putting Harlem on the Map,” in Writing History for the Digital Age (2012), eds Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki

• Nicholas Grant, “Digital Harlem,” Reviews in History (July 2013)

• Digital Harlem

PRACTICUM: Google Map Engine; Google Earth; StoryMap

8. (10/20) Public History

a. Carl Smith, "Can You Do Serious History on the Web?" Perspectives (February 1998)

i. The Great Chicago Fire (1996)
ii. The Great Chicago Fire (2011)
e. Melissa Terras, “Digitisation’s Most Wanted” (5/15/2014)

PRACTICUM: Omeka

9. (10/27) Crowdsourced History
   a. Wikipedia
   b. Crowdsourcing
   c. Collecting
      ii. Sheila A. Brennan and T. Mills Kelly, "Why Collecting History Online is Web 1.5," Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (2009)
   d. Social media
      i. Rebecca Onion, “Snapshots of History,” Slate (Feb 5 2014)

PRACTICUM: Edit a Wikipedia entry related to digital history
10. (11/3) **Games**

   i. The Lost Museum

b. Laura Zucconi, Ethan Watrall, Hannah Ueno, and Lisa Rosner, “Pox and the City: Challenges in Writing a Digital History Game,” *Writing History in the Digital Age* (2012), eds Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki


d. Adam Chapman, “Is Sid Meier’s Civilization history?” *Rethinking History* 17, 3 (2013): 312-332

e. Trevor Owens, "Games as Historical Scholarship," *playthepast* (1/29/2014)

11. (11/10) **Digital Scholarship**


b. Blogging

c. Digital articles
   i. William Thomas, "Writing A Digital History Journal Article from Scratch: An Account" (2007)
d. Jack Dougherty, Kristen Nawrotzki, Charlotte Rochez, and Timothy Burke, "Conclusions: What We Learned from Writing History in the Digital Age," Writing History in the Digital Age (2012), ed Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki (Paragraphs 1-14 only)

12. (11/17) Open Access, Open Source, Copyright
   b. Peter Suber, “Open Access Overview”
   c. Dan Cohen, “Treading Water on Open Access” (September 25, 2012)
   d. Debating Dissertation Embargos (read the comments on the blog posts)
      i. American Historical Association Statement on Policies Regarding the Embargoing of Completed History PhD Dissertations (July 2013)
      ii. Q&A on the AHA’s Statement on Embargoing of History Dissertations (July 24, 2013)
      v. Adam Crymble, “Students should be empowered, not bullied into open access” (July 23, 2013)
      vi. Rebecca Anne Goetz, “Do not fear open access. Embrace It” (August 22, 2013)
   g. Creative Commons Licenses

13. (11/24) Teaching History in the Digital Age
b. Dan Cohen, “Pragmatic as Well as Prescient: Digital History Education at George Mason University,” Perspectives (May 2009)
d. Adam Rabinowitz, “Reading Herodotus spatially in the undergraduate classroom, Part III,” Hestia (July 22, 2014)
f. Nicholas Trepanier, “The Assassin’s Perspective: Teaching History with Video Games,” Perspectives (May 2014)

14. (12/1) Presentations / Wrap up