

HIST 390 THE DIGITAL PAST

Fall 2019

Tuesday & Thursday, 12-1.15 PM

<https://drstephenrobertson.com/hist390>

Prof. Stephen Robertson

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Office Hours: Thursday 2-3

This course, which satisfies the [Mason Core IT requirement](#), prepares students to use and understand a wide variety of current and emerging digital technologies—everything from basic office software to more complex services such as databases and digital maps. It explores how technologies can augment the ability to produce, consume, process and communicate information, but also create challenges related to security, source reliability and automation. The course teaches the fundamentals of information technology within the context of a history course rather than as a set of abstract principles or discrete skills tied to particular software packages. No background in history is required. Students will develop an analysis of a race riot in the US since the Civil War.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	WEEKS	ASSESSMENTS
You will be able to understand the principles of information storage, exchange, security, and privacy and be aware of related ethical issues	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Midterm• Create a spreadsheet of events• Create an Omeka exhibit
You will become critical consumers of digital information; capable of selecting and evaluating appropriate, relevant, and trustworthy sources of information	2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Midterm exam• Analyze a riot• Create a spreadsheet of events• Annotate a Wikipedia article
You will be able to use appropriate information and computing technologies to organize and analyze information and use it to guide decision-making	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a text analysis• Create a timeline• Create a map• Create an Omeka exhibit
You will be able to choose and apply appropriate algorithmic methods to solve a problem	4, 5, 6, 10, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a spreadsheet of events• Create a text analysis• Create a map
You will be able to publish and communicate information on the web	12, 13, 14, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create an Omeka exhibit

To achieve these learning outcomes we will use a combination of reading, writing, exploring, and experimenting with digital tools and materials. Learning by doing is a central part of this course. That is, in most weeks you will engage in making or analyzing something using digital tools and media. Persistence and willingness to try many approaches will be a key to doing well in this course.

FULL SYLLABUS: <https://drstephenrobertson.com/hist390>

SCHEDULE

8/27: SET-UP

8/29: THE INTERNET & THE WEB

9/3: PRESERVATION

9/5: THINKING HISTORICALLY ABOUT
RACE RIOTS

9/10: THINKING HISTORICALLY ABOUT
YOUR RACE RIOT

9/12: DIGITIZATION & OCR

9/17: SEARCH

9/19: RIOTS IN NEWSPAPERS

9/24: RIOT INVESTIGATIONS

9/26: TEXT ANALYSIS

10/1: COPYRIGHT & ACCESS

10/3: TEXT ANALYSIS REPORT BACK

10/8: IMAGES OF RIOT

10/10: **MIDTERM**

10/15: DATA

10/17: CREATING DATA

10/22: SECURITY & PRIVACY

10/24: TIMELINES

10/29: TIMELINE REPORT BACK

10/31: MAPPING

11/5: MAPPING YOUR RIOT

11/7: MAPPING REPORT BACK

11/12: HOW DO WE READ ONLINE

11/14: UNDERSTANDING WIKIPEDIA

11/19: WIKIPEDIA ANNOTATION
REPORT BACK

11/21: RIOT STORIES ONLINE

11/26: TELLING STORIES WITH OMEKA

11/28: **THANKSGIVING**

12/3: DESCRIBING SOURCES IN OMEKA:
METADATA

12/5: RIOT STORIES ONLINE REPORT
BACK: TELLING YOUR STORY

ASSIGNMENT	GRADE	DUE
Class Participation	10%	
Analyze a race riot	10%	9/10
Create a text analysis	10%	10/3
Midterm	10%	10/10
Create a spreadsheet of events	15%	10/24
Create a timeline	10%	10/29
Create a map	10%	11/7
Annotate a Wikipedia article	5%	11/19
Create an Omeka exhibit	20%	12/16

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Complete any assigned readings or activities before class, and then be an active contributor to class discussions

ANALYZE A RACE RIOT: Analyze the race riot you are studying by completing the form with the categories we developed in class, using just the information in the entry on your riot from Walter C. Rucker Jr. and James N. Upton, eds, *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots* (2007).

CREATE A TEXT ANALYSIS: Use Voyant to analyze texts related to the riot you are studying. The primary focus of the assignment is newspaper stories, together with one riot investigation report.

MIDTERM: Provide short definitions of key digital terms and concepts

CREATE A SPREADSHEET OF A RIOT: Identify events during the riot in the newspaper stories from the time that you found and in investigation reports and secondary sources.

CREATE A TIMELINE: Use TimelineJS to create a timeline using the events in your riot spreadsheet and analyze what the patterns it highlights suggest about what happened during the riot

CREATE A MAP: Use kelper.gl to make a map using the events in your riot spreadsheet and analyze what the patterns it highlights suggest about what happened during the riot.

ANNOTATE THE WIKIPEDIA ENTRY ON A RIOT: Annotate the Wikipedia entry on your riot with notes on what it includes and what is missing using the information in your riot spreadsheet and the encyclopedia entry.

CREATE AN OMEKA EXHIBIT ABOUT A RIOT: Provide a narrative of the riot and a discussion of how the riot has been presented in the writing of historians, in Wikipedia, and in other online sources. Include the text analysis, map and timeline you created, as well as any public domain

COURSE ACTIVITIES & READINGS

8/27: SET-UP

- Activity: The digital landscape c.2019
- Activity: What happened in Harlem in 1935?
- Activity: Set up a blog on WordPress.com

8/29: THE INTERNET & THE WEB

- Resource: Diagram
- Resource: Glossary
- Activity: Your glossary

9/3: PRESERVATION

- Reading: Jill Lepore, "The Cobweb: Can the Internet be archived?" *The New Yorker* (January 19, 2015)
- Reading: Trevor Owens, "Beyond Digital Hype and Digital Anxiety," in *The Theory and Craft of Digital Preservation* (pre-print, July 15, 2017)

9/5: THINKING HISTORICALLY ABOUT RACE RIOTS

- Reading: Paul Gilje, "Introduction," *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 1-11
- Reading: Amanda Seligman, "'But Burn--No': The Rest of the Crowd in Three Civil Disorders in 1960s Chicago," *Journal of Urban History* 37, 2 (2011): 230-255
- Resource: Race Riot Timeline & Map
- Activity: Sign-up

9/10: THINKING HISTORICALLY ABOUT YOUR RACE RIOT

9/12: DIGITIZATION & OCR

- Reading: Why don't archivists digitize everything? (Archives @ PAMA, May 31, 2017)
- Reading: Ryan Cordell, "Why You (A Humanist) Should Care About Optical Character Recognition" (January 10, 2019)

9/17: SEARCH

- Resource: How Google Search Works
- Reading: Ted Underwood, "Theorizing Research Practices We Forgot to Theorize Twenty Years Ago," *Representations* Vol. 127, No. 1 (Summer 2014): 64-72
- Reading: Karin Wulf, "What Naomi Wolf and Cokie Roberts teach us about the need for historians," *Washington Post* (June 11, 2019)

9/19: RIOTS IN NEWSPAPERS

- Digitized Newspapers
 - Chronicling America (up to 1923)

- Proquest Historical Newspapers
 - Newspapers.com
 - Google News Archive
- Activity: Find newspaper stories published at the time of your riot

9/24: RIOT INVESTIGATIONS

9/26: TEXT ANALYSIS

- Reading: Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, "Text Analysis and Visualization: Making Meaning Count," in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities* edited by Susan Schreibman, et al. (John Wiley & Sons, 2016).

10/1: COPYRIGHT & ACCESS

- Reading: Carol A. Rudisell, "Liberating History: Reflections on Rights, Rituals and the Colored Conventions Project," *Common-Place: the journal of early American life* 16, 1 (Fall 2015).
- Reading: Robinson Meyer, "After 10 Years, Google Books is Legal," *The Atlantic* (October 20, 2015)
- Reading: Andrew Albanese, "Google Wins: Court Issues a Ringing Endorsement of Google Books," *Publishers Weekly* (November 14, 2013)

10/3: TEXT ANALYSIS REPORT BACK

10/8: IMAGES OF RIOT

- Reading: Sara Blair, "A Riot of Images: Harlem and the Pursuit of Modernity," in *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) [just 1-4]

10/10: MIDTERM

10/15: DATA

- Reading: Lisa Gitelman and Virginia Jackson, "Introduction," *"Raw Data" Is an Oxymoron* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013), 1-14
- Reading: Miriam Posner, "Humanities Data: A Necessary Contradiction," (June 25, 2015)

10/17: CREATING DATA

- Activity: Create a spreadsheet of events in your riot

10/22: SECURITY & PRIVACY

- Activity - take the quiz: Pew Research Center, "How Much Do You Know About Cybersecurity?" (March 22, 2017)
- Reading: List of the most common passwords, *Wikipedia*
- Reading: "Guide to Your Metadata," *The Guardian* (June 12, 2013)

- Reading: Ian Bogost, "Welcome to the Age of Privacy Nihilism," *The Atlantic* (August 23, 2018)

10/24: TIMELINES

- Daniel Rosenberg, "The Trouble with Timelines," *Cabinet* (Spring 2004)
- Activity: Create a timeline of your riot

10/29: TIMELINE REPORT BACK

10/31: MAPPING

- Reading: Monica Muñoz Martinez, "Mapping Segregated Histories of Racial Violence," *American Quarterly* 70, 3 (2018)
- Reading: Katherine Hepworth and Christopher Church, "Racism in the Machine: Visualization Ethics in Digital Humanities Projects," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 12, 4 (2018)
 - Monroe Work today

11/5: MAPPING YOUR RIOT

- Activity: Map your riot with kepler.gl

11/7: MAPPING REPORT BACK

11/12: HOW DO WE READ ONLINE

- Reading: Maria Konnikova, "Being a Better Online Reader," *New Yorker* (July 16, 2014)
- Activity: Set-up hypothes.is

11/14: UNDERSTANDING WIKIPEDIA

- Reading: Jon Udell, "Heavy Metal Umlaut: the movie." Strategies for Internet Citizens (blog), January 22, 2005
- Reading: Roy Rosenzweig, "Can History Be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past," *Journal of American History* 93, 1 (June 2006): 117–146
- Activity: Set up hypothes.is

11/19: WIKIPEDIA ANNOTATION REPORT BACK

11/21: RIOT STORIES ONLINE

- Reading: Mike Caufield, "SIFT (The Four Moves), *Hapgood* (June 19, 2019)

11/26: TELLING STORIES WITH OMEKA

- Resource: Exhibit Building in Omeka S

11/28: **THANKSGIVING**

12/3: DESCRIBING SOURCES IN OMEKA: METADATA

- Reading: "Describing Metadata," Jisc (November 13, 2014)
- Resource: "Working with Dublin Core," Omeka Classic User Manual

12/5: RIOT STORIES ONLINE REPORT BACK: TELLING YOUR STORY

- Assignment: Analyze online stories of your riot
- Assignment: Create an Omeka exhibit telling your story of your riot

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Important Dates

- Last day to add classes—all individualized section — *September 3, 2019*
- Last day to drop with no tuition penalty — *September 9, 2019*
- Final Drop Deadline (with a 50% tuition penalty) — *February 12, 2019*
- Student Self-Withdrawal Deadline (100% tuition, W grade) — *September 30, 2019*

Academic Integrity

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.")

Disability Accommodations

Any student who requires special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should Contact me to make necessary accommodations (before 8/31 please). Students should present appropriate verification from the Office of Disability Services (<http://ods.gmu.edu/distance.php> 703-993-2474). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Diversity Policy

George Mason University is an inclusive community of learners. Your instructor and all classmates should abide by the University's Diversity Policy found at Mason Diversity Statement (<http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/>).

Student Privacy

Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See Mason Live (<http://masonlive.gmu.edu>) for more information.

Student Services

- Writing Center < <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu> > (703-993-1200)
- Ask A Librarian < <http://library.gmu.edu/ask> >
- Counseling and Psychological Services < <http://caps.gmu.edu> > (703-993-2380)