Hist 3814 week one notes

Listen: week one

* Don’t hide your failures
* Fail #1: technological failure
* Fail #2: human failure
* Fail #3: failure as artifact – accept that the fail is going to happen and to examine the fail as an object of study
* Fail #4: failure as epistemology – gives us licence to actively break the technologies; change focus from product to process
* Failure as open reflection; sharing failure

Returning Women to the history of digital history

* Narratives about origins of the field are almost entirely devoid of women
* Historical GIS
* Contribution of female authors, academics, historians
* What conditions contributed to the erasure of women in the history of digital history? What systems and conditions become visible when we return them to the origin stories for the field?
* Studies show that women’s scholarship gets cited less than men’s in many fields
* Structures within the academy have historically slowed women historians’ advancement
* Attention to digital work done within halls of academe excludes the work of women who land in non-academic positions
* An be difficult to identify women’s labour on projects
* It takes longer for women to get to leadership positions
* Slowing forward momentum in the height of their careers because of domestic responsibilities
* Funding requirements
* Non-academic projects often credit institutions rather than the individuals that worked on it

History can be open source: democratic dreams and the rise of digital history

* Wikipedia might be comparable to traditional encyclopedias, but they repel academics
* “if historians believe that what is available free on the Web is low quality, then we have a responsibility to make better information sources available online”
* Dream of “democratization” and the rise of digital humanities
* Open access and participation
* Way to recognize and celebrate the role of ordinary people in making history and culture
* Online access was a defining feature of “democratic” digital scholarship
  + But who has online access?
* Democratization as integral to the definition of the digital humanities from the beginning
* “resources that are free to use in any way, even if they are imperfect, are more valuable than those that are gated or use-restricted, even if those resources are qualitatively better”
* With such efforts proliferating across the university press landscape, academic credibility can hardly be considered any longer an obstacle to democratized access. And yet academic credibility is not the only remaining obstacle to the flourishing of a democratized digital humanities. … “Access,” it seems, is not the only barrier to a more democratic humanities
* More concerned with the code that goes into projects but not with the projects that come out
* As digital humanists institutionalize themselves further into the landscape of higher education, they must conceive of themselves less as underdogs and revolutionaries than as gatekeepers
* Working with communities rather than for them
* Don’t fetishize code – calls to encourage women and persons of colour to learn to code fail to confront longstanding structural inequalities
* “Democracy” is, and always has been, at root a discourse about power: about agency and access and equality, and “democratization,” therefore, cannot rely on institutions, philanthropy, or even technology alone, but must emerge consciously alongside critical self-reflection in the conception and execution of the work that will continue to push digital history forward.