

*Digital & Quantitative History - KHID 2580*¹

Franziska HEIMBURGER

13-15th January 2021

¹ the pandemic version

This syllabus provides an outline for the indicated class, as well as all the necessary information on preparatory work and subsequent evaluation.

Participants in this workshop will learn about different possible uses of quantification in history, both theoretically (in order to be able to understand such approaches when you encounter them in your reading) and practically (to get a feel for the various methods and tools). In the words of two authors who are fundamental to our conception of these issues, the aim is "to enable anyone to understand quantitative methods, even if that means deciding eventually, with full understanding, that it is better to do without them"².

Finally, this workshop also aims to provide a space for reflection on the recent digital transformations of the historical trade and its outputs.

² Claire Lemerrier and Claire Zalc.
*Quantitative Methods in the Humanities:
An Introduction*. University of Virginia
Press, Charlottesville, 2019

How the class will work

Your instructor

My name is Franziska HEIMBURGER, I am a *maîtresse de conférence* at Sorbonne Université where I teach British history and IT tools for students of English. My research focusses on military coalitions of the 19th and early 20th centuries, in particular as far as questions of interlingual communication are concerned.

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Dates and times

This class is taught in a very condensed format and our meetings as a whole group will take place over the space of three days in mid-January. We will convene for a total of twelve hours at the following times which will be split between whole-group formats and smaller breakout-room discussions or one-to-one technical advice sessions:

Wednesday to Friday, 13th-15th January 2021

- Three mornings from 10.15am to 12.15pm
- Three afternoons from 2.45pm to 4.45 pm

This Zoom link is valid for all these meetings:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85890348452?pwd=dnkobFhaL2NSTE9oQ05rb3RYV1hrQT09>

Workload

This class has the status of an "atelier" and is thus worth four ECTS credits. This means about 120h of student work in total, including class time and individual work. In this case, the workload will be split approximately as follows (the various tasks and readings are further described below):

Participating in class	12h
Reading (total)	14h
Lemercier & Zalc book	10h
article for review	2h
two other articles for class	2h
Writing (total)	80h
article review (approx. 8 pages)	32h
reflective essay on quantitative methods (approx. 12 pages)	48h
Other Preparation	3h
Looking at tutorials/other material	

What I expect you to do

Ahead of the class starting, all participants need to read the following book in order to familiarise themselves with the general approach and the technical vocabulary:

Claire Lemercier and Claire Zalc. *Quantitative Methods in the Humanities: An Introduction.* University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 2019.

For each of the morning discussions, I expect you to have read at least one of the articles in order to be able to participate in the discussion.

You will submit two pieces of writing for credit in this workshop:

1. A critical review of one of the articles set for the morning discussions. You may use the methodology explained here if you find it useful: <https://devhist.hypotheses.org/3103>
2. An essay in which you reflect on the possible uses of quantitative methods on an historical subject of your choice. You should include material aspects of the chosen methods as well as their potential limits.

Prepare before the class meetings, submit by 22nd January at the latest. Approximately 1800 words.

Submit approximately 3000 words by 22nd January.

Looking over the tutorials and other additional material ahead of the afternoon sessions will enable you to proceed more quickly and take the practical work further.

All the indicated articles as well as further reading material are available in this Drive:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xkCkTA9oA_zRyBMQAKOrXPKO88pQEpbS

Class outline

On each of the three days we will have a morning discussion which will include a theoretical introduction, exchanges about the different articles and some time in breakout rooms working out the implications of some of the methods. The afternoon sessions will be more applied, including testing some of the approaches seen in the morning on actual historical data.

Day 1: An introduction to Quantification in History

Wednesday, 13th January 2021

We will start with a whirlwind tour of the uses of quantification in history and a specific example so that you can see the potential from two very different perspectives. Group work will be dedicated to going over some fundamental concepts for the establishment of historical corpora (data entry, sampling techniques).

Select at least one of these articles to read before the session

- Fabien Accominotti. Creativity from interaction: Artistic movements and the creativity careers of modern painters. *Poetics*, 37(3):267–294, June 2009.
- Thomas David, Alix Heiniger, and Felix Bühlmann. Geneva's philanthropists around 1900: A field made of distinctive but interconnected social groups. *Continuity and Change*, 31(1):127–159, May 2016.
- Naomi Rosenthal, Meryl Fingrutd, Michele Ethier, Roberta Karant, and David McDonald. Social Movements and Network Analysis: A Case Study of Nineteenth-Century Women's Reform in New York State. *American Journal of Sociology*, 90(5):1022–1054, 1985.
- Gisèle Sapiro. The structure of the French literary field during the German Occupation (1940–1944): A multiple correspondence analysis. *Poetics*, 30(5):387–402, October 2002.
- Charles Tilly. Parliamentarization of Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834. *Theory and Society*, 26(2/3):245–273, 1997.
- Michael J. White and Erica Jade Mullen. Socioeconomic Attainment in the Ellis Island Era. *Social Science History*, 40(1):147–181, 2016.

Our practical session in the afternoon will be dedicated to the more advanced usages of spreadsheets which enable us to answer complex questions of quantitative history with the tools available on every computer.

Please ensure either Microsoft Excel or Libreoffice Calc is installed on your computer before we begin

Day 2: Counting words? Using lexicography in history

Thursday, 14th January 2021

We only have time to focus on one method in more detail and I decided to make that the usage of more or less sophisticated techniques to approach texts by using a computer. In the morning there will be a short historiographical introduction, a discussion about the articles you have read and some group work thinking through possible examples of "word-counting" for historians.

Select at least one of these articles to read before the session

- Matthew L. Jockers and David Mimno. Significant themes in 19th-century literature. *Poetics*, 41(6):750–769, December 2013.
- Kirsten Jane Lawson. "Just a few lines to let you know". Formulaic language and personalization strategies in Great War trench letters written by semi-literate Scottish soldiers. *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 31:111–143, December 2019.
- Franco Moretti. *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History*. Verso, London & New York, 2007.
- Mark Olsen. Gender representation and histoire des mentalités : Language and Power in the Trésor de la langue française. *Histoire & Mesure*, 6(3):349–373, 1991.
- Stefan Schöberlein. Poe or Not Poe? A Stylometric Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's Disputed Writings. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 32(3):643–659, July 2016.
- Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey. The Congressional Debate on Partial-Birth Abortion: Constitutional Gravitas and Moral Passion. *British Journal of Political Science*, 38(3):383–410, July 2008.
- Martina Katalin Szabó, Orsolya Ring, Balázs Nagy, László Kiss, Júlia Koltai, Gábor Berend, László Vidács, Attila Gulyás, and Zoltán Kmetty. Exploring the dynamic changes of key concepts of the Hungarian socialist era with natural language processing methods. *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, Online First, September 2020.

The practical session in the afternoon will include a brief introduction to IRAMuTeQ as one possible tool for historians who wish to use texts in a quantitative way.

Documentation is available here: <http://iramuteq.org/documentation>

We will go over the installation together.

Day 3: A digital revolution in history?

The final day is dedicated to the fairly recent digital transformations of the historical trade. We will start with an introduction to the larger field of Digital Humanities and then discuss the implications of "Digital History" as mentioned in the articles for preparatory reading.

- Anne Baillot and Sabine Seifert. The Project "Berlin Intellectuals 1800–1830" between Research and Teaching. *Journal of the Text Encoding Initiative*, (Issue 4), March 2013.
- Adrian Bingham. 'The Digitization of Newspaper Archives: Opportunities and Challenges for Historians'. *Twentieth Century British History*, 21(2):225–231, June 2010.
- Andreas Fickers. Update für die Hermeneutik. Geschichtswissenschaft auf dem Weg zur digitalen Forensik? *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History*, 17(1):157–168, 2020.
- Roberto Franzosi. A third road to the past? Historical scholarship in the age of big data. *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, 50(4):227–244, October 2017.
- Patrick Leary. Googling the Victorians. *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 10(1):72–86, January 2005.
- Stephen Robertson, Lincoln A Mullen, and Edward Ayers. Digital History and Argument. *White paper, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media*, November 2017.
- Renée Sieber and Victoria Slonosky. Developing a Flexible Platform for Crowdsourcing Historical Weather Records. *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, 52(3):164–177, July 2019.

Our final practical session will be dedicated to discovering and critically analysing a wide range of digital history projects.

Friday, 15th January 2021

Select at least one of these articles to read before the session