

# HIST 390-001: The Digital Past

Fall 2013  
Mon & Wed 12:00pm-1:15pm  
Robinson Hall B201  
George Mason University

## Dr. Amanda French

Research Hall 474

Office hours: T Th 12pm-1:30pm and by appointment

Email: [afrench5@gmu.edu](mailto:afrench5@gmu.edu)

Web: [amandafrench.net](http://amandafrench.net)

## Learning Goals

This course satisfies the [University's information technology requirement](#), which has the following five goals:

1. Students will be able to use technology to locate, access, evaluate, and use information, and appropriately cite resources from digital/electronic media.
2. Students will understand the core IT concepts in a range of current and emerging technologies and learn to apply appropriate technologies to a range of tasks.
3. Students will understand many of the key ethical, legal and social issues related to information technology and how to interpret and comply with ethical principles, laws, regulations, and institutional policies.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate, create, and collaborate effectively using state-of-the-art information technologies in multiple modalities.
5. Students will understand the essential issues related to information security, how to take precautions and use techniques and tools to defend against computer crimes.

Unlike some other courses designed to satisfy the IT requirement, this 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. The course is structured around four units that map to the first four of these IT requirements; the fifth, issues related to information security, is dealt with in the “Core IT concepts” unit.

## Assignments

### Shared Links - 10% of course grade

Over the course of the semester, you will submit at least 10 links to the course's Diigo group at <https://groups.diigo.com/group/hist-390-001> that will help you and your fellow students with that week's topic. Links have no due date, and you can submit as many links as you like, but you can only get credit for one link per week. Links may be submitted any time between Monday, September 2 and Wednesday, December 4. **Add a descriptive and/or evaluative comment to the link you submit in order to receive credit for it.**

### **Exam 1 (short answer, Core Concepts) - 15% of course grade**

**Wednesday, 9/11/13**

In-class exam on Unit 1, Core Concepts of Information Technology. The exam will take the form of 50 short-answer questions.

### **Exam 2 (short answer, Research Skills) - 20% of course grade**

**Wednesday, 10/16/13**

In-class exam on Unit 2, Research Skills in the Digital Age. The exam will take the form of 50 short-answer questions.

### **Presentation (in-class presentation, Social Issues) - 25% of course grade**

A ten-minute in-class presentation submitted to the course website that tells the story of a particular aspect of Internet history through the lens of a particular little-known **person** whose contribution to a particular **technology, technology feature, or website** is important for understanding a particular **ethical, legal, or social issue**. This presentation must be accompanied by a Zotero collection in our Zotero group bibliography at <https://www.zotero.org/groups/hist390-001-2013> that lists sources and media credits.

### **Final Project (digital history project, Creation and Communication) - 30% of course grade**

The final project is to create and publish to our course website a multimedia blog post that tells the story of a particular aspect of Internet history through the lens of a particular little-known **person** whose contribution to a particular **technology, technology feature, or website** is important for understanding a particular **ethical, legal, or social issue**. The blog post must contain at least 1000 words of original writing (or audio narration from a script), and the post must include at least two original multimedia items in at least two of the following six types: a timeline, a map, a chart or graph, a word cloud, an audio recording, or a video recording. Just like the writing, the multimedia items must be **created by you**. The post must also link all its sources to their origins, and must also link to a Zotero collection in our group bibliography at <https://www.zotero.org/groups/hist390-001-2013>. Above all, the post must be **interesting** and **scholarly**.

## **Important Dates**

- Mon, Aug 26 — first day of class
- Tue, Sep 3 — last day to drop class with no penalty
- Wed, Sep 11 -- **Exam #1**
- Wed, Sep 18 — last day to drop class with 33% tuition penalty
- Fri, Sep 27 — final drop deadline with 67% tuition penalty
- Mon, Oct 14 — no class due to Columbus Day
- Wed, Oct 16 -- **Exam #2**
- Mon, Oct 21 - Wed, Nov 20 -- **Presentations**
- Wed, Dec 4 — last day of class
- Mon, Dec 16 — **Final Project due at 1pm**

# Course Schedule

## Unit 1 -- Core Concepts of Information Technology

<b>MON 26-Aug</b>	Introduction and diagnostic survey
<b>WED 28-Aug</b>	Computer Basics, Files and File Management, and Keyboard Shortcuts
<b>WED 4-Sep</b>	The Underpinnings of the Internet and the Web, HTML, and CSS
<b>MON 9-Sep</b>	Data, databases, and content management systems
<b>WED 11-Sep</b>	<b>EXAM 1</b>

## Unit 2 -- Research Skills in the Digital Age

<b>MON 16-Sep</b>	Zotero
<b>WED 18-Sep</b>	Google
<b>MON 23-Sep</b>	Wikipedia
<b>WED 25-Sep</b>	Books
<b>MON 30-Sep</b>	Magazine and Newspaper Articles
<b>WED 2-Oct</b>	Scholarly Journals and Databases
<b>MON 7-Oct</b>	Archives
<b>WED 9-Oct</b>	Open Access and Creative Commons
<b>WED 16-Oct</b>	<b>EXAM 2</b>

## Unit 3 -- Social Issues and Information Technology

<b>MON 21-Oct</b>	Student Presentations
<b>WED 23-Oct</b>	Student Presentations
<b>MON 28-Oct</b>	Student Presentations
<b>WED 30-Oct</b>	Student Presentations
<b>MON 4-Nov</b>	Student Presentations
<b>WED 6-Nov</b>	Student Presentations
<b>MON 11-Nov</b>	Student Presentations
<b>WED 13-Nov</b>	Student Presentations
<b>MON 18-Nov</b>	Student Presentations
<b>WED 20-Nov</b>	Student Presentations

## Unit 3 -- Creating and Communicating with Technology

<b>MON 25-Nov</b>	Visual Design and the Web
-------------------	---------------------------

<b>WED 27-Nov</b>	Timelines and Maps
<b>MON 2-Dec</b>	Charts, Graphs, Word Clouds, and Visualizations
<b>WED 4-Dec</b>	Audio and Video Tools for the Web
<b>MON 16-Dec</b>	<b>FINAL PROJECT DUE BY 1:00pm</b>

## Policies

**Attendance:** You are expected to attend every class, but I will not be taking attendance. If you miss an ordinary class, you do not need to notify me or explain your absence to me. There are only three occasions when you must notify me 24 hours in advance or provide a written excuse of your absence: the date of the first exam, the date of the second exam, and the date of your presentation. See Medical and Other Excuses for more.

**ADA:** Any student who requires special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me to make necessary accommodations (before September 4, please). Students should present appropriate verification from the [Office of Disability Services](#), 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Medical and Other Excuses:** Every semester someone is forced to miss either an examination or the due date for an assignment either as the result of an illness or a family emergency. If you find yourself in this situation, fairness to all students in the class requires the proper documentation, without which your excuses will not be accepted. If you need to know more about this process consult me as soon as the emergency is taken care of.

**Plagiarism and Cheating:** Don't. Plagiarism and cheating are much easier in the digital age, but finding cheaters is even more easy, especially when you know computers and the Internet as well as I do. Please read the [George Mason University Honor Code](#) if you have any questions about what is expected of you in this regard. Penalties for academic dishonesty are severe. In short, you are at extreme risk for failing the course from just a single act of plagiarism or cheating.

**Privacy:** If you are enrolled in this class, you must as a part of the course work join certain Internet services (e.g., Diigo, Zotero, Slideshare) and publish certain work to the open web on our course website. If you wish, however, you may have your work removed from the course website after the class is over. To have your work removed, email me when the class is over.

**Communications:** In general, the best way to get hold of me is by email at [afrench5@gmu.edu](mailto:afrench5@gmu.edu); I will usually respond within two business days. Please be aware that I don't usually check email in the evening or on weekends. I will usually contact you by email, and I too will not expect a response sooner than two business days.

**Enrollment Status:** Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment status in this course. Any change in that status is the responsibility of the student and must be made by the dates listed in the Schedule of Classes. After the last day to drop a course, withdrawal from the course must be approved by the Dean and will be approved only for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.