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## Final Project Group Charter

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This charter outlines the values, goals, and roles for a digital humanities project that explores the North Carolina Digital Collections' records documenting civil rights history across North Carolina<sup>1</sup>, putting this collection into conversation with our ongoing work as part of the *Fourth Ward Oral History Project*, which documents the experiences of Raleigh residents who were displaced from the Fourth Ward, a predominantly Black neighborhood that was demolished as a result of urban renewal between 1968 and 1975. Currently, the larger oral history project includes several sub-projects, which are at various stages in their completion:

- The establishment of an oral history website that includes clips from interviews with former Fourth Ward residents
- The establishment of a community archive that collects maps, city records, and photographs pertaining to the neighborhood's history and redevelopment, as well as residents' photographs and archival records
- The development of a documentary illustrating the history and effect of urban renewal on Fourth Ward residents
- The development of a museum exhibit on the history of the neighborhood, completed in partnership with the City of Raleigh Museum
- The development of a book scanner and scanning software for use with City of Raleigh records to both digitize records relating to urban renewal in Raleigh and establish a streamlined process for digitization of city records more broadly

Given the wide scope of methods that the project mobilizes to document Black history in Raleigh in a variety of modalities, this course project's primary focus will be to supplement ongoing work and research for the larger project, aiding in the further development of these sub-projects.

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## *Project Values*

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As a continuation of our efforts working on the *Fourth Ward Oral History Project*, this course project will be guided by many of the same values that have been informative for our work with Black residents in Raleigh and the Fourth Ward Historic Neighborhood Association. Critically, these values have been formed over time out of collaboration with those residents, as well as scholarship exploring issues of epistemic injustice in research<sup>2-3</sup> and the implications this has for researchers who are seeking to preserve and document Black history. This project, then, is part of a legacy of work in public Black history that has been stewarded by scholars like Carter G. Woodson<sup>4-5</sup>, Madeline Morgan<sup>6</sup>, John Hope Franklin<sup>7</sup>, and many others whose efforts are not listed here but offer much insight that informs our efforts to both make Black history publicly accessible and to do so as part of active efforts to advocate for justice for Black communities in Raleigh<sup>8</sup>. We recognize that these efforts did not start and will not end with our project, however, and we are grateful to local historians and organizers including Carmen Cauthen<sup>9</sup>, Octavia Rainey, and the Wake County Housing Justice Coalition, all of whom have offered their guidance and expertise in the intersection between scholarship and activism.

As was the case for many neighborhoods destroyed through urban renewal projects, the Fourth Ward neighborhood was depicted in city records and local newspaper accounts as “dilapidated” and “blighted”<sup>10</sup>, largely in an effort on the part of City of Raleigh officials to bolster public support for the redevelopment project. Our project’s work, then, is largely informed by Fourth Ward residents’ rejection of this narrative, recognizing it as one of many instances in which language has been weaponized to pathologize and exclude Black communities and their residents from discussions relating to city planning and rationalize their subjugation<sup>11</sup>. This exclusion has extended beyond planning, however, with Black epistemologies and communities’ records likewise being excluded from local historical records<sup>12</sup>, questioned on the basis of their “authenticity” and “objectivity.”

For this reason, our work seeks to explore new methods in digital humanities that are informed by Black analytic perspectives, recognizing the importance of Black affects in response to digital historical texts<sup>13-14</sup>, centering Black communicative practice and storytelling as counter narrative practice<sup>15</sup>, and drawing on archival practices that resist and refuse knowledge extraction<sup>16</sup> from

local communities. To do so, we are prioritizing the following goals and values in our analysis of records from the North Carolina Digital Collections:

- In the course of this research, our team members will continue to explore alternative resources and storage-making practices for our community archive while we read and engage with scholarship on issues related to institutional archival practices to aid in our analysis of the civil rights collection. This will require a commitment to learning and engaging with work on oral history and alternative archiving frameworks which prioritize community ownership and agency.
- Likewise, the needs of Fourth Ward residents and our ongoing collaboration will be central in considering how to ensure that our analysis of the civil rights collection accounts for the lived experiences of the communities documented in these records. Specifically, we will consider ways to invite Fourth Ward residents to participate in and co-create knowledge in our analysis and visualization of these records, emphasizing collaborative research methods and communal knowledge production.
- Given our research interests, our reading and research for this project will include scholarship on the intersection between race, space, and place, exploring how their interaction can be ethically visualized in meaningful ways with an emphasis on documenting the connection between Black North Carolinians' and their communities in a way that is meaningful for residents of the Fourth Ward.

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### ***Project Management***

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In order to accomplish the aims of this project, the project team will meet weekly, every **Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. in Rick's Annex or Tompkins Hall, Room 204** (or via Zoom if one or both of us cannot meet in person) for around an hour to update each other about our progress on the project, develop and delegate new tasks, and, if necessary, reassess the project's goals and timeline. If we need more time, we will extend our Wednesday meeting anytime between **2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.**, or we will coordinate an alternate time to meet via text and/or email. On account of both member's hectic schedules during the month of April, particularly around the week of April 20th, we will aim to stay ahead of tasks throughout the month of March and will

maintain a steady line of communication in order to discuss any potential scheduling conflicts and project adjustments as they arise.

For each weekly meeting, Haley and I will alternate the role of **meeting scribe**, using the standardized agenda format developed by Haley here: [☰ Notes Template](#) . As part of this role, the scribe will detail the meeting's proceedings as well as set a prospective agenda for the following week. The scribe will also be tasked with documenting and attributing action items to the team member for the next meeting. These notes will then be uploaded to the **Weekly Meeting** folder in the project's shared drive. This note taking protocol ensures that project responsibilities are mutually agreed-upon, clearly articulated, and easily accessible for both parties involved.

All pertinent files associated with the project — meeting notes, spreadsheets, media files, and project drafts — will be uploaded to our shared **Google Drive folder** (here:

[📁 ENG 798 Final Project](#) ). Project members will work collaboratively on developing these files, making use of the suggesting feature made available via Google Workspace as well as in-text notes to develop and document project protocols as well as to suggest revisions.

Additionally, at least the week prior to an assignment's due date, members will determine who is responsible for submitting the finalized project files to the professor.

Group communication will primarily take place via text messaging and email. Haley and I will take a flexible approach to response times (within reason) so long as action items are completed by the agreed upon deadlines and the project progresses in a timely manner. If these deadlines are repeatedly missed or if significant changes need to be made to the schedule outlined above, we will meet to reevaluate these communication protocols.

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### ***Team Roles***

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#### **Documentation & Project Management**

Given the size of our project team, rather than organize our roles on the basis of any one individual overseeing project management and documentation, we have instead elected to

allocate different aspects of the project management process to both Brody and I equally (*see “Group Protocols”*). For this reason, we have established a shared Google Drive folder for project documentation and meeting minutes, and we have agreed to switch who takes on the note-taking responsibility every other meeting.

### Web Coordinator

Given Haley’s prior role as the web coordinator who has overseen the design and structure of the oral history project’s website ([fourthwardhistory.org](http://fourthwardhistory.org)), they will continue in this role for this course project. Notably, however, given that the Fourth Ward site is already live and is currently in use by residents and local city staff, officials, and historians, they will be developing this course project’s site as a pilot project using Google Sites. This will allow for trialing of the site’s design to see how it may (dis)align with the already existing branding and stylization of the oral history site, as well as provide a testing space for the integration of the course project materials and visualizations into the larger oral history site, if appropriate, after the end of the semester.

### Data Curation & Visualization

Given that our training has aligned in some ways, with our common background in computational linguistic research and methodologies, we have decided to approach both data curation and visualization in a similar manner to our approach for project management and documentation in that specific tasks will be assigned to both of our team members based our existing skill sets, research interests, and previous work and experience with the *Fourth Ward Oral History Project*. In particular, given our present interest in close analysis of letters and photographs contained within the civil rights collection, the distribution of roles is as follows:

	Data Curation	Data Visualization
Haley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee the use of optical character recognition and automatic transcription methods of records containing verbal data, with a focus on the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use geographic information develop 3D mapped scenes for users to explore the source locations of the records in space</li> </ul>

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	collection's letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use record transcriptions for corpus linguistic analysis, including text analysis and potentially sentiment analysis and create visualizations with key findings</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aid in cleaning of geographic information for each record to ensure they are machine-readable with GIS</li> </ul>	
Brody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a spreadsheet containing the metadata for each photo and letter record within the collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create social network maps and visualizations based on connections between letters in the collection</li> <li>• Ensure consistency in visualization aesthetics for the project's final presentation</li> </ul>

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If needed, to ensure that we can adapt to necessary changes in our curation and visualization roles over the course of the semester should we encounter barriers or discover potentially new research methods and practices that may be useful as we are more familiar with our dataset and are actively engaging in analysis, we will provide regular updates on our progress in each of these roles during our weekly meetings.

### Content Specialist

To ensure collaboration on the website's design and alignment between both its form and content, Brody will oversee the alignment of any narrative writing for the project and draft writing for visualization captions and descriptions, as well as offer context for the project's origins, goals, and work through the creation of an "About Page" for the project site.

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### ***Group Protocols***

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Weekly Wednesday meetings will be kept to an hour to ensure efficiency. During these meetings, the project member who takes on the role of the scribe will be responsible for facilitating

discussions, drafting the agenda, and guiding decision making, which will be made via consensus. In the rare case that additional meeting time is required, an alternative time/place will be arranged (see **Project Management** for details).

Group deadlines – i.e., those assignments not listed under “Course Project Calendar” – will be collaboratively developed and documented using both the weekly agenda notes and Google Calendar. If, for some reason, someone cannot fulfill a group deadline, they will be responsible for communicating this with the other group member to come up with a reasonable, alternative timeline. There will be a one week grace period for group deadlines. If tasks are still not completed after this period, or if action items continue to be delayed in a way that seriously hinders the project’s progress, members will be in communication with the professor to develop an action plan to resolve the issue. Open communication here is paramount, in regards to establishing project timelines, holding project members accountable for action items, as well as adjusting the project expectations when and if necessary.

To this end, and in order to ensure a positive collaborative experience with the project, we will commit to the following work practices:

- We will create concrete action items with clear deadlines to ensure that project responsibilities and deadlines are clearly articulated.
- We will collaboratively delegate tasks to ensure that responsibilities are equitably distributed and that the project timeline is manageable, while remaining flexible to adjusting said tasks and timeline as the project progresses.
- We will make use of Google Calendar to set weekly reminders for meetings and upcoming due dates.
- We will start tasks collaboratively in group meetings after which individual project members will be responsible for refining our assigned work and uploading it to the project’s shared Google Folder.
- We will make use of the collaborative functions offered by Google Workspace as well as the weekly agenda document to keep track of the project’s progress, communicate updates, set reminders, and suggest agenda items.

As part of the greater Fourth Ward Oral History Project, this website will continue to be developed and maintained by Haley after the completion of this digital humanities course.



## References

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