Hist 396.3 Digital History

Wednesdays, 9:30-12:20

Professor: Dr Jim Clifford

Office Location: Arts 706☐

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-1:30pm and other times by appointment.

E-mail: jim.clifford@usask.ca☐

NOTE: This course has a homepage in PAWS that you will be using regularly.

Course Description

Digital history, the application of new and emerging technologies to the study of history, is an exciting new historical methodology. In this course, we explore the literature on digital history, and then put theory into practice by digitally collecting, evaluating, and producing historical knowledge. Along with discussing what is digital history and how it is evolving, this course will introduce students to text mining, geographic information systems (GIS) and developing historical websites. We will also explore how digital archives are changing how we preserve and research history. Students will get hands-on experience with a wide range of digital skills and use these new methods to develop a final digital history project.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes ☐

We have three goals for this course:

1. The development of a digital portfolio, which showcases your work with several digital platforms, tools, and languages (including Wordpress, Omeka, SketchUp, basic GIS, and basic Python).
2. Improve your written communication skills through regular short writing.
3. Develop ability to find high quality primary sources on the Internet.

Required Text

- Dan Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. Available online at http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/

Course Requirements and Assessment

Assessment	Date of Evaluation	Weighting
Four Required Blog Posts	September 23; October 14; October 30; November 20	20%
Contributions to course discussions (in class and online)	Ongoing	15%
Final Project Proposal	September 30	10%
Final Project	December 2	40%
Final Project Lightning Talk	November 25 and December 2	15%

Four Required Blog Posts (20%)

You write a series of four short blog posts on your personal blog. Each of which can be between 800 and 1000 words and where applicable, should include embedded material such as images, links, videos and sample code. Blog posts are not essays - they are simply there to show that you're engaged with the material, playing with the tools and showing off some of your results.☐This are the required posts:

1. One posts reviewing a digital history project found on the web.
2. One post on a digital tool for historical research.
3. One post on your encounters with HGIS.
4. One post on your encounters with programing.

- Each student should create a personal blog on the Blogger platform.

Each blog post will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Clarity: Is it well written? Does the blog post follow proper spelling, grammar, and□stylistic conventions?

- Engagement: Does the post engage with the assignment? Does it demonstrate that□you have used the digital project or tool?

- Description: What is the project or tool?

- Analysis: Be critical. If you are frustrated, if you do not think something makes□sense, or if a tool does not seem useful, this is OK. If you think it is the best thing since sliced bread, this is OK as well!□

Contributions to course discussions (in class and online) (15%)

Students are expected to be actively involved in lecture and tutorial discussions. I expect you to:

- Attend class regularly with the readings completed and contribute to discussions.
- Demonstrate a conscientious effort to learn and explore course themes and concepts. If you ever have a question, feel struck, or if anything arises - don't hesitate to☐contact me. Asking questions will help your contributions grade.☐
- Help fellow students during the hands-on lab sessions.
- If you are not a big contributor during the class discussions, you can contribute online with additional short weekly blog post (300-400 words) and by adding thoughtful comments to your fellow student's blog posts.

Final Project PROPOSAL☐ and Meeting (10%)

400-500 words (roughly two pages, double-spaced) - due September 30th. For this, you only need to do the following:

- What is your project going to be?
- What sources will you be drawing on?☐
- What digital tools do you plan to use?

You also need to schedule a meeting with me during the following two weeks to discuss your proposal and plan a feasible final project.

Final Project □(40%)

This is a major research project for this course, that will allow you to pursue one of the tools that you have explored in depth. There is quite a bit of freedom in what you want to do. The project is due on the last day of class, December 2nd and should be the rough workload equivalent of a 12-15 page paper. □For this assignment, YOU WILL PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TO DO!□

- **Research, establish, and write a historical website:** Using Omeka or Wordpress, create a small public history website. This could be of:
  - University of Saskatchewan topics: cataloguing public art, buildings, nature, and so forth on campus.
  - Local history: finding historical sites, plaques, etc.□
  - Other (preferably something you love)□

~ OR ~□

- **Conduct large-scale textual analysis and share your analysis:** In consultation with me, we can find a corpus that you could then explore using tools such as topic modeling, *n*-grams, Voyant Tools, and so forth.
  - The end result can be a historical paper (8-10 pages) *or* can be a website explaining your findings (similar to *Mining the Dispatch*).

~ OR ~

- **Develop a HGIS project:** With maps and data found online, through the library, in consultation with the me or from city resources.
  - The end result can be a historical paper (8-10 pages) *or* can be a website explaining your findings (you could use Neatline or Arc Story Maps).

~ OR ~

- **Create a tool with Python or another language:** Building on our introductory *Programming Historian* work, you could find a corpus online, find a way to spider the sources, and program your own textual analysis tools. As with above, you could write a historical paper (8-10 pages) which would note your own experiences as well as findings, or put this on your website. Or, you could choose to write your own Programming Historian style lesson(s) as a part of this project.

~ OR ~□

- **Something else**! Come talk to me in office hours.

Final Project Lightning Talk (15%)

This will involve quickly showing off what you've done to the rest of the class in exactly 5 minutes. It will be marked on the effectiveness of your presentation slides and on the clarity of your oral presentation. You will need to submit your slides for me to grade.

Course Outline□

Week 1: Course Introduction and Going Digital - September 9

Readings: "Introduction: Promises and Perils of Digital History," in *Digital History*.

Week 2: The History Web - September 16

Reading: "Exploring the History Web," in *Digital History*, "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History," available online, http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/issues/952/interchange/ index.html

Lab: Blogging and basic HTLM: Blogger vs Wordpress, text formatting and embedding links, images, videos, maps and other media.

Homework: Set up a Blogger blog, and say hi in your first post! Who are you, why are you in the course, what is your background? (complete before class on September 16).

Week 3: Citizen Histories and Web Sources - September 23

Readings: "Designing for the History Web," in *Digital History*.

Toni Appelbaum, "How the Professor Who Fooled Wikipedia Got Caught by Reddit," 15 May 2012, available online, http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/05/how- the-professor-who-fooled-wikipedia-got-caught-by-reddit/257134/.

Explore at least five of the following websites:

1. 9/11 Digital Archive: http://911digitalarchive.org
2. Hurricane Katrina Archive: http://hurricanearchive.org
3. Web Archives for Historical Research (Canadian political parties portal): http://webarchives.ca/
4. Locating London's Past: http://www.locatinglondon.org/
5. Montréal, l'avenir du passé (English version available): http://www.mun.ca/mapm/eng/about_frame.html
6. Mapping the Republic of Letters: http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/
7. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces
8. Megaprojects New Media: http://megaprojects.uwo.ca/
9. Sask History Online: http://saskhistoryonline.ca/
10. Environment and Society Portal: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/
11. UK HANSARD 1803–2005: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/
12. Don Valley Historical Mapping Project: http://maps.library.utoronto.ca/dvhmp/
13. History & Policies: http://www.historyandpolicy.org/
14. Quantifying Kissinger: http://blog.quantifyingkissinger.com/
15. Digital Harlem: http://digitalharlem.org/
16. Occupy Web Archive: http://webarchives.cdlib.org/a/occupy
17. Outbreak (digital history game): http://kevinkee.ca/articles/project/outbreak/
18. Returning the Voices to Kouchibouguac National Park: http://returningthevoices.ca/

Lab: Wordpress, MediaWiki and Omeka

Homework: Complete your first required blog post on a digital history project. What is it? What does it offer? Is it valuable? Representative? (Due before class)

Week 4: Podcasting and Sketchup - September 30

Readings: "Building an Audience," in *Digital History*.

Listen to an episode of *Nature's Past* or the *History Slam Podcast*.

Devon Elliott, Robert MacDougall, and William J. Turkel, "New Old Things: Fabrication, Physical Computing, and Experiment in Historical Practice," *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 37 (2012): 121-128. Available online.

Lab: Recording and editing audio and/or install and play with Google Sketchup. Make a simple object or recording.

Week 5: Digitizing Primary Documents and The Role of Archives - October 7

Readings: "Collecting History Online" and "Preserving Digital History," in *Digital History*.

Library Visit*: This week we will visit the Digitization team at the University Library (still waiting to confirm this).

Watch: "How the Internet Works in 5 Minutes." Type that into the search bar at http://youtube.com/ or if you like direct links, it's http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_LPdttKXPc

*This remains tentative as my normal contact at the library is on leave this term.

Lab: Omeka archives and the importance of metadata.

Homework: Blog post on a digital tool for historical research (finish before the following class).

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Some questions to consider: What are uses of your tool? What are the
strengths and weaknesses of the tool? Can you find a digital history project
that uses the tool?
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Tools:

1. History Lab
2. Voyant Tools
3. Relational Databases
4. Audacity
5. Timeline.js
6. Wordpress
7. Omeka
8. Drupal
9. MALLET
10. Ngrams
11. Javascript and D3
12. Find more digital tools on the Dirt Directory: http://dirtdirectory.org/
13. Do not choose GIS software or Python, as you will write future blog posts on these tools.

Week 6: Quantitative History and Historical Databases (with Prof. Jon Bath) - October 14

Readings: Peter Baskerville, "Undetermined by Borders: The Commonality of Counting," http://activehistory.ca/papers/pbaskerville/

Week 7: Historical Geographic Information Systems (with Prof. Geoff Cunfer) - October 21

Readings: "What is Spatial History?" http://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29

Geoff Cunfer, "Scaling the Dust Bowl" in *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS Are Changing Historical Scholarship*, Anne Kelly Knowles, ed. (Redlands, Calif.: ESRI Press, 2008), 95-121,https://esriaustralia.com.au/u/lib/cms/placing_history_c4sample.pdf

-Visit to the HGIS Lab and discussion with Prof. Cunfer.

Lab: Geospatial Historian ArcGIS Lessons

Week 8: Finding Patterns in a HGIS Database - October 28

Readings: Dunae, Patrick A., Jason A. Gilliland, Donald J. Lafreniere, and John S. Lutz. "Making the Inscrutable, Scrutable: Race and Space in Victoria's Chinatown, 1891." *BC Studies*, no. 169 (2011).

Lab: Geospatial Historian ArcGIS and/or QGIS lessons

Homework: Blog post on your experiences with HGIS due by Friday at 5pm. If possible, include an image of a map you created using ArcGIS, QGIS or Google Earth.

Weeks 9: Humanities Programming and Distant Reading - November 4

Readings: 1. Jean-Baptiste Michel et al., "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," *Science* 331, no. 6014 (January 14, 2011): 176–82. Mining the Dispatch: http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch - Google N-Gram: http://books.google.com/ngrams - New York Times Chronicle http://chronicle.nytlabs.com/

Lab: *The Programming Historian 2,* available online, http://programminghistorian.org. Do lessons 1, 2, and 3.

Reading Break - November 11

Week 10: Visualizations/ Programming Continued - November 18

Lab: *The Programming Historian 2,* available online, http://programminghistorian.org. Do lessons 4, 5, and 6.

Homework: After our introductory classes, begin to work through the lessons. Write up a short blog post on your encounters with Python (Due Friday at 5pm). How far did you get? Do you think this is a valuable approach for historians? Why or why not?

Note that I do not expect you to become the best **Python** *programmer in the world. Instead, these readings are to help you start thinking about programming and whether we think it matters for Arts students. At the end of the day, if you hated it and got nowhere, that's fine!*

Week 11: Big Data and History - November 25

Readings: Tim Hitchcock "Big Data for Dead People: Digital Readings and the Conundrums of Positivism" on his Historyonics Blog: http://historyonics.blogspot.ca/2013/12/big-data-for-dead-people-digital.html and S. Graham, I. Milligan, and S. Weingart, *The Historians Macroscope. Read "The Joys of Abundance: The Era of Big Data" and "The Limits of Big Data, or Big Data and the Practice of History"* http://www.themacroscope.org/.

Homework: Find out something new about a commodity using the Trading Consequences visualizations: http://tradingconsequences.blogs.edina.ac.uk/

Week 12: What could be next? Course Conclusion and Final Lightning Talks - December 2

This week we will end by discussing the value of computers in expanding historian's toolboxes. We will also consider the limits and pitfalls of these methodologies.

Acknowledgements:

This course is adapted from Dr. Ian Milligan's History 303 at the University of Waterloo.

Late Policy and Extensions

The late penalty is 2% per day (14% per week). You will receive a 2% penalty at 9am each day.

Every student may take one 7-day extension without penalty. After you use your extension, do not request a second one unless you have a documented medical or family emergency. Please consult with me as soon as possible if you have a medical or family emergency.

Departmental policy on plagiarism

It is important that students read and understand the University's regulations governing academic misconduct, which apply to all University courses. Plagiarism is one of 23 examples of misconduct that are outlined in these regulations. Because it concerns the use of sources in the production of one's own work (term essays, prepared in-class essays, take-home exams, book reviews, historiographic overviews, artistic or historical reproductions, and any other written requirements), a clear understanding of plagiarism is particularly important in History and CMRS courses, where such work often constitutes an important component of the course. Accordingly, every student must understand the distinction between plagiarism and the legitimate use of external sources. As stated in the University's regulations: **Department of History Undergraduate Instruction Handbook: 11**

"Plagiarism is the presentation of the work or idea of another in such a way as to give others the impression that it is the work or idea of the presenter.

Adequate attribution is required. What is essential is that another person have no doubt which words or research results are the student's and which are drawn from other sources. Full explicit acknowledgement of the source of the material is required.

Examples of Plagiarism are:

(i) The use of material received or purchased from another person or prepared by any person other than the individual claiming to be the author.

(ii) The verbatim use of oral or written material without adequate attribution.

(iii) The paraphrasing of oral or written material of other persons without adequate attribution."

It is also unethical to submit the same essay to two different classes, unless you have made a special arrangement with the instructors of both classes.

If your instructor believes that plagiarism or any other type of academic misconduct has occurred, s/he will follow the University regulations governing these matters, which are available at: http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/honesty/StudentAcademicMisconduct.pdf

Integrity Defined (from the Office of the University Secretary)

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Student Conduct & Appeals section of the University Secretary Website and avoid any behavior that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should read and be familiar with the Regulations on Academic Student Misconduct (http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/honesty/StudentAcademicMisconduct.pdf) as well as the Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters and Procedures for Resolution of Complaints and Appeals (http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/honesty/StudentNon-AcademicMisconduct2012.pdf)

For more information on what academic integrity means for students see the Student Conduct & Appeals section of the University Secretary Website at: http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/pdf/dishonesty_info_sheet.pdf

Examinations with Disability Services for Students (DSS)

Students who have disabilities (learning, medical, physical, or mental health) are strongly encouraged to register with Disability Services for Students (DSS) if they have not already done so. Students who suspect they may have disabilities should contact DSS for advice and referrals. In order to access DSS programs and supports, students must follow DSS policy and procedures. For more information, check http://www.students.usask.ca/disability/, or contact DSS at 966-7273 or dss@usask.ca.

Students registered with DSS may request alternative arrangements for mid-term and final examinations.

Students must arrange such accommodations through DSS by the stated deadlines. Instructors shall provide the examinations for students who are being accommodated by the deadlines established by DSS.