**DH Project Plan**

**Time window**: January 2017 to May 2017

**Project Description**:

My project is largely concerned with discourse as it pertains to processes of knowledge production, replication, and misrepresentation. I use special collections materials from Thomas Gosse, whose family traveled up and down the eastern coast of the continent in 1929. Through diary entries, photos, and films, I analyze the ways in which ideas about the African continent and its peoples are produced, perpetuated, and distorted. Ultimately, I argue that these materials (though seemingly innocuous) misrepresent Africa through tropes of primitivism, absence, and ultra-naturalness. These misrepresentations and the medium of photography as a whole deprive Africans of voice and agency, while also contributing to an Africanist discourse that is not centered around words or ideas, but images, supporting another one of my central arguments that when it comes to the African continent, it is mostly understood through a series of photos.

**Project Goals**:

My goal for this project is to have a fully functioning, aesthetically pleasing website that will house digitized versions of the collections visual and textual materials. The website will also feature a crowdsourcing tool for annotation and exhibits centered on the idea of visual tropes. By constructing a website, I hope to create an intersection between archival history and public history, where materials typically only available to a small population of the public can be widely distributive. Moreover, such distribution will also increase awareness of often implicitly problematic discourse, encouraging people to be more mindful of the ways in which we constantly re-inscribe imperial rhetoric. While the website is my main goal, I also hope to co-author a paper with Professor TJ Tallie concerning the significance of my findings from a postcolonial, poststructuralist position, reflecting on the impact of Digital Humanities methodology in our particular field of interest.

**Progress**:

So far I have uploaded the 96 images of the first photo album in the collection and made significant changes to the website’s appearance and functionality. I have experimented with the Scripto plug-in, but determined that it will not make any significant contribution to the project’s final product. However, there are still several steps that need to be taken. I will number them (by priority) as follows:

1. Upload images from the four remaining photo albums
2. Upload digitized diary pages
3. Transcribe diary entries and then upload text
4. Upload film taken by Thomas Hills
5. Continue working on exhibits, grouping photos by tropes and explaining the meaning/significance of the trope
6. Install annotation functionality on website that will allow visitors to identify tropes at work in the collection, adding an instructive element to the website (perhaps hypothes.is)
7. Develop text posts that will explain the significance of the project, but also lay out (in a simple manner) the theory influencing the project
8. Increase and refine website functionality and aesthetic