

New Viewpoints in American History 21.512.393:Q1 Digital History in Theory and Practice

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Friedman

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Office: Conklin Hall 337 ♦ Monday 1:00-2:00 pm, Tuesday 1:30-2:30 pm

Class Location and time: Conklin Hall 348, Monday-Wednesday 4:00-5:20 pm

Introduction:

This course focuses on the promises – and challenges – of digital technologies for the analysis and collection of historical data, and the delivery of digital history content over the web for pedagogical and public history purposes. Students will be introduced to the theory and issues of digital history, including its potential and controversies, and to the tools of the digital historian's trade. Although students are expected to already have a high level of computer proficiency and Internet literacy, this course will introduce them to the unique application of otherwise familiar tools and resources to digital history.

Students will work collaboratively to create a digital history project using content produced for this course equivalent in scope to a standard research seminar paper. They will also be required to maintain a personal blog for the course, where they will post response papers, as well as an ongoing journal discussing their reflections on the process of digital history and the challenges – and solutions – of developing a digital history website.

Through practical assignments, workshops and class discussions, students will develop the practical skills (including research methods, media preparation and management, and history website management) and the critical perspective required of digital historians in the 21st century.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on-time and stay for the duration of the class. Students may be excused for illness, family emergency and similar extreme situations, and religious observance. Absences for work, job interviews and similar events will not be excused. Six unexcused absences will result in an automatic failing grade. Students who miss eight or more sessions through *any* combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course.

Participation:

Everyone is both expected and required to participate in class discussions and workshops. The participation grade will reflect the quality and quantity of your in-class participation and the quality of your ongoing blog posts.

Required Readings:

Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*

Sonja Cameron, Sarah Richardson, *Using Computers in History*

Additional readings (indicated by **) are available online.

Assignments:

Response Posts: Students will post four reading responses of no less than 600 words on the readings for each class. These must be posted *before* class to receive full marks.

Source Criticism Assignment: Students will critique the reliability of two online sources.

Archive Report Assignment: Students will conduct preliminary research at an online archive, and write a report on the extent, strengths, and limitations of the collection.

Website Review: Students will write a 2-page review of a professional digital history websites of their choice. These will be published on their blogs no later than 2 March.

Oral History Assignment: Students will conduct an oral history interview with the subject of their choice and produce both a transcript of the Interview and a short paper appropriate for a digital history site. They will publish both, along with digital audio, on their blogs no later than 4 April.

Game Report: Students will write a 3-page report on a historically-themed computer or video game of their choice (approved by the professor) critiquing its implementation and pedagogical value.

Digital History Project: In groups of four or five, students will produce a pedagogical or public history website using a content management system. This assignment will consist of three parts:

1. *Project Proposal:* A proposal detailing the project's theme, goals, content and presentation. A preliminary proposal will be submitted to all students for critique and discussion. The final proposal, incorporating suggestions, will be submitted to the professor for approval.
2. *Project Presentation:* Each group will present the draft project to the class on 18 April, demonstrating its interface and content for peer review.
3. *Final Project:* Each Group's digital history website, incorporating changes to address issues raised in peer review, will go live by 2 May.

Project Reviews: Students will post detailed critiques of each group's websites to their blogs. Each review should be no less than 300 words in length.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every major assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination / assignment."

Grading:

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Source Criticism Assignment	5%
Archive Report Assignment	10%
Oral History Assignment	10%
Website Review	5%
Game Report	5%
Response Posts.....	20%
Digital History Project	<u>25%</u>
	100%

Class Schedule

- 20 January Class 1: Introduction – What It's All About**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, "Introduction: Promises and Perils of Digital History"
- 25 January Class 2: Networks and Topologies of Knowledge**
** Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (selection)
** Barry Leiner, Vint Cerf, et al., "Brief History of the Internet"
- 27 January Class 3: Issues I**
** Christine L. Borgman, "The Digital Future is Now: A Call to Action for the Humanities," *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 3.
- 1 February Class 4: Issues II**
** N. Katherine Hayles, "How We Think: Transforming Power and the Digital Humanities"
** Nicholas Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains," *The Atlantic*, July-August 2008.
- 3 February Class 5: Issues III**
** Rebecca J. Rosen, "Truth, Lies, and the Internet," *The Atlantic*, 29 December 2011.
** William Badke, "Rumor, Fear, and Conspiracies," *Online*, July-August 2012.
** Minh-Ha T. Pham, "Blog Ambition: Fashion, Feelings, and the Political Economy of the Digital Raced Body," *Camera Obscura* 2, 2011.
- 8 February Class 6: The Digital Archive I**
Cameron and Richardson, Chapter 1
** Bob Nicholson, "rediscovering the Scholar Adventurer," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 45, Summer 2012
Source Criticism Assignment Deadline
- 10 February Class 7: The Digital Archive II**
Cameron and Richardson, Chapter 4
** Michelle Caswell, "Community Archives and the Fight Against Symbolic Annihilation," *The Public Historian* 36, November 2014
- 15 February Class 8: Quantitative Analysis**
** Deryck W. Holdsworth, "Historical Geography: New Ways of Imaging and Seeing the Past," *Progress in Human Geography* 2003.
Cameron and Richardson, Chapter 5
- 17 February Class 9: Research**
Cameron and Richardson, Chapter 6
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 1

- 22 February Class 10: Curating**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 3
** Arjun Sabhawral, "Digital Representation of Disability History: Developing a Virtual Exhibition," *Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference* 3, 2012.
Archive Assignment Deadline
- 24 February Class 11: Workshop – Working With Images**
- 29 February Class 12: Pedagogy**
** W. Guy Clarke and John K. Lee, "The Promise of Digital History in the Teaching of Local History," *Clearing House* 78, 2004
** Tracey M. Weis, Rina Benmayor and Cecilia O'Leary, "Digital Technologies and Pedagogies," *Social Justice*; 29, 2002.
- 2 March Class 13: Publishing and Content Management**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 4
Website Review Deadline
- 7 March Class 14: Dynamic Multimedia**
** Judith Thomas, "Digital Video, the Final Frontier," *Library Journal*. 129, 2004.
Preliminary Project Proposal Deadline
- 9 March Class 15: Project Proposal Peer Review and Discussion**
- 21 March Class 16: Collaborative History**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 5
** Paul Arthur, "Digital Fabric, Narrative Threads: Patchwork Designs in History," *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 2, 2008.
- 23 March Class 17: Oral History**
** Paul Longley Arthur, "Digital Lives: Oral Histories, Community Building, and Experimental Multimedia," *Issues in Writing* 1, 2007.
Revised Project Proposal Deadline
- 28 March Class 18: Workshop – Working with Audio**
- 30 March No Class**
- 4 April Class 19: Sources**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 6
Oral History Assignment Deadline
- 6 April Class 20: Gameplay**
** Kevin Kee, Shawn Graham, et. al., "Towards a Theory of Good History Through Gaming," *Canadian Historical Review* 90, 2009.
** Bill MacKenty, "All Play and No Work," *School Library Journal* 5, 2006.
- 11 April Class 21: Ethics and Rights**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 7

- 13 April** **Class 22: Trans/Interdisciplinarity**
Yu-Wei Lin. "Transdisciplinarity and Digital Humanities: Lessons Learned from Developing Text-Mining Tools for Textual Analysis," in Berry.
Game Report Deadline
- 18 April** **Class 23: Project Presentations**
- 20 April** **Class 24: Peer Review I**
- 25 April** **Class 25: Peer Review II**
- 27 April** **Class 26: The Future of Digital History**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 8
- 2 May** **Class 27: Conclusion and Presentation of Final Projects**