

CREATING DIGITAL HISTORY

History GA.2033 – Fall 2016

Instructor: Leah Potter

Time & Place: Class meets Mondays, 4:55-7:35pm in King Juan Carlos, Room 607

Email: leah.potter@nyu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description

A hands-on introduction to “doing history” in the digital age, this course focuses on the evolving methodologies and tools used by public historians to collect, preserve, and present digital sources. Students will become familiar with a range of web-based tools, such as Omeka, and learn best practices for digitizing, adding metadata, tagging, and clearing permissions. By evaluating existing digital history projects and discussing perspectives from leading practitioners, students will also consider the role of the general public as both audiences for, and co-creators of, digital history. The core requirement is a collaborative digital history archive and exhibit that will be developed throughout the semester on the theme of “Wealth and Inequality in New York City and the Nation.”

Course Objectives

- Develop a working knowledge of the approaches and tools relevant for gathering, preserving, and presenting digital history.
- Become familiar with a wide range of digital (and some non-digital) archives collections, and how they organize information and items.
- Evaluate the elements and effectiveness of digital history projects created for public audiences.
- Learn how to create a digital collection in Omeka, and add text, visual, and audio objects using metadata.
- Gain experience designing and developing an online exhibit that situates archival items in the context of contemporary historical research and debates.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Students should come to class having completed all readings and/or assignments, and be ready to engage in discussion questions listed in the syllabus and/or assigned in the previous class. In addition, each student will give one in-class “tool tutorial” (8-10 minute presentation) about a tool

that can assist with gathering, preserving and/or presenting digital history. Students must sign up to present on either October 24 or November 14.

Weekly attendance is required. In most cases, missing some or all of a class will negatively affect your participation grade. You must email in advance if you cannot attend a class (or must arrive late/leave early) due to an emergency, illness, or other extenuating circumstances.

You are strongly encouraged to bring a laptop to class, especially for classes with designated time for project work.

Written Assignments

Each student will be required to write:

- A **digital archive review** (500 words), using [JAH Guidelines](#); reviews should summarize how information is organized and accessed, the project audiences, its technical platform, and evaluate its ease of use.
- A **book review** (750 words) of a secondary historical work, related to your digital history project (see below).
- A **digital exhibit review** (750 words), using [JAH Guidelines](#); reviews should evaluate its key themes, target audience, presentation of collection items, and historical interpretation.
- A **“featured item” article** (500 words) highlighting one item in your digital collection that exemplifies the project themes or purpose.

Digital Project

The core requirement is to complete a collaborative, semester-long project. Working with a partner (or, if necessary, in groups of 3), students will build an Omeka site, with a minimum of 20 entries, 4 featured items, and a public-facing exhibit. The collection (or archive) should consist of a mix of text and visual items; at least one audio/video item; and at least 3 previously non-digitized or transcribed items.

A detailed set of guidelines and worksheets for the digital project will be posted to the course site.

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities ([212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980) or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Course Grading

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following assignments and criteria. Note that 55% of your grade is based on individual class participation and assignments, and 45% on a digital project that you create with a partner(s). Except in rare cases, project partners will receive an identical grade for all project components (design, collection, exhibit).

Assignment		Due Date	Criteria
Class Participation	15%	Weekly	<i>Comes to class prepared, and constructively participates in discussion and activities.</i>
“Tool Tutorial”	10%	10/24 or 11/14	<i>Provides clear overview of tool so that others can understand what it does and begin to evaluate its relevance to digital history (eg. its purpose, how it works, level of support for users, etc.).</i>
Written Digital Archive Review	5%	9/19	<i>Following JAH guidelines, clearly summarizes key aspects of digital archive, and evaluates its strengths and weaknesses.</i>
Written Book Review	10%	10/3	<i>Provides clear summary of author’s argument, main conclusions, and use of evidence, and evaluates strengths and weaknesses of each.</i>
Written Digital Exhibit Review	10%	10/31	<i>Following JAH guidelines, clearly summarizes key aspects of digital exhibit, and evaluates its strengths and weaknesses.</i>
Written Featured Item	5%	11/28	<i>Writes clear, compelling description of archival item and its significance to the larger project.</i>
Project Design (Worksheets #1-4)	10%	11/7	<i>See detailed project guidelines.</i>
Project Omeka Collection	20%	12/12	<i>See detailed project guidelines.</i>
Project Omeka Exhibit	15%	12/12	<i>See detailed project guidelines.</i>

Course Texts & Resources

Required readings are available online, as PDFs, or from the NYU ebrary.

Readings for Book Review

Below is a list of significant works by historians, journalists, and sociologists that explore the theme of wealth and inequality in the context of a particular time, place (often New York City), individual, or social group. Each book addresses one or more related theme: **capitalism, colonialism, gender, labor movements, poverty, race, real estate, reform, progressivism.**

These works are meant to provide context and to help generate research questions to guide your creation of a digital project during the semester.

Students are responsible for reading one of these secondary works, and writing a book review. Most texts are available at the NYU library or for purchase at many online and local booksellers.

- Beckert, Sven. *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Chernow, Ron. *Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.* Vintage, 2004.
- Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Crown, 2016.
- Fink, Leon. *The Long Gilded Age*. University of Pennsylvania, 2015.
- Lindert, Peter and Williamson, Jeffrey. *Unequal Gains: American Growth and Inequality since 1700*. Princeton University Press, 2016.
- McGerr, Michael. *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
- O'Donnell, Edward. *Henry George and the Crisis of Inequality: Progress and Poverty in the Gilded Age*. Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Orleck, Annelise. *Storming Caesar's Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*. Beacon, 2006.
- Satter, Beryl. *Family Properties: How the Struggle Over Race and Real Estate Transformed Chicago and Urban America*. Picador, 2010.
- Shorto, Russell. *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America*. Vintage, 2005.

Digital Tools & References:

- DiRT Directory, <http://dirtdirectory.org/>, a comprehensive list of tools and resources for digital historians.
- Doing History Glossary, <http://history2016.doingdh.org/glossary/>: Glossary of technical terms and abbreviations commonly by digital historians.
- History Pin, <https://www.historypin.org/en/>: Local history tool that allows users to create collections of map "pins" with text, photos, and tags.
- Omeka, <https://omeka.org/>: Open source content management tools especially designed for scholars, museums, libraries, and cultural institutions.
- Neatline, <http://neatline.org/>: An Omeka add-on tool that allows you to create interactive maps and timelines to enhance digital storytelling

- Reclaim Hosting, <https://reclaimhosting.com/>: Domain and web hosting for students and educators.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Guiding Questions for Articles:

- *What is the author's main argument? What does it add to our theoretical understanding of digital history?*
- *What practical knowledge or insights does the author share about doing digital history?*

Guiding Questions for Digital Archives and Exhibits:

- *Who is the target audience? And how does the project attempt to engage users?*
- *What is the main idea or problem being addressed?*
- *How well is content communicated to users?*
- *How easy is the site to use and navigate?*

September 12: What is Digital History?

Readings:

- Cohen, Dan and Roy Rosenzweig, *Doing Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*. University of Pennsylvania, 2005: [Introduction](http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/introduction/), <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/introduction/>, and [Exploring the History Web](http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/exploring/), <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/exploring/>
- Robertson, Stephen. "[The Differences between Digital History and Digital Humanities.](http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/76)" in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/76>.
- Weller, Toni. "History in the Digital Age." In *History in the Digital Age*. Routledge, 2012. ([NYU ebrary](#))

Digital Archive:

- The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/>, University of Virginia

September 19: Digital Sources and Digital Archives

Readings:

- Rosenzweig, Roy. "[Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era.](https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/links/pdf/introduction/0.6b.pdf)" *American Historical Review* 108, 3 (June 2003): 735-762, <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/links/pdf/introduction/0.6b.pdf>.
- Sheratt, Tim. "[It's All About the Stuff: Collections, Interfaces, Power and People.](#)" *Journal of the Digital Humanities* 1, no. 1 (March 9, 2012).

- Turkel, William, Kevin Kee, and Spencer Roberts, “A Method for Navigating the Infinite Archive.” In *History in the Digital Age*. Routledge, 2012. ([NYU ebrary](#))

Digital Archives & Databases (pick one to write about in your review):

- Calisphere, <https://calisphere.org/>, University of California
- Digital Harlem: Everyday Life, 1915-30, <http://digitalharlem.org/>, University of Sydney
- Digital Public Library of America, <https://dp.la/>
- Georgetown Slavery Archive, <http://slaveryarchive.georgetown.edu/>, Georgetown Slavery
- Norman Leventhal Map Center, http://maps.bpl.org/view_collection, Boston Public Library
- Transatlantic Slave Trade, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/>, Emory University

***Assignment due: Digital Archive/Database Review

September 26: Designing Digital History Projects

Readings:

- Blevin, Cameron. “[Digital History’s Perpetual Future Tense](#).” In *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016*, <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/77>.
- Morgan, Paige. “How to Get a Digital Humanities Project Off the Ground.” Paige Morgan, June 5, 2014, <http://www.paigemorgan.net/how-to-get-a-digital-humanities-project-off-the-ground/>.

Project Work:

- Project partners assigned
- Project brainstorm
- Begin Digital Project Worksheet #1: Designing Historical Research

October 3: Omeka, Metadata, and the Dublin Core

Readings:

- Secondary work for book review

Digital Guides and Websites:

- Omeka Documentation, <http://omeka.org/codex/Documentation>
- Miriam Posner, Up and Running with Omeka.Net, <http://programminghistorian.org/lessons/up-and-running-with-omeka>
- Dublin Core, http://wiki.dublincore.org/index.php/User_Guide
- Metadata Games, <http://www.metadatagames.org/>

Project Work:

- Review Digital Project Guidelines and Worksheets
- Sign up for Omeka
- Create Omeka site
- Add an item with metadata

*****Assignment due:** Book Review

October 10: Fall Recess

NO CLASS - Work on Project Design with your partner (Digital Project Worksheet #2: Environmental Scan and Digital Project Worksheet #3: Resource Assessment)

October 17: Copyright, Permissions, and the Public Commons

Guest Speaker: April Hathcock (New York University Libraries)

Readings:

- Cohen, Daniel J., and Roy Rosenzweig. *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*. University of Pennsylvania, 2005: Owning the Past, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/1.php>

Digital Guides:

- NYU Copyright Guide, <http://guides.nyu.edu/copyright>
- Rights Statement.org White Paper, http://rightsstatements.org/files/160208recommendations_for_standardized_international_rights_statements_v1.1.pdf

Project Work:

- Share drafts of Project Design and worksheets
- Create permissions log for your project

*****Assignment due:** Project Design (Draft of Worksheets #1-3), including 3-5 potential items for your Omeka Collection.

October 24: Tools for Analyzing Digital Text

Guest speaker: Jeff Allred (Hunter College)

Readings:

- Cohen, Dan. "Searching for the Victorians." *Dan Cohen*, October 4, 2010.
<http://www.dancohen.org/2010/10/04/searching-for-the-victorians/>
- Mussell, Jim. "Doing and Making: History as Digital Practice," in Weller, Toni, ed. *History in the Digital Age*. 1 edition. London ; New York: Routledge, 2012. Chapter 2.
- Underwood, Ted. "Seven Ways Humanists are Using Computers to Understand Text," *The Stone and the Shell*, June, 4, 2015,
<https://tedunderwood.com/2015/06/04/seven-ways-humanists-are-using-computers-to-understand-text/>

Digital Tools (pick one to present, or find another)

- Corpus of American Historical English (COHA), <http://corpus.byu.edu/coha/>: search more than 400 million words of text from the 1810s-2000s to learn about their usage.
- [Google Books Ngram Viewer](https://books.google.com/ngrams), <https://books.google.com/ngrams>, displays a graph showing how words or phrases have occurred in a corpus of books over selected years.
- MACHINE Learning for LanguageE Toolkit, <http://mallet.cs.umass.edu/>, advanced tools for topic modeling and other text analysis.
- Oral History Metadata Synchronizer, <http://www.oralhistoryonline.org/>, user interface for oral histories that embeds time-codes in interview transcripts.
- Voyant, <http://voyant-tools.org/>, suite of tools for visualization of texts.

*** Assignment due: Tool Tutorials (Round 1)

October 31: Evaluating Digital Narratives and Exhibits

Readings:

- Leon, Sharon. "21st Century Public History, Part II: Digital Public History and Traditional Narrative Exhibits,"
<http://www.6floors.org/bracket/2010/04/23/21st-century-public-history-part-ii/>
- Leon, Sharon. "21st Century Public History, Part III: Digital Public History and Knowledge Creation,"
<http://www.6floors.org/bracket/2010/05/13/21st-century-public-history-part-iii/>

Digital exhibits: (pick one to review)

- An American Family Grows in Brooklyn: The Lefferts Family Papers at the Brooklyn Historical Society, <http://www.brooklynhistory.org/exhibitions/lefferts/>, Brooklyn Historical Society
- "Everything on Paper Will be Used Against Me": Quantifying Kissinger, <http://blog.quantifyingkissinger.com>, Kauffman

- O Say Can you See, Early Washington, DC, Law, and Family, <http://earlywashingtondc.org/>, Thomas and the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities
- Performing Archive, Curtis + the “Vanishing Race,” <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/performingarchive/index>, Weirmont, Kim, Schuster, et. al.
- Plateau Peoples’ Project, <http://plateauportal.wsulibs.wsu.edu/>, Washington State University
- The U.S. Dakota War, <http://www.usdakotawar.org/>, Minnesota Historical Society
- Visualizing 19th Century New York, <http://visualizingnyc.org/>, Bard Graduate Center

*****Assignment due:** Digital Exhibit Review

November 7: Crowds, Communities, and Citizen Historians

Guest Speaker: Jason Rhody, Social Science Research Council

Readings:

- Selections from Adair, Bill, Benjamin Filene, and Laura Koloski, eds. *Letting Go?: Sharing Historical Authority in a User-Generated World*. Left Coast Press, 2011. Read Kathleen McClean “Whose Questions, Whose Conversations?” and one additional case study, <http://history2016.doingdh.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/06/Throwing-Open-Doors.pdf>
- Brennan, Sheila A. and T. Mills Kelly, “Why Collecting History Online is Web 1.5” CHNM Case Study, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=47>
- [Optional] Simon, Nina. “17 Ways We Made Our Exhibition Participatory.” MuseumTwo. June 13, 2012, <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2012/06/17-ways-we-made-our-exhibition.html>.

Digital Archives:

- Citizen Archivist, <https://www.archives.gov/citizen-archivist/>, National Archives
- Collecting and Preserving the Stories of Katrina and Rita, <http://hurricanearchive.org/>, Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media
- Operation War Diary, <https://www.operationwardiary.org/#/>, Zoonivserre/National Archives
- Our Marathon, <http://marathon.neu.edu/>, Northeastern
- The History Harvest, historyharvest.unl.edu, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
- *What’s on the Menu?*, <http://menus.nypl.org/>, New York Public Library

Project Work:

- Digital Project Worksheet #4: Defining Audiences

November 14: Spatial History: Data Visualizations, Maps, and Timelines

Readings:

- Gibbs, Frederick. "New Forms of History: Critiquing Data and Its Representations," *The American Historian*, 2016, <http://tah.oah.org/february-2016/new-forms-of-history-critiquing-data-and-its-representations/>
- Graham, Shawn, Ian Milligan, and Scott Weingart, The Historian's Macroscopic: Big Digital History, *The Joys of Big Data for Historians, Putting Big Data to Good Use: Historical Case Studies*, http://www.themacroscopic.org/?page_id=595
- White, Richard "What is Spatial History?," <https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29>

Digital Exhibits:

- America Panorama: An Atlas of United States History, <http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama>, University of Richmond
- Mapping Occupation: Force, Freedom, and the Army in Reconstruction, <http://mappingoccupation.org/>, Gregory Downs and Scott Nesbit
- The Roaring Twenties, <http://vectorsdev.usc.edu/NYCsound/777b.html>, Emily Thompson and Scott Mahoy
- The Spread of U.S. Slavery, 1790-1860, <http://lincolnmullen.com/projects/slavery/>, Lincoln Mullen
- Visualizing Emancipation, <http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/>

Digital Tools:

- Historypin, <https://www.historypin.org/en/>: digital, user-generated archive of historical photos, videos, audio recordings and personal recollections.
- MapWarper, <http://mapwarper.net/>: find maps and other imagery, upload, and rectify against a real map.
- Neatline, <http://neatline.org/>: suite of add-on tools for Omeka that allows users to create timelines.
- StoryMap JS, <https://storymap.knightlab.com/>: web-based tool for mapping events in a story.

*** **Assignment due:** Tool Tutorials (Round 2); Project Design (Final of Worksheets #1-4)

November 21: Interactive History – Digital Games and Simulations

Readings:

- Whitaker, Robert. “Backwards Compatible: Gamers as a Public History Audience.” *Perspectives on History*, January 2016, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2016/backward-compatible-gamers-as-a-public-history-audience>
- Zucconi, Laura, Ethan Watrall, Hannah Ueno, and Lisa Rosner, “Pox and the City: Challenges in Writing a Digital History Game,” <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dh/12230987.0001.001/1:8/--writing-history-in-the-digital-age?g=dculture:rgn=div1;view=fulltext:xc=1>

Digital Games:

- Mission US, <http://www.mission-us.org/>, WNET

Project Work:

- Exhibit Planning

November 28: The Future of Digital History

Readings:

- Weller, Toni. *History in the Digital Age*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2012: Conclusion ([NYU ebrary](#))
- Watters, Audrey “(Marketing) Virtual Reality in Education: A History,” Hack Education, <http://hackeducation.com/2016/07/02/virtual-reality>

Digital Apps:

- OldNYC, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/oldnyc-explore-historical/id1097347396?mt=8>, Dan Vanderkam
- The Power of Poison: Be a Detective, <http://www.amnh.org/apps/the-power-of-poison-be-a-detective>, American Museum of Natural History

*****Assignment due:** Featured Item for your Exhibit

December 5: In-Progress Project Presentations

Project Work:

- Partners will present their in-progress exhibits, discussing their historical argument, how they chose and presented the items, and any issues they are facing.

December 12: No Class - Project Work Time

Project Work:

- Individual meetings available by appointment.

*****Final Projects are due December 19th; your site must be published and all items entered into your permission log.**