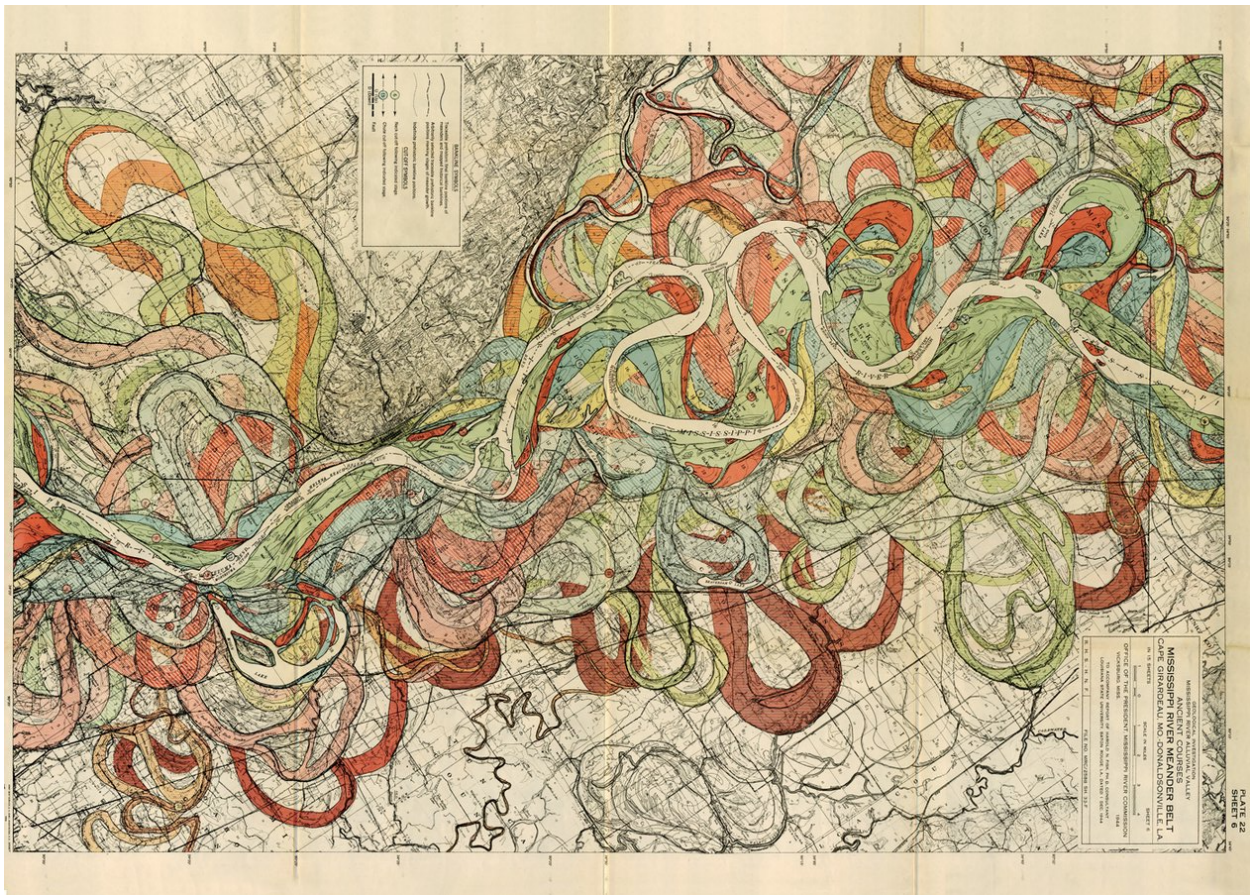# Introduction to Digital History

HIST 6687: Fall 2020
Zoom Sessions: 5:30-7:30
THIS CLASS IS FULLY ONLINE AND WILL NOT MEET IN PERSON

Instructor: Dr. Aimee M. Genell
                Office: TLC 3209
                Tel.: (678) 839-6031
                Office Hours: Mondays 3:15-5:15 (I will be available on Zoom or Google Meets, please make an appointment). Appointments are also available upon request via Zoom or Google Meets.
                E-mail: agenell@westga.edu
                PLEASE DO NOT USE COURSEDEN EMAIL

Harold Fisk, The alluvial valley of the lower Mississippi River (1944)

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the theory and practice of digital history. The digitization of archival records, books, historical newspapers and journals, has enabled historians to ask and answer traditional research questions with recourse to vast amounts of data. At the same time, digital tools offer historians new venues and ways of presenting historical research, but also new methods of interpretation. Through in-class labs, the course will introduce students to a variety of

historical databases and research methods, as well as digital platforms to present historical research. Students will explore digital tools and techniques for historical interpretation including data visualization, geographic information systems and network analysis. In addition to learning concrete skills (archival research, database management for archival records, WordPress, podcasting and StoryMaps), students will learn to think critically about design, content legibility, data visualization and accessibility.

Learning Outcomes
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history, theory and practice of digital history
- Conduct historical research and further develop research skills, including how to conduct archival research using digital archives and digitized collections of newspapers and government records.
- Formulate and defend a historical argument in Standard English
- Create a final project that demonstrates digital history capacities in research, design and usability
- Students will be able to use digital technologies in the study, interpretation, and presentation of the past

Labs: Each week, the class has dedicated lab time where we will learn how to use particular applications and digital tools. These are scheduled on Mondays at 5:30. Most sessions will last two hours.

Assessment:

Class participation: **10%** (includes attendance, discussion, lab participation and homework)

Portfolio: **55%**
By the end of class, you will produce a portfolio including your mini-research assignments, podcast plan, ArcGIS StoryMap and final digital history project. The portfolios should demonstrate your ability to apply the research and design skills that you have learned in class. Your portfolio should include storyboards and scripts for digital storytelling and podcasts, as well as other archival and visual material you assembled for your final digital history project. Because this class will focus on the rapid development of new skills in digital history, I would suggest that each of these short assignments are based on your existing graduate thesis work.

Your portfolio must include the following items:

Mini-Research Exercises:	20%
Newspapers, Books, Court Records:	10%
(due August 31)	
Government Records:	10%
(due September 8)	
Interpretation Exercises:	35%
ArcGIS StoryMap	25%
(due November 13)	
Plan a Podcast	10%
(due November 6)	

Final Project: **25%**

You will design and build a digital history project based on original research and using tools learned in the course. Your final project may be a written paper based on research using digital tools introduced in this course. Alternatively, you may opt to present your historical research in a digital format. For instance, you might build a website, create a digital exhibition on Omeka, create a podcast, or present your research in the form of an ArcGIS StoryMap. Your final project may be based on one of the mini-assignments contained in your portfolio. You should decide on final project idea no later than September 14th. (Due November 30th)

Final Reflection Paper: **10%**

Write a brief analysis of your experience of using each digital tool (WordPress, Omeka, Story Maps, Audacity). Reflect upon what each tool did for your research. How did your research change when you presented it in different arenas—as a podcast, a StoryMap, etc. How might digital history tools change how you approach your next research project? Did thinking about scale, data visualization, or narrative change how you might execute future research and writing projects? (Due November 30th)

Grade Scale:

A = 90% and above B = 80-89 % C = 70-79% D = 60-69% F = below 60%

This class is 100% online. It is your responsibility to complete the work on time. I strongly suggest you follow the weekly syllabus, rather than work ahead. We will have regular Zoom sessions to for labs.

Classroom Policies:

Assignments: Students are expected to complete ALL assigned readings before class. Pay attention to the due date of written assignment and exams. You will receive a worksheet for each writing and digital assignment along with a rubric. Late submissions will lose half a letter grade per day late.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and participation are essential to perform well in the class. Because this is an online course, this means attending Zoom sessions on Mondays. **If you are unable to class to attend the Zoom session, please send me an email before class. You will NOT be penalized. I ask that you watch the session, which will be posted on CourseDen by Monday evening, and answer a brief set of questions on CourseDen to demonstrate that you understand the material covered.**

Here is the Zoom link and password:

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74047993605?pwd=OGRxOFVKNjJldWR2cVJpVUE3SWhJdz09

Meeting ID: 740 4799 3605
Passcode: 960596
One tap mobile

+13017158592,,74047993605#,,,,,,0#,,960596# US (Germantown)
+13126266799,,74047993605#,,,,,,0#,,960596# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location
    +1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)
    +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
    +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
    +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
    +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
    +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
Meeting ID: 740 4799 3605
Passcode: 960596
Find your local number: https://us04web.zoom.us/u/fbeRAJpc75

Academic Honesty: Students are required to abide by the University's Honor Code. **Plagiarism or cheating will result in the automatic failure of the course. The code can be found here:** https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpsa/assets/docs/2016-2017-code-of-conduct.pdf

Student Resources: I encourage all students to meet with me at least once during the semester. If you have any questions about the readings, material covered in lectures or the written assignments, please send me an email or visit me in my office.

For assistance with writing, please make use of the University Writing Center (UWC) located in TLC 1201: https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/writing/.

For assistance with developing study skills and time management please visit the Center for Academic Success (CAS) located in UCC 200: https://www.westga.edu/student-services/cas/index.php.

Disability Services and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act): The Office of Disability Services will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please notify me using the course email system by the end of the second full week of class and attach a PDF copy of your SAR (Available from the Office of Disability Services).

For important policy information, i.e., the UWG Honor Code, Email, and Credit Hour policies, as well as information on Academic Support and Online Courses, please review the information found in the Common Language for Course Syllabi documentation at: http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

CourseDen and Required Reading:
All readings are posted on CourseDen.

Please check CourseDen before class for any syllabus adjustments!!!

In addition to readings for each class, you will find supplemental materials

Weekly Syllabus

August 17 – What is Digital History? Research Methods and Interpretive Frameworks
Google Meets Session 5:30

Discussion and syllabus review

Lab: Examine StoryMaps, online exhibitions and other examples of digital humanities work

Slave Voyages: https://www.slavevoyages.org/
Camera and Locomotive:
https://www.loc.gov/ghe/cascade/index.html?appid=531a16f45bec4008bc19de2e805be362&bookmark=The%20Route
Mapping the Republic of Letters: http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/
The Lomax Kentucky Recordings: https://lomaxky.omeka.net/
Envisioning Baroque Rome: https://www.baroquerome.org/

August 24 – Digital Archives: Newspapers, Books and Court Records
Read: Jo Guildi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, introduction, chapter 4 "Big Questions, Big Data"

Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 121, Issue 2, April 2016, Pages 377–40

Written Homework: Research Brainstorm. Think about possible research topics, come to class prepared to talk about 2-3 potential ideas. Ideally, you should focus on your thesis research. If you have not narrowed down a topic, select an historical event, particular people or stories that you want to learn more about over the course of the semester. Try to select something that will help you figure out your thesis topic. You will focus on one or two of these topics throughout the semester! (Upload to CourseDen by 11:59 PM – under "Assessments" / "Topic Brainstorm")

Before class: Create a University of Michigan Friend Account (this will enable you to search HathiTrust more effectively):
https://friend.weblogin.umich.edu/friend/

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: Digitized newspaper, books and court records
Please experiment with the digital collections below before class
        https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/
        https://www.digitalpanopticon.org/
        https://www.hathitrust.org/
        http://libguides.westga.edu/c.php?g=772498&p=5541792

Mini-research exercise: Newspapers, Books and Court Records
Using newspapers, digitized books, periodicals and court records as historical sources (see worksheet on CourseDen, **upload your short response by August 31ᵗʰ at 11:59 PM**)

August 31 – Digital Archives: Government Records
Read: David Allen and Matthew Connelly, "Diplomatic History After the Big Bang Using Computational Methods to Explore the Infinite Archive" in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (March 2016)

Eileen Scully, "Thematic Digital History Archives and Their Wicked Problems: China, America and the Pacific," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 122, Issue 1, 1 February 2017, pp. 115–122

Before class: Set up a free trial account on Adam Matthew. These accounts last for one week, please set them up the day before our class session:
https://www.amdigital.co.uk/login

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: Using American and British government records—Foreign Relations of the United States, the Congressional Record, British Parliamentary Debates and the Confidential Print of the British Foreign Office
The Central Foreign Policy Files
https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/ebooks
https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/frus/
https://www.amdigital.co.uk/primary-sources/confidential-print-middle-east-1839-1969
https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/

Mini-research exercise: Government Records
Using newspapers, digitized books, periodicals and court records as historical sources (see worksheet on CourseDen, **due September 8th at 11:59 PM**)

September 7 -- Holiday Labor Day – NO CLASS

September 14 - History in the Age of Computation and Big Data
Read: Joseph Bernstein, "The Most Redacted Men in America"
https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/josephbernstein/the-most-redacted-men-in-america#.byDlZR34bq

William Brennan, "The Declassification Engine: Reading Between the Black Bars," *The New Yorker* (October 16, 2013)
https://www.newyorker.com/tech/annals-of-technology/the-declassification-engine-reading-between-the-black-bars

Listen: "The Declassification Engine," *On the Media* (October 11, 2013)
https://www.wnyc.org/story/declassification-engine/

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: The Declassification Engine and History-Lab (Columbia and Brown)
http://www.history-lab.org/
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/documents/doclist.html

September 21 – Research Databases and Bibliographic Software
Stephen Fortune, "A Brief History of Databases"

Ansley T. Erikson, "Historical Research and the Problem of Categories: Reflections on 10,000 Digital Notecards," in *Writing History in the Digital Age*,
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dh/12230987.0001.001/1:7/--writing-history-in-the-digital-age?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=fulltext;xc=1#7.

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: Research databases and bibliographic software. Overview of FileMaker, Zotero and Scrivener

https://www.zotero.org/
https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener/overview

September 28 – A Brief History of Data Visualization
Read: Edward R. Tufte, "Visual and Statistical Thinking" in *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative*

Edward R. Tufte, "The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint"

Steven Johnson, "Building the Case" in *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic*

Before class: Examine "Diagram of the Causes of Morality in the Army," "US Slave Map based on the 1860 Census" and "John Snow's Cholera Map" and the website "Historiography"
https://histography.io/

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: Google Ngram
https://books.google.com/ngrams

October 5 – Spatial Analysis and Mapping I
Mark Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps*, chap. 1-3

Richard White, "What Is Spatial History?" Spatial History Lab: Working paper; Submitted 1 February 2010, http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29

Lincoln Mullen, "Map Literacy," Spatial Humanities Workshop,
http://lincolnmullen.com/projects/spatial-workshop/literacy.html

Lincoln Mullen, "Narrative Maps," Spatial Humanities Workshop,
http://lincolnmullen.com/projects/spatial-workshop/narrative-maps.html

Before class: Set up ArcGIS public account
https://doc.arcgis.com/en/arcgis-online/get-started/create-account.htm

Before Class: Search the Story Maps gallery. Bring examples of at least two StoryMaps to class
and be prepared to discuss why you thought they were particularly successful:
https://storymaps-classic.arcgis.com/en/gallery/#s=0

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: StoryMaps

Interpretation Exercise: StoryMap (See Worksheet on CourseDen).
StoryMap due November 13th at 11:59 PM. Please email the link to agenell@westga.edu

October 12 - Spatial Analysis and Mapping II
Mark Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps*, chap. 10-13

Lincoln Mullen, "Data Maps," Spatial Humanities Workshop,
http://lincolnmullen.com/projects/spatial-workshop/data-maps.html

Cameron Blevins, "Space, Nation, and the Triumph of Region: A View of the World from
Houston," *Journal of American History*, June 2014,
http://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=93 (reproduced here on the
Stanford Spatial History site

Edward Ayers and Scott Nesbit, "Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American
South," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* vol. 1, no. 1 (March 2011), 3-24
See too http://mappingoccupation.org/

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: ArcGIS
Mapping the Republic of Letters (http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/)
The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World (http://orbis.stanford.edu/)

October 19 – Digital Interpretation: Using Website to Tell Historical Stories
Examine the following websites before class:
https://www.slavevoyages.org/
http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/

http://mediterraneansharedpast.org/home
http://www.teach-mena.org/
https://histography.io/
http://depts.washington.edu/moves/index.shtml
https://eagleeyecitizen.org/
https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/theme/cold-war-history
http://mallhistory.org/Guide/

Written Homework: Select three websites to analyze. What do they claim to do? In what ways do they diverge from articles or monographs? Who is the audience? What are their limitations compared to traditional methods of presenting research? Pay attention to design and usability, what was your experience like using each website? What did the site do well? What were some of the problems? **Upload to CourseDen on September 28 by 12:30 PM**

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: WordPress Demonstration
https://wordpress.com/

October 26 – Podcasting and Narrative
Hannah Hethmon, *Your Museum Needs a Podcast*, chap. 1, 4

Listen to the following podcasts:
1619 (select one from the list)
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html

Ottoman history podcast
https://www.ottomanhistorypodcast.com/2020/03/plague-ottoman-empire.html

Serial episode 1
https://serialpodcast.org/season-one

Lab: Audacity & Garage Band

Introduction to Interpretive Assignment: Planning a Podcast (See "Planning a Podcast" worksheet on CourseDen – Due November 6 at 11:59 PM)

November 2 - Digital Storytelling
Read: Paige Morgan, "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/

Stephen J. Pyne, *Voice and Vision: A Guide to Writing History and Other Serious Nonfiction*, part II

Story Corp, "Tips on How to Conduct an Interview"

https://storycorpsorg-staging.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/The-Great-Thanksgiving-Listen-Toolkit-2019-11.15.19.pdf

Written Homework:
Examine the website below. Analyze two digital stories below (be prepared to discuss your selection in class). How was each story crafted? What kinds of digital tools to the authors use to create the story? Did the author(s) use images, music, infographics, StoryMaps or data visualization? What worked particularly well? What was less successful?
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/30/us/2019-year-in-graphics.html

Lab: Digital Storytelling

November 9 - Digital Archives and Preservation
Roy Rosenzweig, "Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era," *American Historical Review* 108 (2003): 735-762

William McAllister, "The Documentary Big Bang, the Digital Records Revolution, and the Future of the Historical Profession," *Passport* 41:2 (September 2010): 12-17.

http://digitalpreservation.gov/
http://digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving/

Lab: Omeka
http://mallhistory.org/Guide/

November 16 - Accessibility, Usability and Intellectual Property
Rosenzweig and Cohen, Chapter 7 "Owning the Past?"
http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/

"Accessibility and the Digital Humanities," *Chronicle of Higher Education*,
http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/accessibility-and-the-digital-humanities/42782

How People with Disabilities Use the Web: Overview," Web Accessibility Initiative,
https://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/people-use-web/

"Considering the User Perspective: A Summary of Design Issues," WebAIM,
http://webaim.org/articles/userperspective/

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Lab: Making your WordPress site accessible

November 23 – Conclusion
Final project presentations

Zoom Meeting 5:30

Your complete portfolio, final project and reflection essay are due November 30th at 11:59 PM