HIST 970: Digital History Seminar

Seminar Meetings: Wednesdays 6:00 - 7:50 PM OLDH 638

Lab Meetings: Fridays 3:30-4:30 PM OLDH 607 Call #: 11555 Section: 001 Spring 2011

Professor Douglas Seefeldt University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of History 606 Oldfather Hall 472-3251 dseefeldt2@unl.edu Office Hours: T 3:30-4:30 PM W 4:00-5:00 PM R 10:30-11:30 AM (and by appointment)

"...history may be better suited to digital technology than any other humanistic discipline. Changes in our field far removed from anything to do with computers have helped create a situation in history where the advantages of computers can seem appealing, and perhaps even necessary. At the same time, changes in information technology, far removed from any consideration of its possible uses for our discipline, have made it possible for us to think of new ways to approach the past. The new technologies seem tailor-made for history, a match for the growing bulk and complexity of our ever more self-conscious practice, efficient vehicles to connect with larger and more diverse audiences."

> – Edward L. Ayers "<u>The Pasts and Futures of Digital History</u>" (1999)

Course Objectives

This research seminar course will examine leading works of digital history scholarship, explore theories of narrative in hypertext, and develop models of digital scholarly communication. Students will be expected to conduct research around selected topics in history, focus their work on the creation of a digital project, and participate in class discussion on methods and theories of digital media. The emphasis in this course, however, will be to develop in students an acute awareness of the opportunities and challenges inherent in communicating one's scholarship the digital medium. Students will explore the possibilities of digital history and engage the theoretical implications at every stage of their work. The final research project will feature the completion of an original piece of digital scholarship equivalent in scope to a research seminar paper.

Required Texts

(Please note that additional readings will be posted to the course Blackboard site):

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Borgman, Christine L. *Scholarship in the Digital Age: Information, Infrastructure, and the Internet*. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2007).

McNeely, Ian F., with Wolverton, Lisa. *Reinventing Knowledge: From Alexandria to the Internet* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).

Rosenzweig, Roy. *Clio Wired: The Future of the Past in the Digital Age*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

Optional Text

Cohen, Daniel J. and Rosenzweig, Roy. *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*. (U. Pennsylvania Press, 2006). This book is available online: <<u>http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/</u>>

Course Requirements

40% Active participation (200 points)

You are expected to attend and actively participate in all facets of the weekly seminar and lab, including out of class work. Participation will be evaluated on the completion of reading reflection posts and thoughtful contributions to seminar discussions.

20% Digital History Project Reviews (100 points)

Each student will be responsible for writing a detailed review of two digital history projects from a list provided by the instructor. These reviews will assess the technical specifications, systems and practices, as well as the forms of presentation, navigation and design. Narrative choices, argument and analysis in these projects will also be evaluated informed by the seminar theory readings.

40% Final project (200 points)

Students will work outside of class to research and build a digital history project on topic of their choice approved by the instructor. Projects may take many forms, including but not limited to: web site hypertext, xml/xsl markup of texts, geographic information systems data sets, database development, web programming, animation and simulation, and visualization technologies.

Late assignments will be marked down one half-letter grade per day that they are overdue. No assignments will be accepted more than one week late without permission from the instructor.

Final Grade Scale

A+	486-500	В-	400-419	D	320-334
А	470-485	C+	385-399	D-	300-319
A-	450-469	С	370-389	F	000-299
B+	435-449	C-	350-369		
В	420-434	D+	335-349		

Classroom Etiquette

In order for everyone to have the opportunity to learn we must strive to create an open, positive, non-threatening classroom atmosphere. Curiosity, honesty, and above all,

respect, are characteristics inherent in healthy discourse. A great deal of this class revolves around discussions of material that quite often lends itself to subjective aesthetics, contested meanings, and personal opinions. We are going to address some divisive topics and it will be perfectly appropriate for us to end our discussions in disagreement. I believe that one of the greatest strengths of the class will be the variety of experiences and perspectives each one of us brings to the subject. No personal attacks or disrespect will be tolerated and proper sanctions will be imposed. Please familiarize yourself with the "Student Honor Code," published in the "General Information" chapter, and the "Student Code of Conduct," published in the "Student Rights and Responsibilities" chapter of the *Graduate Studies Bulletin*.

Academic Honesty

Examples of academic dishonesty include the following types of actions and behavior: Cheating, fabrication or falsification, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, and misrepresentation to avoid academic work. Academic dishonesty is prohibited and has serious consequences including course failure or disciplinary proceedings. See section 4.2, "Academic Dishonesty," part of the "Student Code of Conduct" published in the "Student Rights and Responsibilities" chapter of the *Graduate Studies Bulletin* for specific details.

Administrative Deadlines

The office of Registration and Records has several important deadlines:

1/18:	Last day to register, add a class, or drop a class and receive a refund
1/21:	Final date for dropping without being subject to a "W" grade
3/4:	Final date for changing to or from Pass/No Pass

4/8: Last day to withdraw from courses (grade of "W")

Course Schedule & Assignments

Please complete the readings and assignments prior to each seminar meeting, as we will discuss the material as a group. I reserve the right to change the schedule as necessary and will give you notice when I do via Blackboard announcement and group email.

Week 1:History and the Digital FutureW 1/12Assignment: Reading Reflection #1Reading: Cohen, et. al., "Interchange: The Future of Digital History,"Journal of American History.Reading: Schmidt, "For Many Historians, Use of Technology RemainsStuck in the Past," Chronicle of Higher EducationPresentation: Introductions and Interests

F 1/14 No Lab

Week 2: W 1/19	Knowledge Construction <u>Assignment</u> : Reading Reflection #2 <u>Reading</u> : McNeely and Wolverton, <i>Reinventing Knowledge</i>
	Presentation: Favorite Online History Resources
F 1/21	Lab: FTP tutorial
Week 3: W 1/26	Potential Project Topics <u>Assignment</u> : Blog Post #1
	<u>Presentation</u> : Potential project topics and primary sources
F 1/28	Lab: HTML tutorial
Week 4: W 2/2	Digital History <u>Assignment</u> : Reading Reflection #3 <u>Reading</u> : Rosenzweig, <i>Clio Wired</i>
	<u>Presentation</u> : Example document marked up in HTML
F 2/4	<u>Lab</u> : Imaging tutorial
Week 5: W 2/9	Digital History Exemplars <u>Assignment</u> : Blog Post #2
	<u>Presentation</u> : Example image thumbnail and full-size .jpg
F 2/11	Lab: OCR and Transcription tutorials
Week 6: W 2/16	Doing Digital History <u>Assignment</u> : Digital History Project Review
	Presentation: Digital History Project Review
F 2/18	Lab: XML tutorial
Week 7: W 2/23	Communicating Digial Information <u>Assignment</u> : Reading Reflection #4 <u>Reading</u> : Borgman, <i>Scholarship in the Digital Age</i>
	Presentation: Project Site Maps
F 2/25	<u>Lab</u> : Text Analysis tutorial

Week 8: Assembling A Research Argument

W 3/2 <u>Assignment</u>: Reading Reflection #5 <u>Reading</u>: Booth, et. al., *The Craft of Research*, Prologue, parts, I, II & III

Presentation: Argument Example

F 3/4 Lab: GIS & Google Maps tutorial

Week 9: Spatial History

W 3/9 Assignment: Reading Reflection #6 Reading: Thomas, "Is the Future of Digital History Spatial History?" <u>Reading</u>: Knowles, "GIS and History" <u>Reading</u>: Ayers, "Turning toward Place, Space and Time"

Presentation: TBA

F 3/11 Lab: Wikipedia tutorial

Week 10: Scholarly Communication in the Digital Age

W 3/16 <u>Assignment</u>: Reading Reflection #7 <u>Reading</u>: Robert Darnton, "The New Age of the Book." *The New York Review of Books* <u>Reading</u>: Daniel H. Pink, "The Book Stops Here," *Wired* <u>Reading</u>: David A. Bell. "The Bookless Future: What the Internet is doing to Scholarship." *The New Republic* <u>Reading</u>: Robert B. Townsend, "Google Books: What's Not to Like?" *AHA Today* <u>Reading</u>: Steven Levy, "The Future of Reading." *Newsweek*

Presentation: What You Are Reading Online

F 3/18 No Lab

Mar. 21-25: Spring Vacation

Week 11:
W 3/30Project Development Issues
Assignment: Reading Reflection #8
Reading: Daniel Pitti, "Designing Sustainable Projects and Publications"
Reading: Cohen & Rosenzweig, "Owning the Past"Presentation: Main Navigation Design DraftF 4/1Lab: SIMILE Timeline & Timeplot tutorials

Week 12: Research

- W 4/6 No Seminar Meeting
- F 4/8 Lab: Drop-in Troubleshooting

Week 13: Project Drafts, part 1

W 4/13 <u>Assignment</u>: Project Prototype

Presentation: Presentations & Evaluations (Half of the students)

F 4/15 Lab: SIMILE Exhibit tutorial

Week 14: Project Drafts, part 2

W 4/20 <u>Assignment</u>: Project Prototype

Presentation: Presentations & Evaluations (Half of the students)

Lab: SIMILE Runway tutorial

Week 15: Research

- W 4/27 No Seminar Meeting
- F 1/29 Lab: Drop-in Troubleshooting

May 4: Finals Week

Assignment: Final Project & Self evaluation due 11:59 PM Wednesday 5/4