

# HIST 477/677: History and New Media

## American University, Spring 2016

Thursdays, 5:30-8pm

Watkins Building 106

Professor Joshua Sternfeld

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Office Hours (virtual): Mondays, 8-10pm on Skype, username: **joshua.sternfeld2** or by appointment.

Please use the sign-up sheet posted on Blackboard to select a 10-minute slot in advance.

Welcome to History and New Media! In this course, we will explore how developments in digital technology and media platforms have transformed how we produce and consume history. Thanks to advances in digitization and information organization, historians have blurred the boundaries that have typically separated audiences and modes of history. Today, a podcast can appeal to history enthusiasts and students just as much as scholars. Oral histories have the capacity to capture diverse voices that can expand our understanding of the past at an experiential level. And curators can aggregate artifacts digitally from across multiple collections and institutions to create exhibits that can challenge preconceptions.

This course has been arranged as a hybrid of theory and practice. In the early weeks of the course, we will explore concepts that are fundamental to the work of new media historians. These readings will build the knowledge foundation necessary to engage critically new media historical representations and complete your final project. You will have the option to work on one of four possible final project types: build a digital exhibit, conduct and index an oral history digitally, produce and publish a podcast, or critique a digital historical representation. Depending on the option you select, the final project will be completed either individually or as a small group. As we move through the semester, we will devote more time to workshopping your final projects in class. The goal is to develop a project that is “portfolio-ready.”

### Grading

Participation: 20%. Come prepared each week having completed the readings and assignments; attendance is mandatory. Readings have been carefully selected so as to give you time to work on written assignments and your final projects. Participation will be evaluated on your level of preparedness and willingness to engage in class discussion and activities.

Weekly Assignments (6 short activities + 5 discussion question weeks): 30%. Hand in all written assignments as a hard copy to me in class unless otherwise noted. If you are unable to attend, you may submit your assignments by email. For group assignments, be sure to include the names of all members.

Final Project (including 4 preparatory assignments, draft, revision, and final version): 50%

## Readings and Assignments

Week 1-January 14: Introduction: Past, Present, and Future of (Digital) History

Week 2-January 21: Digital Historical Representation

- \*Thomas, David, and Valerie Johnson. "New Universes or Black Holes? Does Digital Change Anything?". In *History in the Digital Age*, edited by Toni Weller, 173-94. London; New York: Routledge, 2013.
- "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History." *The Journal of American History* 95, no. 2 (September 1, 2008): 452-91.
- Dorn, Sherman. "Is (Digital) History More Than an Argument About the Past?". In *Writing History in the Digital Age*, edited by Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013.
- Sternfeld, Joshua. "Archival Theory and Digital Historiography: Selection, Search, and Metadata as Archival Processes for Assessing Historical Contextualization." *The American Archivist* 74, Fall/Winter (2011): 544-75.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Draft 5 discussion questions based on the readings you would like to raise in class. Your questions may want to cite specific passages, pull together themes from multiple readings, or highlight differences of opinion. One of your questions may pose a definitional question to your classmates and professor about a term or concept you did not understand.

**Final Project:** Select your final project group members and the type of project you want to work on and submit this information to me by email as a group.

Week 3-January 28: Historical Evidence

- \*Henige, David P. *Historical Evidence and Argument*. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005. 42-57.
- Gibbs, Fred, and Trevor Owens. "The Hermeneutics of Data and Historical Writing." In *Writing History in the Digital Age*, edited by Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013.
- \*Manovich, Lev. *The Language of New Media*. Leonardo. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002. 18-61.
- \*Phiri, Lighton, and Hussein Suleman. "Managing Cultural Heritage: Information Systems Architecture." In *Cultural Heritage Information: Access and Management*, edited by Ian Ruthven and G.G. Chowdhury, 113-34: Facet Publishing, 2015.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Critique of a *Digital Public Library of America* Exhibition.

#### Week 4-February 4: Metadata and Controlled Vocabularies

- Gilliland, Anne J. "Setting the Stage." In *Introduction to Metadata*, edited by Murtha Baca. Paul Getty Trust, 2008.  
[http://www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic\\_publications/intrometadata/setting.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic_publications/intrometadata/setting.pdf).
- Baca, Murtha, and Association Visual Resources. *Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and Their Images*. Chicago: ALA Editions of the American Library Association, 2006. xi-18.
- Elings, Mary W., and Günter Waibel. "Metadata for All: Descriptive Standards and Metadata Sharing across Libraries, Archives and Museums." *first monday* 12, no. 3 (2007).
- \*Sternfeld, Joshua. "'Harlem Crime, Soapbox Speeches, and Beauty Parlors: Digital Historical Context and the Challenge of Preserving Source Integrity.'" *American Historical Review* (February 2016).

Further Suggested Reading (especially for those building a digital exhibit for their final project)

- Using Dublin Core: <http://dublincore.org/documents/usageguide/>
- Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, Version 1.1: <http://dublincore.org/documents/dces/>
- Guidelines for Dublin Core Application Profiles: <http://dublincore.org/documents/profile-guidelines/>

**ASSIGNMENT:** Metadata Reclassification Activity.

#### Week 5-February 11: Digital Collections

- \*Blouin, Francis X., and William G. Rosenberg. *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 183-204.
- \*Shiri, Ali. "Semantic Access and Exploration in Cultural Heritage Digital Libraries." In *Cultural Heritage Information: Access and Management*, edited by Ian Ruthven and G.G. Chowdhury, 177-96: Facet Publishing, 2015.
- NARA Bulletin. "Guidance on a New Approach to Managing Email Records."  
<https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2013/2013-02.html> (August 29, 2013).
- <https://library.stanford.edu/projects/epadd>. Watch the Introductory Video, read through documentation, and browse the "Discovery Module."

**ASSIGNMENT:** Email Research Activity.

**Final Project:** Submit a 2-3-page proposal describing your project. Your proposal should discuss your topic and why you selected it. What is the intended audience for your project and why? Discuss any other related digital projects that your project may be referencing. For example, if you are critiquing a digital historical representation, have others already reviewed it and if so, how do you plan on responding to their criticisms? If you are working on creating an oral history or digital collection, what other collections may be relevant? You should have secured your interview subject for your oral history or an outside guest for your podcast.

If you plan on using OHMS or Omeka, create a free account (Please note: Securing an account is **not** instantaneous and may take several days or even weeks. Plan ahead accordingly!)

#### Week 6-February 18: Curation and Appraisal

- Bailey, Jefferson. "Disrespect Des Fonds: Rethinking Arrangement and Description in Born-Digital Archives." *Archive Journal*, no. 3 (2013). Published electronically Summer. <http://www.archivejournal.net/issue/3/archives-remixed/disrespect-des-fonds-rethinking-arrangement-and-description-in-born-digital-archives/>.
- \*Sentilles, Renée M. "Toiling in the Archives of Cyberspace." In *Archive Stories : Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, edited by Antoinette M. Burton, 136-56. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Digital Newspaper Activity.

#### Week 7-February 25: Oral History Week – Guest Speaker: Nancy Groce, Senior Folklife Specialist, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

- Groce, Nancy and Lyons, Bert. (2012). "Designing a National Online Oral History Collecting Initiative: The Occupational Folklore Project at the American Folklife Center." *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2013). <http://ohr.oxfordjournals.org/content/40/1/54.full>.
- Boyd, Doug. "OHMS: Enhancing Access to Oral History for Free." *The Oral History Review*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2013). <http://ohr.oxfordjournals.org/content/40/1/95.full>.

#### Further Suggested Reading (especially for those working on an oral history final project)

- Remaining articles in the "Oral History in the Digital Age" special issue of *The Oral History Review*.
- Oral History in the Digital Age website: <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/>
- Oral History Metadata Synchronizer website: <http://www.oralhistoryonline.org/>. (Especially Tutorials and Guides)

**ASSIGNMENT:** TBD

**Final Project:** Submit your final project's thesis paragraph and annotated bibliography. The thesis paragraph should propose the argument that you plan on making based on your research of prior historical work on your topic. What new knowledge or perspective do you anticipate your project will present? Remember, this will likely change as you work through your project. Your bibliography must include **at least 10 sources** and comprise a combination of primary and secondary sources depending on the type of project you are conducting. Your secondary sources must reflect the latest scholarship or criticism related specifically to your historical topic. For each source, please provide a brief summary along with how the particular source will be used to support your project's thesis (1 paragraph each). For your secondary sources, do you agree with the argument(s) presented, or do you plan to refute all or part of it with evidence

that you have obtained? Secondary sources ought to be a combination of full monographs, journal articles, (credible) websites, and other secondary **credible** materials – Wikipedia entries will not suffice! If you are working on developing a digital collection, you should have selected the overall institutional collections from which you will select your digital objects. Provide a brief scope of each collection including its overall size, chronological span, format, and provenance. If you plan on writing an essay critiquing another digital historical representation, you may want to consider including scholarly works that speak to the theoretical issues that are relevant, e.g. geospatial history or text mining. (10%)

Week 8-March 3: Podcasting

**ASSIGNMENT:** Podcast Listening Assignment.

Week 9-March 10: SPRING BREAK

Week 10-March 17: Evaluation of a Digital Historical Representation, Part I + Workshopping

- American Historical Association. "Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians." 2015.  
[http://historians.org/Documents/Teaching%20and%20Learning/Current%20Projects/Digital%20Scholarship%20Evaluation/Guidelines%20Dig.%20Scholarship%209.30.2015\(0\).pdf](http://historians.org/Documents/Teaching%20and%20Learning/Current%20Projects/Digital%20Scholarship%20Evaluation/Guidelines%20Dig.%20Scholarship%209.30.2015(0).pdf)
- Hitchcock, Tim, and Robert Shoemaker. "Digitising History from Below: The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674–1834." *History Compass* 4, no. 2 (2006): 193-202.
- Read through the following sections on *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey* (<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org>): About the Proceedings, Search, Historical Background, The Project, Research and Study Guides. Explore the collection by browsing items and reading through at least two trials.
- **ASSIGNMENT:** Draft 5 Discussion Questions.
- **Final Project:** Complete the first draft for your final project. If you are conducting an oral history, your interview should be complete and you should have at least indexed it at Level 1 with keywords and subject headings. If you are creating a digital exhibit, your digital objects should be selected and uploaded with descriptive metadata, and you should have most of your sections outlined. If you are writing a critique of a digital historical representation, you should have at least two thirds of your paper written. If you are producing a podcast, any interviews with guests should be completed along with at least 10 minutes of scripted material.

### Week 11-March 24: Evaluation of a Digital Historical Representation, Part II + Workshopping

- Hitchcock, Tim. "Academic History Writing and the Headache of Big Data." In *Historyonics*, 2012. <http://historyonics.blogspot.com/2012/01/academic-history-writing-and-headache.html>
- Cohen, Dan, Frederick Gibbs, Tim Hitchcock, Geoffrey Rockwell, Jörg Sander, Robert Shoemaker, Stéfan Sinclair, *et al.* "Data Mining with Criminal Intent." 2011. <http://criminalintent.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Data-Mining-with-Criminal-Intent-Final1.pdf>.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Old Bailey Evaluation Activity.

### Week 12-March 31: Copyright Week + Workshopping

- Terras, Melissa. "Opening Access to Collections: The Making and Using of Open Digitised Cultural Content." *Online Information Review* 39, no. 5 (2015): 733-52.
- Whalen, Maureen. "Rights Metadata Made Simple." In *Introduction to Metadata*, edited by Murtha Baca. J. Paul Getty Trust, 2008. [http://www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic\\_publications/intrometadata/rights.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/research/publications/electronic_publications/intrometadata/rights.pdf).
- Boyle, James. *The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. <http://www.thepublicdomain.org/download/>. Chapter 8: A Creative Commons.

Further Suggested Reading

Hirtle, Peter B., Emily Hudson, Andrew T. Kenyon, and Cornell University. Library. *Copyright and Cultural Institutions : Guidelines for Digitization for U.S. Libraries, Archives, and Museums*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Library, 2009.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Draft 5 Discussion Questions.

### Week 13-April 7: Digital Memory + Workshopping

- Haskins, Ekaterina. "Between Archive and Participation: Public Memory in a Digital Age." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37 (2007): 401-22. <http://g20inmemoriam.pbworks.com/f/Between+Archive+and+Participation.pdf>
- Hess, Aaron, and Art Herbig. *Recalling the Ghosts of 9/11: Convergent Memorializing at the Opening of the National 9/11 Memorial*. 2013. Vol. 7, 2013.
- September 11 Digital Archive: <http://911digitalarchive.org>

**ASSIGNMENT:** Draft 5 Discussion Questions.

**Final Project:** Complete revised draft of final projects. For a digital exhibit: all explanatory texts written. For an oral history: interview indexed at Level 3. For a written critique of a digital historical representation: full draft of paper completed. For a podcast: the episode fully produced and ready for upload to a free online host.

#### Week 14-April 14: Historical Big Data

- Guldi, Jo, and David Armitage. *The History Manifesto*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 88-117.  
[http://historymanifesto.cambridge.org/files/9814/2788/1923/historymanifesto\\_5Feb2015.pdf](http://historymanifesto.cambridge.org/files/9814/2788/1923/historymanifesto_5Feb2015.pdf)
- \*Aiden, Erez, and Jean-Baptiste Michel. *Uncharted : Big Data as a Lens on Human Culture*. New York: Riverhead Books, A member of Penguin Group (USA), 2013. 1-24.
- Update on the Twitter Archive at the Library of Congress (2013).  
[https://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/files/twitter\\_report\\_2013jan.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/files/twitter_report_2013jan.pdf)

**ASSIGNMENT:** Draft 5 Discussion Questions.

#### Week 15-April 21: PRESENTATIONS, PT. I

We will spend the last two weeks presenting your final projects. Presentations should be 10-12 minutes in length. Since your classmates will be familiar with your projects, focus on how your project has evolved, any additions or changes that they may not have seen, and the experience of working on the project. In other words, use your final written reports as the template for your presentation. Powerpoint presentations should be limited to 5 slides. Audiovisual clips and other media demonstrations should be limited to a total of three minutes in length. All members of your project team should participate. (5%)

#### Week 16-April 28: PRESENTATIONS, PT. II

**Final Projects:** Final projects due on this day. Complete all recommended revisions and publish the final version of your site/podcast/oral history. Hand in written reports as well.

## Final Project Options

**Note:** All written work should be Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, 1" margins with page numbers, and proper citations (footnotes using MLA or Chicago plus bibliography).

### Option #1: Digital Oral History

Number of students: 1-2

**Description:** Select and contact one individual from the local area to conduct an oral history. The individual should not be a relative or close friend of your family. The individual should have been an active participant or witness of the historical topic of your choosing, e.g. the Civil Rights movement, an important local industry, or a particular immigrant experience. If you plan on contributing your interview to an ongoing oral history project, receive permission by the institution and me first. Draft a consent form to be signed by the interviewee that grants permission to publish the interview on the web and other print and media formats. Select appropriate equipment and a meeting place to conduct the interview (you may rent equipment from the AU library). The interview may be either filmed or audio recorded and must be at least 45 minutes in length. Upload your interview to a cloud service such as YouTube where you will then use the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) to index your interview at Level 3, which will include using at least one existing controlled vocabulary (such as Library of Congress Subject Headings) and a set of more descriptive keywords that you create (see the Oral History week's readings for further details on the levels of indexing). Altogether use a *minimum* of 25 keywords and headings.

**Final Report:** Compose a 7-10-page final report that will accompany your indexed interview and which will contain the following sections: A brief synopsis of the historical topic that you selected and that draws upon your historiographical literature review (3-4 pages); biography of your subject and why you selected him/her (1-2 pages); and a discussion of your indexing process (3-5 pages). Include a breakdown of responsibilities for each member of your team.

**Assessment:** You will be assessed on the selection of your interview subject, your research preparation for the interview, the quality of the interview (both technically and for content), the quality of indexing via OHMS, and your final report documenting the process.

### Option #2: Produce a History Podcast

Number of students: 2-3

**Description:** Produce an audio podcast episode that focuses on a single historical theme or topic for the entirety of the episode. The podcast should be conceived within the context of a recurring series that you design, such as "Great Historical Speeches," "Moments in Cold War History," or "Women Pioneers" that is targeted for a specific audience, e.g. students, history enthusiasts, other historians, etc. Your episode may be framed as the first episode of the series, or you may decide to reference earlier (fictitious!) episodes, all for the purpose of establishing a brand for your series. Your podcast should be a minimum of 20 minutes in length, or 30 minutes if you elect to interview another guest. Should you

decide to invite a guest to your program, that segment should last no more than 10 minutes. Your team will be responsible for researching, scripting, producing, and publishing the entire episode. Any outside media used during the podcast must be cleared for any rights or permissions by the copyright holders and properly cited. Each member of your team should participate in the recording of the podcast—there will be no silent “engineers” on your team! Equipment for production can be rented from the AU Library. Following the production of your podcast, select a public platform to publish it such as SoundCloud, followed by creating and implementing a brief campaign to market your podcast to the audience you are targeting using a combination of social media, email listservs, and other digital means of your choice. Additional branding materials such as logos, artwork, and other media are not required but encouraged.

**Final Report:** Compose a 5-7-page final report that will accompany your podcast and which will include the following sections: Background why you created your series, including a discussion of similar podcast series and your target audience (2-3 pages); a description of your dissemination strategy including an evaluation of how successful you think it was (3-4 pages). Include a breakdown of responsibilities for each member of your team.

**Assessment:** You will be assessed on the selection of your episode topic, your research preparation, the quality of the podcast (both technically and for content), the proper use of additional media, and your design and execution of a marketing campaign for the episode.

### **Option #3: Create a Digital History Collection and Exhibit**

Number of students: 2-3

**Description:** Design an Omeka.net-based collection and exhibit that gathers published digital objects from multiple sources to communicate an original, well-researched historical topic of your creation. The topic should present a clear argument backed by evidence contained in your source material. The collection should include 40-50 digital objects drawn from the following sites: The Library of Congress, New York Public Library, Smithsonian, Chronicling America or Digital Public Library of America, and at least one additional cultural heritage institution (archive, museum, library, historical society) of your choosing. Each collection that you draw from may constitute no more than one third of the total number of objects in your collection. In other words, your collection must include a balance of objects from at least three distinct collections from at least three distinct institutions. Media-collecting sites such as Flickr or WikiMedia are **not** acceptable. All materials must be cleared for any rights or permissions by the copyright holders and properly cited on your site. Describe each object using at least the basic Dublin Core metadata schema provided by Omeka. You may import metadata from the originating cultural heritage institutions, but all metadata must be normalized for your site. For example, dates, names, and institutions must be similarly formatted. You may also import descriptive metadata such as keywords and subject headings from the originating institutions. Create an additional controlled vocabulary that includes a minimum of 20 new keywords or subject headings. Your exhibit must include at least four content sections plus an Introduction and About page, with a minimum total of 3,000 words which includes explanatory text and captions. You are welcome to use Neatline plugins to add a geospatial component to your exhibit, but a word of caution: this may require significantly more technical support that the AU IT department may or may not be able to provide. Also, adding

extra functionalities have the potential to come across as unnecessary bells and whistles and may actually distract from your argument and presentation.

**Final Report:** Compose a 6-9-page final report that will accompany your exhibit and which will include the following sections: Background how and why you selected the historical topic (2-3 pages); discussion of your selection process for objects included in your collection and any objects that perhaps were not included (2-3 pages); a discussion describing your process of applying metadata to the objects and your creation of an original controlled vocabulary (2-3 pages). You should also include a breakdown of responsibilities for each member of your team.

**Assessment:** You will be assessed on the selection of your exhibit topic, the selection of your digital objects, the quality of metadata including an original controlled vocabulary, the quality of explanatory writing, and the overall layout and aesthetic of the site. Include a breakdown of responsibilities for each member of your team.

#### **Option #4: Evaluate a New Media Historical Representation**

Number of students: 1

Select one new media historical representation such as a digital collection, website, mobile app, or virtual exhibit and compose a 17-20-page, well-researched written evaluation. Ideally your representation ought to have been created by history-affiliated professionals, such as scholars, curators, archivists, documentarians, educators, etc. Evaluate the representation based upon current historiographical literature of the topic that you have selected (see the Annotated Bibliography assignment for further guidance). Include a brief summary description of your representation that introduces the reader to its functionalities and other unique qualities as well as a historiographical review that identifies salient scholarship and related projects or representations. Your evaluation should consider the following elements: historical argument (may be explicit or implicit), use and quality of historical information, interface functionalities, metadata quality, intended audience, accessibility, design and aesthetic. Consider how the representation's format enables or inhibits engagement with the historical topic. Conclude your evaluation by offering recommendations for improving elements of the representation. Images such as screenshots may be included in an appendix but do not contribute to the written page count.

**Assessment:** You will be assessed upon the following criteria: selection of your representation, strength of your argument, quality of your writing, quality of your historiographical review, employment of evaluation criteria, concluding recommendations.