

Schedule

Unit 1: Digital sources

In the first unit, we'll be exploring how digitization changes the sort of sources—primary and secondary—that historians work with. What are the biases and inherent assumptions in digital scholarship? What gets digitized, and what doesn't? What sort of answers are computational works of scholarship bringing to historical practice?

Week 1 (Sep 9): Introductions

- Cohen et al. "Interchange."
- Spiro "Getting Started in Digital Humanities."

Practicum: Setting up your blog account.

Week 2 (Sep 16): Digitization as a social condition

- Benjamin "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproducibility (Third Version, 1939)."
- McLuhan *Understanding Media.*, Introduction and chapters 1-2.
- Manovich *The Language of New Media.*
- Liu "The Meaning of the Digital Humanities."
- Cecire "When Digital Humanities Was in Vogue."

Practicum: What is digital text? Regular Expressions.

Week 3 (Sep 23): Data as a source

- Gibbs and Owens "Hermeneutics of Data and Historical Writing."
- Fogel and Engerman *Time on the Cross.* (Methodological appendix on reserve; skim it, but read the book for content and method.)
- Haskell, Review of *Time on the Cross*
- Gutmann, *Time on the Cross* review/Slavery and the Numbers Game
- Ruggles "The Transformation of American Family Structure."
- Gitelman "*Raw Data*" *Is an Oxymoron.*, Introduction

Practicum: Tapping into the world of social science historical data from IPUMS, OECD, ICPSR, etc. Practicum w/ blog post: Crowdsourcing participation.

Week 4 (Sep 30): Digitization as a practical endeavor

SPECIAL DIGITIZATION TRIP, NEW MEETING PLACE: Meet at 4:30 at the Boston Public Library for a discussion of digitization with Tom Blakesadf

- KMNL, keycoding standards; read for an extreme example of selection priorities.
- Bill Turkel's blog posts on digitizing text. (Links on web site).
- Melissa Terras, "Digitization's Most wanted": <http://melissaterras.blogspot.com/2014/05/digitisations-most-wanted.html>

- Trevor Owens, [4-part series on crowdsourcing](#)

Practicum: Begin to digitize a historical object yourself. Do this with (at least) an image and a text. Try to pick something that you're legitimately interested in, which will save you work down the line in finding sources that you can work with. You should post it to the course website, and you should be prepared to discuss the digitization process in class. **If the object is under copyright, make sure to post it privately on the web site.**

Unit 2: Historical Computing

For years, much of what's now called the "digital humanities" was called, instead, "humanities computing." The term tended to denote a more circumscribed set of practices than all the digital publishing, public history, and new media studies that are now part of digital humanities; it was, specifically, about the the possibility of digital techniques to transform the ways we do research. This unit aims to get your hands dirty with some of the research techniques you might be able to use taking full advantage of your computation.

Week 5 (October 7): Texts (small)

- Ramsay *Reading Machines*.
- Witmore "Text."
- Cameron Blevins, "Topic Modeling Martha Ballard's Diary"
- Rhody "Topic Modeling and Figurative Language."

Practicum:

- Voyant Tools (no installation needed, online)

Week 6 (October 14): Texts (large)

- Michel et al. "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books."
- Jockers *Macroanalysis*.
- Goldstone and Underwood "The Quiet Transformations of Literary Studies."

Practicum

- Software: RStudio: R-Mallet (no installation required)

Note: the following three weeks have been rescheduled from the original syllabus

Week 7 (October 21): Maps

- Richard White, [What is Spatial History](#)
- Knowles "Placing History," Chapter 1 and Dust Bowl chapter.
- Browse through the Orbis Project, Stanford.
- Presner, Shepard, and Kawano, *HyperCities* (book and web site).

Practical:

- Install QGIS from [here](#) (this can be complicated, particularly on OS X: leave 45 minutes at least).
- Review Map Projections at jasondavies.com.

Unit 3: Creating Digital Scholarship.

The sort of work historians create and share matters as much as the sort of work they do.

You could use the techniques from unit 2 and produce a wholly conventional work of scholarship; and you could create a groundbreaking multimedia installation without using any algorithms or even programming. This unit focuses on the opportunities for scholarly communication afforded by the web and other digital media.

Week 8 (October 28): Digital Collections and exhibitions.

- Wyman et al. “Digital Storytelling in Museums.”

Aside from the one museum collection, we’ll be doing presentations on born-digital exhibitions.

There are a wide variety of professional digital collections and exhibitions. Rather than have each of you explore all of them, find one and explore it at length, bringing several URLs to class to discuss as successes or failures of design, narration, and public engagement.

Some possible online archives/exhibits to present on:

- “Our Marathon,” Northeastern
- Rumsey Historical Maps
- September 11th Digital Memorial.
- The Old Bailey Online
- Mall Histories, CHNM
- Digital Harlem

Practicum

- Workset: Building with Omeka.

Week 9 (November 4): Networks**Guests: Nick Beauchamp (Political Science)**

Note—we’re doing network methodologies here because of rescheduling needs, but thematically they’re part of the second unit of the course.

- Weingart “Demystifying Networks, Parts I & II”
- Winterer “Where Is America in the Republic of Letters?”
- Shin-Kap Han, “The Other Ride of Paul Revere”

Software: Networks with Gephi

No class/office hours Nov. 11, Veteran’s Day

Project proposals due Friday 11/13

Week 10 (November 18): Visualizing Data

- Theibault “Visualizations and Historical Arguments.”
- Tufte *Envisioning Information*.
- Drucker “Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display.”
- Klein “The Image of Absence.”

Practicum: visualizing in R: the “grammar of graphics”

No class/office hours week of November 25, Thanksgiving

Week 11 (December 2nd): Stories in New Media

- “Snow Fall.”
- MacAskill and team “NSA Files Decoded.”
- Bagnall and Sherrat, “Invisible Australians: Living under the White Australia Policy”
- Something TBD, hopefully something released this fall; suggestions welcome.

Practicum: Workshop on Public History project

Week 12 (December 9): Publishing and sharing research

- Ayers “The Valley of the Shadow.”
- Thomas and Ayers “The Differences Slavery Made.”
- Thomas “Writing a Digital History Journal Article from Scratch.”
- Dan Cohen, “The Social Contract of Scholarly Publishing,” *Gold Debates in the Digital Humanities*.
- Fitzpatrick, Planned Obsolescence, selections.

Practicum: none

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