DIGITAL HISTORY 631 ~ SPRING 2017

Dr. Joey A. Fink

Class Meetings: Wednesdays, 6:30-9:20pm, W. Moore Humanities and Research Administration Building, Room 2204

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 5:30-6:15, MHRA, Room 2114, and by appointment

Email: jafink@uncg.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Digital technologies infuse a vast array of historical practices, including virtual exhibits, online collections, and audio/visual components in museum spaces. Museums and historic institutions have begun to use technology in their halls on a widespread basis, whether moving image presentations, audio tours, computer games or mobile applications. Historic institutions have also poured their efforts and resources into digitizing their collections and building their audience base through social media. Individuals and organizations have created an array of virtual exhibits that put historic knowledge directly onto the web.

During the semester, students will explore these technologies and discuss the core question of the class, "How do multimedia tools shape the telling of history?" The class will critically engage with the possibilities and challenges opened up by these methods. In order to build these skills and understandings, course work will center around three areas: reading and discussing texts about the experiences of individuals and institutions with digital tools and creating multimedia projects; critically assessing existing digital history projects; and doing hands-on work on a digital project to develop and hone skills and create tangible products.

Learning Objectives – Core Concepts
The Digital History class will foster understanding about the following core concepts:

- the ways that contemporary museums are using digital technologies (audio, video, computer gaming, social media, mobile applications) and how those new tools have changed the landscape of museums and the related opportunities and challenges,

- an understanding of the skills, resources and infrastructure involved in the creation of digital projects and the issues surrounding these projects, including copyright laws, accessibility and the problems of digitized primary sources, and,

- an understanding of the ways that digital tools alter the presentation of history and the ability to assess the appropriateness of digital methods in research, public history projects and reaching audiences.

Learning Objectives – Core Skills
This class will train you in skills that public historians use in the profession and in digital practices, including:

- write concisely, clearly and creatively,

- speak publicly and teach in a way that engages and activates your audience,

- exposure to multi-media and digitization tools (examples: WordPress, Omeka, mapping tools, Creative Commons, Photoshop, Audacity, OCR, Viewshare, Flickr, Palladio),

- assess existing digital history projects, know how to identify appropriate digital programs and learn/adapt to the new technology.

EXPERIENCES, PROJECTS & EVALUATION

To build these skills, you will engage in the experiences and projects listed below. You must turn in each assignment on-time. I will deduct one letter grade for each hour past the deadline. Unless you have a specific accommodation from the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services, I will only grant extensions in advance of the due date. That said, contact me if you sense that you will not meet the deadline.

Grade Scale: A 93-100 / A- 90-92 / B+ 87-89 / B 83-86 / B- 80-82 / C+ 77-79 / C 73-76 / F 72 and below.

Your evaluated work for this course will fall within four components, described below. We will discuss in class the expectations and specific instructions for each component. At any point, if you have questions or need clarification or guidance, don't hesitate to email or meet with me.

1. Scholarly and Professional Engagement – 20%
Scholarly Engagement: Seminar-style discussions of the readings and active participation in the workshops make up a central part of this course. Attendance is mandatory and if you have any conflicts because of religious holidays, family emergencies, or health issues, please contact me as soon as possible and no later than the day of class to request an excused absence and arrange for making up that work. Merely attending is, at best, a minimal effort to meet the expectations for scholarly engagement. A-level scholarly engagement means consistently offering significant vocal contributions throughout the class meeting, demonstrating active listening through body language/non-verbal communication, being prepared for each meeting with reading notes/questions, and actively participating in workshops.

Professional Engagement: Everyone in the class will work with UNCG librarians on a digital history project on runaway slave ads. More information will be provided by Richard Cox and David Gwynn, including the expectations and workload, which will be similar to/roughly equivalent to the expectations and workload for Scholarly Engagement.

2. 3-4 Page Review of an Existing Digital History Project – 20%
Students will assess an existing digital history project of their choosing. The review should evaluate the project's audience and intent, presentation, accessibility, and its strengths and limitations. **Due by midnight March 15.** (Submit your review in Canvas under Assignments as a Word Doc or PDF. You're welcome to turn in the assignment any time before the deadline.)

3. In-Class Presentation of Digital Skillset/Tools – 20%
Students will choose one digital skill /toolset, and research it and assess its use in the public history field. Each student will sign up to present it to the group in a way that promotes student learning. On the day you present, provide the class with a one-page summary sheet.

4. Individual Digital History Project – Total 40%
Project Proposal – 10% – Due midnight Friday February 10 in Canvas under Assignments
The project proposal will explain the purpose and intended audience of the project, provide a description of the structure of the project, and list the sources/resources you will use. This should be 2-3 pages in length (no more than 4).

Progress Report – 5% – Due at the beginning of class on Wednesday March 22
In a 1-2 page paper, explain the progress you have made thus far, challenges or issues you've encountered and how you have dealt with them/plan to deal with them, and a work plan for finishing the project. Please bring a **printed out copy to class with you on Wed. March 22, as well as submit this report in Canvas under Assignments**.

Presentation of Project – 5% Students will present their projects in class on April 19 or 26.

Final Web Project – 20% – Due Wed. May 3 by midnight
Submit the final project, along with a 4-5 page paper in Canvas under Assignments. The paper should include: an argument for the significance of the project; self-evaluation of the work produced; reflection on lessons learned, changes you would make, and/or where you would take the project from here.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro greatly values integrity in the work of its students. You must appropriately cite any information that you use from your sources and you must submit work that you (and you alone) wrote/created. Copying the work of others and passing it off as your own (known as plagiarizing) is taken very seriously and will be handled by the university administration. Read more about the policy at: academicintegrity.uncg.edu.

ACCESSIBILITY
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro seeks to promote meaningful access to educational opportunities for all students. Should you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS), located in the Elliot University Center, #215. As an instructor, I am committed to making this course accessible to all of the students in it, and will work with OARS to accommodate students' requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to the instructor in order to receive accommodations.

RESOURCES

For assistance with writing assignments, contact the UNCG Writing Center, where staff members hold appointments both in person and via instant-messaging. The Digital Media Commons and the Digital ACT Studio in Jackson Library provide help with multimedia projects and UNCG's Speaking Center offers a great resource for building public, small-group or individual speaking skills.

READINGS
The following readings are available at the bookstore or online sellers. Contact me in a timely manner if you have trouble accessing the reading or acquiring the books. If a digital version of a required book is available, you may use that instead of the print copy.

Required

Dan Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).
      (Free digital version available at http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/)

Ross Parry, *Museums in a Digital Age* (Routledge, 2010).

Robin Williams and John Tollett, *The Non-Designer's Web Book* (PeachPit Press, 2006).

Any other assigned readings will be available online or in Canvas.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The readings and assignments should be completed before class begins on the day on which they are listed in the course schedule.

I may make minor changes or adjustments to the schedule. I will communicate any changes via email and post to Announcements in Canvas in a timely manner.

Jan. 18   Introductions

Jan. 25   The Nature of the Web and Digital Sites
Rosenzweig and Cohen, Introduction and Chapters 1-2, Exploring the History Web and Getting Started
Williams and Tollett, Introduction and Chapters 1-2 (skim through what is already familiar/what you already know – take the quizzes)

Feb 1   Designing for the History Web: Structuring the Site
Rosenzweig and Cohen, Chapter 4 Designing for the Web
Williams and Tollett, Chapters 3-6

Feb. 8   Designing for the History Web: Site Design, Digitizing Materials and Copyright
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapters 3 Becoming Digital and 7 Owning the Past?
Martha A. Sandweiss, "Artifacts as Pixels, Pixels as Artifacts," *Perspectives on History*, November 2013.
https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2013/material-culture-in-the-digital-frame/artifacts-as-pixels-pixels-as-artifacts
Williams and Tollett, Chapters 7-11

Feb 10 (Fri.) DUE by midnight, submit in Canvas your project proposal; upload in Canvas as a Word Doc or PDF

Feb. 15   Building and Communicating with Your Audience(s)
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 5 Building an Audience
Parry, ed., *Museums in a Digital Age*, 159-169
Workshop: Social Media and Public History

Feb. 22   Digital Technologies in the Museum Experience
Parry, ed., *Museums in a Digital Age*, 355-364, 391-405
Workshop: Basic website building

Mar 1   **Usability and Accessibility**
Parry, *Museums in a Digital Age*, 177-192, 281-290.

Mar. 8   **User-Generated History and Authority**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 6 Collecting History Online
Parry, *Museums in the Digital Age,* 229-246.

Mar. 15   **Spring Break – No Class**
Due by midnight: Review of existing digital history project; upload in Canvas as a Word Doc or PDF. Early submissions are welcome.

Mar. 22   **Student-led Workshop: Skillset/digital tools**

Due at the beginning of class: Submit your Progress Report in Canvas and bring a printed copy with you to class.

Mar. 29   **Student-led Workshop: Skillset/digital tools**

Apr. 5   **Student-led Workshop: Skillset/digital tools**
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Apr. 12   **Digital Preservation and Public Projects for Collections**
Cohen and Rosenzweig, Chapter 8 Preserving Digital History
NYPL, [Designing a Digital Project for a Historical Collection](#)

Apr. 19   **Presentations of Final Projects and Peer Evaluations**
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Apr. 26   **Presentations of Final Projects and Peer Evaluations**
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Final Projects Due by midnight May 3
Upload your paper to Canvas as a Word Doc or PDF. How you deliver your final project will depend on what your final project is (i.e., for websites, send the URL to me in an email).