Instructor Information

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Course Description

Digital history, the application of new and emerging technologies to the study of history, is an exciting new field. In this course, we are going to explore the literature on digital history, and then put theory into practice by digitally collecting, evaluating, and producing historical knowledge. Some critical topics for this course include:

- What is digital history?
- How new technology can transform historical work, through introductory data mining, textual analysis, spatial analysis, and data visualization
- How to put history online: making websites, blogs, and engaging with the public (public history)
- How digital archives are changing how we preserve history
- How gaming can shake up the historical landscape

This course aims to be different than other history courses you’ve taken. While I will lecture a bit throughout the class, much of it will be hands-on: playing with tools, experimenting with various software packages, getting out of the classroom from time to time, with an eye to active and engaged learning.

You will notice that the reading load is a bit lighter for this course. To make up for this, I will occasionally ask you to do some short ‘homework’ assignments: be it a blog post, asking you to pre-install a piece of software before you come to class on your laptop if you have one, and asking you to spend a decent amount of time on your assignment.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

We have three goals for this course:
1. The development of a digital portfolio, which showcases your work with several digital platforms, tools, and languages (including WordPress, Omeka, SketchUp, basic GIS, and basic Python).
2. Through regular short writing, work on your written communication skills.
3. Have fun and engaged learning through hands-on work.

Required Text


Readings Available on LEARN

Links are available to readings in schedule, most are web based.

Course Requirements and Assessment

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Date of Evaluation</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Course Blog</td>
<td>Ongoing, See Below</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Proposal</td>
<td>3 February 2014</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>2 April 2014</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Lightning Talk</td>
<td>24 or 26 March 2014</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Assessment #1: Tutorial and Course Participation (15%)**

Students are expected to be actively involved in lecture and tutorial discussions. **Remember:** this is not a straight-up lecture course, so it will be a bit more active in terms of participating. I expect you to:

- Attend class regularly with the readings completed
- Make a conscientious effort to learn and explore course themes and concepts
- If you ever have a question, feel struck, or if anything arises - don’t hesitate to contact me.

**Assessment #2: Ongoing Course Blog (30%)**

Rather than short assignments, we will write a series of short blog posts on the course blog. There are five required blog posts, each of which can be between 500 to 800 words. Blog posts are not essays - they are simply there to show that you’re playing with the material and showing off some of your results.

**BLOG POSTS ARE DUE BY THE END OF THE WEEK LISTED BELOW (Friday @ 11:59pm).**

They are listed below, but for your reference they are:

- **Week of January 13th:** Write an initial post just saying hi and why you are interested in the course. This is more just to make sure that we’ve all got blogs set up!
• **Week of January 20th:** Write a post about the three sites listed in the syllabus: what are they? What do they offer? Are they valuable? Representative?

• **Week of February 3rd:** Write a short blog post on the Science article, the N-Gram viewer, and the Mining the Dispatch site. What do you think? Play with the N-Gram Viewer and tell me about some interesting things you find.

• **Week of March 10th:** Write a shot blog post on your early encounters with Python. How far did you get? Do you think this is a valuable approach for historians? Why or why not?

• **Final week:** Write a short blog post revisiting your first post: do you still agree? What do you think of digital history?

Each blog post will be evaluated on the following criteria:

• **Clarity:** Is it well written? Does the blog post follow proper spelling, grammar, and stylistic conventions?

• **Engagement:** Does the post engage with the assignment? Does it demonstrate that you have used the tool?

• **Description:** What is the tool?

• **Analysis:** Be critical. If you are frustrated, if you do not think something makes sense, or if a tool does not seem useful, this is OK. If you think it is the best thing since sliced bread, this is OK as well!

**Assessment #3: Final Project PROPOSAL**

400-500 words (roughly two pages, double-spaced) - due **February 3rd.** For this, you only need to do the following:

• What is your project going to be?

• What sources will you be drawing on?

**Assessment #4: Final Project**

This is a major research project for this course, but will allow you to pursue one of the six tools that you have explored in depth. There is quite a bit of freedom in what you want to do. **The project is due on the last day of class, April 2nd and should be the rough workload equivalent of a 12-15 page paper.**

For this assignment, **YOU WILL PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TO DO!**

• **Research, establish, and write a historical website:** Using Omeka or Wordpress, create a small public history website. This could be of:
  o **University of Waterloo topics:** cataloguing public art, buildings, nature, and so forth on campus.
  o **Local history:** finding historical sites, plaques, etc.
  o **Other (preferably something you love)**
  o **Here, you’ll be building on examples we discuss in class.**

  ~ OR ~

• **Conduct large-scale textual analysis and share your analysis:** In consultation with
me, we can find a corpus that you could then explore using tools such as topic modeling, n-grams, voyant tools, and so forth.
  o I can also provide ready made corpuses, including historical plaques, historical books, and so forth.
  o The end result can be a historical paper (8-10 pages) or can be a website explaining your findings (similar to Mining the Dispatch).

  ~ OR ~

• Carry out spatial research: With maps, in consultation with the library, me, or city resources, come up with a question. Can we map historical maps onto current grids? Can you make an interactive historical document using Neatline? You could do one of UW, one of the local community, or elsewhere.

  ~ OR ~

• Create a tool with Python: Building on our introductory Programming Historian 2 work, you could find a corpus online, find a way to spider the sources, and program your own textual analysis tools. As with above, you could write a historical paper (8-10 pages) which would note your own experiences as well as findings, or put this on your website.

  ~ OR ~

Something else! Come talk to me in office hours.

Assessment #5: Final Project Lightning Talk (10%)
This will involve quickly showing off what you’ve done to the rest of the class.

Course Outline
Readings need to be done by the second meeting of our class (i.e. by the Wednesday).
TUTORIAL OUTLINE WILL BE FORTHCOMING, BUT WILL USE THESE READINGS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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Homework: Set up your home system in accordance with what we discuss in January 8th class. |
| 2    | Jan 13 and 15 | The History Web                   | Reading: “Exploring the History Web,” in Digital History.                |

(next page for more)
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Homework: Set up a Wordpress.com blog, and say hi in your first post! Who are you, why are you in the course, what is your background?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Podcasting and Sketchup</td>
<td>Reading: “Designing for the History Web,” in Digital History.</td>
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<td>Explore the following websites:</td>
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<td>9/11 Digital Archive: <a href="http://911digitalarchive.org">http://911digitalarchive.org</a></td>
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<td>Hurricane Katrina Archive: <a href="http://hurricanearchive.org">http://hurricanearchive.org</a></td>
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<td>Occupy Archive: <a href="http://occupyarchive.org">http://occupyarchive.org</a></td>
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<td>Homework: Write a short blog post on the three websites listed above. What are they? What do they offer? Are they valuable? Representative? (500-800 words)</td>
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<td>and 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Read the following websites and explore the projects:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- Mining the Dispatch: <a href="http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/">http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/</a></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Google N-Gram: <a href="http://books.google.com/ngrams">http://books.google.com/ngrams</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Homework: Write a short blog post on the Science article, the N-Gram viewer, and the Mining the Dispatch website. Play with them! Have fun! What do you think?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>Digitizing Primary</td>
<td>Reading: “Collecting History Online” and “Preserving Digital History.”</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>Readings</td>
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| 7    | Feb 24 | Spatial Histories                          | Reading: “What is Spatial History?”
|      | and 26 |                                            | http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29   |
|      |        |                                            | “Place and the Politics of the Past”
|      |        |                                            | http://historyonics.blogspot.ca/2012/07/place-and-politics-of-past.html |
|      |        |                                            | **Homework:** Play with Neatline and Google Earth.                       |
| 8    | Mar 3  | Humanities Programming                     | **Readings:** The Programming Historian 2, available online,
|      | and 5  |                                            | http://programminghistorian.org. Do lessons 1, 2, and 3.                |
| 9    | Mar 10 | Visualizations/Programming Continued and   | **Readings:** The Programming Historian 2, available online,
|      |        |                                            | **Homework:** After our introductory classes, begin to work through
|      |        |                                            | the lessons. Write up a short blog post on your encounters with
|      |        |                                            | Python. How far did you get? Do you think this is a valuable
|      |        |                                            | approach for historians? Why or why not?                                |
|      |        |                                            | **Note that I do not expect you to become the best Python
|      |        |                                            | programmer in the world. Instead, these readings are to help you
|      |        |                                            | start thinking about programming and whether we think it
|      |        |                                            | matters for Arts students. At the end of the day, if you hated it
|      |        |                                            | and got nowhere, that’s fine!                                          |
| 10   | Mar 17 | Gaming                                     | **Readings will be provided (they’ll have to do with gamification
|      | and 19 |                                            | and, specifically, video games).                                        |
|      |        |                                            | These will be the last readings for the course, giving you time to
|      |        |                                            | focus on your project.                                                  |
| 11   | Mar 24 | Final Lightning Talks                      | This will hopefully be a festive end to the course! Each of us
|      | and 26 |                                            | (Professor Milligan included) will give short three-to-five minute
<p>|      |        |                                            | lively presentations on our research.                                   |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3:30 also strikes me as a good time for some afternoon refreshments!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mar 31 and Apr 2</td>
<td><strong>What could be next?</strong> And <strong>Course Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>No readings, but your final project is due on the last day of class.</td>
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**Late Work**

Late work is generally penalized at five percent a day, **unless you are in touch with me beforehand and we work something out**. If you are submitting a late assignment, e-mail it to me and bring a hard copy (if applicable) to the next class. I will 'stop the clock' based on when your e-mail is stamped.

**Electronic Device Policy**

You are encouraged to bring and use laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc. to class, although I do expect that you will use it responsibly and not distract your classmates.

**Institutional-required statements for undergraduate course outlines approved by Senate Undergraduate Council, April 14, 2009**

**Academic Integrity**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity Webpage](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the [Arts Academic Integrity Office Webpage](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/current-undergraduates/academic-responsibility) for more information.

**Discipline**

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing academic offenses and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).
Grievance
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals
A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals (http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

Note for Students with Disabilities
The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.