HIST 455: INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL HISTORY
FALL 2018
Instructor: Dr. Angel David Nieves, Associate Professor of History & Digital Humanities
History Department, San Diego State University

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Catalog Description
Theory and issues of digital history. Tools and practices used by historians to conduct research and present findings and results through a technology lens. Challenges and uses of digital history.

Course Description
This course blends a traditional seminar in the theory and issues of digital history with hands-on training in its tools and practices in order to better understand how technology is transforming the way historians conduct research and present their work. Students in this course will learn about computational tools for data analysis; the new ways historians record, store, organize and disseminate their findings; and about the theories and practice of digital history through readings, workshops, websites, field trips, discussions, and by having professional historians, archivists, librarians, and digital project directors as guest speakers. Using an experiential and flipped-classroom approach, students will explore the possibilities and challenges of doing public history in digital spaces, applying what they learn to their own self-designed digital public history projects. Students will each identify a digital collection of materials around which they will build an online project. In developing a digital history project, students will define their target audience(s); establish a set of outcomes; identify and adopt a delivery platform; determine an organizational system; create content, including narrative and interpretative text; and devise a set
of criteria for evaluating the project’s impact. Students will develop detailed work plans to ensure timely and successful completion of their projects. This course challenges students to think broadly about where the field of history is headed and how libraries, archives, academics, publishers, and the public are thinking about how to preserve the past and curate unique projects to share with the world.

Student Learning Outcomes
On completion of HIST 455, you should be able to:

IDENTIFY key issues and historical developments of the sub-field, of digital history, as it relates to the broader discipline of history

COMPARE key issues, developments, and periods through digital history with special attention to the changes resulting from advances on the internet and through the emergence of new digital tools on-line for historical research

ANALYZE key themes – of power, privilege and access as they relate to the various kinds of digital history projects under consideration across the course with particular attention to those projects that consider race, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, and identity formation through an intersectional framework

INTERPRET the scholarly arguments regarding the viability, accessibility and use of digital history to advance the social, political and economic narratives of marginalized groups in American society

ASSESS the broad impact of digital history on the everyday practices of historians and the ways that digital history projects can impact the public

APPLY GE EXPLORATIONS: Intertwined with the History-focused learning outcomes for this course are the broader learning goals of Humanities GE. This course fulfills one of nine courses that you will take in General Education EXPLORATIONS. EXPLORATIONS GE courses cultivate skills in reading, writing, research, communication, computation, information literacy, and use of technology. They furthermore introduce you to basic concepts, theories and approaches in a variety of disciplines in order to provide the intellectual breadth necessary to help you integrate the more specialized knowledge gathered in your major area of study into a broader world picture. Upon completion of this area of GE EXPLORATIONS, you will be able to:

1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments;
2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures;
3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance;
4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

As outlined in the General Course Catalog for 2018-2019 (pg. 94), “Cultural diversity courses focus on the theoretical and practical factors of age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender
identity, immigration, nation, race, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and other significant markers of social identity. Courses meeting this requirement examine the complexity of diversity through an analysis of differential inequities, oppression, power, and privilege. Cultural diversity courses focus on non-dominant views and perspectives.”

This course will be taught through a feminist intersectional framework which considers the overlapping and multiple identities that make up the human experience while also acknowledging how power, privilege and access are intertwined with human categories of identity.

COURSE STRUCTURE, ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Structure

Class time will be divided between 1) lectures and discussion, with the focus mostly on discussion. (That means that you must to come to class having done the readings or assignments and ready to participate in – or even sometimes lead – discussions. If you don’t pull your weight and don’t participate, we all lose) and 2) hands-on workshops in a range of open-source tools and approaches to creating digital projects. Some meeting time will be devoted to individual project development, although the bulk of students’ project work will occur outside of class.

Grading

Grades will be determined according to:

Participation (25%) will be measured on the basis of your consistent attendance and the frequency and value of the contributions you make to in-class discussions, workshops, and exercises, including those based on new digital tools. You can, of course, only contribute meaningfully to in-class discussion, workshops and training-based exercises if you attend class regularly and prepare for class participation and contribution.

Grading rubric for participation (to be completed at the end of the semester):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Novice (no points)</th>
<th>Intermediate (1/2 of possible points)</th>
<th>Proficient (full points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency (5%)</td>
<td>Seldom comments in class</td>
<td>Comments in some classes but not all</td>
<td>Comments frequently in most classes</td>
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<td>Preparedness (5%)</td>
<td>Shows no preparedness for discussions</td>
<td>Shows preparedness for discussions in some classes but not all</td>
<td>Shows preparedness for discussions in most classes</td>
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<td>Comprehension (5%)</td>
<td>Discussion shows little understanding of the readings</td>
<td>Discussion shows some understanding of the readings</td>
<td>Discussion shows deep understanding of the readings</td>
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<td>Questions (5%)</td>
<td>Asks few or no questions to aid in understanding</td>
<td>Asks some questions to aid in understanding</td>
<td>Regularly asks questions to aid in understanding</td>
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<td>Debate (5%)</td>
<td>Shows little interest in engaging other students about the discussion topics</td>
<td>Shows only some interest in engaging other students about the discussion topics, or only in some classes</td>
<td>Shows real interest in engaging other students about the discussion topics</td>
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<td>Total: 25%</td>
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Project (30%) will take place in several stages over the course of the semester, including: proposal, presentation, and final paper (1500 words).

In groups of four or five, students will produce a pedagogical or public history website using the exhibit/content management system Omeka. You will design and execute a digital history project using the software/platforms/tools of your choosing. All projects will be presented as Omeka exhibits.

This assignment will consist of three parts:
1. **Project Proposal & Workplan** (5%): A proposal detailing the project's theme, goals, content and presentation. The final proposal, incorporating suggestions from an in-class peer review exercise, will be submitted to the professor for approval. (SLO: 2. Compare; 3. Analyze) (GE-SLO: 1. analyze written, visual, or performed texts; 4. complex problems and ask complex questions)
2. **Project Presentation** (10%): Each group will present the draft project to the class, demonstrating its interface and content for peer review. (SLO: 2. Compare; 3. Analyze; 4. Interpret) (GE-SLO: 2. describe various aesthetic and other value systems)
3. **Final Project** (15%): Each group's digital history website, incorporating changes to address issues raised in peer review, will go live. (SLO: 4. Interpret; 3. Analyze; 5. Assess) (GE-SLO: 1. analyze written, visual, or performed texts)

**Mid-Term (25%) Evaluating a Mature Digital History Project** (SLO: 3. Analyze; 5. Assess) (GE-SLO: 1. analyze written, visual, or performed texts; 2. describe various aesthetic and other value systems)

You will compose a detailed review of a project in teams of two (or three), focusing on the following (in 1000 words):

The ambitions and aim of the project, the contribution to knowledge, the design of the project, its methods and technologies, its relationship to the field, and so forth. Please answer the following questions:

- Describe and evaluate the significance of the scholarship for the humanities.
- How does the project push forward (or fail to push forward) the state knowledge of a discipline?
- Can you identify the project’s primary research question? What is it? A series of questions?
- Describe and evaluate the project’s design and interface. Evaluate the interactivity and modes of navigation of the project.
- What technologies does the project employ (both front-end and back-end) and how does the scholarship make use of these technologies?
- What do you consider to be the successes and failures of the project?
- Consider the role of the project director (listed in parentheses). What influence does the
What impact does the project director have on the project’s success (or failure)?

- Consider using a rubric and applying whatever form of evaluation that might work best with the project you are examining.

1. Perseus Digital Library (Greg Crane): http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/
3. Digital Himalaya (Mark Turin): http://www.digitalhimalaya.com/
5. Salem Witch Trials (Benjamin Ray): http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/
6. Digital Harlem (Shane White): http://digitalharlem.org/
7. The Willa Cather Archive (Andrew Jewel): http://cather.unl.edu/
8. Homer Multitext Project (Gregory Nagy): http://www.homermultitext.org/
9. The Valley of the Shadow (Edward Ayers): http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/
10. Women Writers Project (Julia Flanders): http://www.wwp.northeastern.edu/

**Auto-ethnography (20%)** (SLO: 2. Compare; 3. Analyze; 5. Assess) (GE-SLO: 3. personal and global relevance)

For one day, pay conscious and close attention to the way digital media are shaping your life. As you go about your day, think about how racialized and gendered structures are embedded in the technology we use every day, and how you are shaped by these structures. One day this week, (ie. a 24-hour period) make notes and take pictures or screenshots:

1. What ways of seeing, hearing, moving your body are become intuitive and natural to you because of the ways you use digital devices?
2. Are your movements through the world at the mercy of Google Maps?
3. Do you see the world through a Pokémon GO, Instagram, Tumblr, Tinder, or Grindr lens?
4. Do you encounter different digital experiences through work, family, or friends?

Now, bearing in mind everything you’ve attended to over the past day, write a response to the following question: **How do race, gender, sexuality and/or queerness shape your digital practices?**

Keep these in mind:

1. This is not a thesis-driven paper. Rather, this is an opportunity to think things through as you write, to make an inventory of your own entanglements with digital media and how you interact with these media and with other humans through digital infrastructures and interfaces. (Though we still expect you to proofread and to include citations for any
readings you choose to “quote!”)

2. I am not asking you to write about your own race, gender and sexual identities in particular, though you are more than welcome to refer to them. Instead, try to notice when race and gender, and sexuality inflect what you do. Your auto-ethnography might be written as several different entries: like a field log, journal or annotated inventory.

Please conclude with a paragraph that communicates provisional analysis of your notes. **Include one (1) image that best relays the way digital media are shaping your life.** This can be a selfie, a photograph of your digital environment where you most engage with these devices, or even a drawing.

Remember to include your first and last name at the top of every page. 500 words max.

Grading will break down like this:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital History Project</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto-ethnography</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Readings and Research Paper**

Assigned readings are due on the days on the syllabus – make sure you’ve completed them BEFORE you come to class. **Readings must be completed before coming to class on the day for which they are assigned. You must bring a copy of the texts with you to class (either in hardcopy or on your screen).** The readings vary in length and type: some days we will read articles and documents; other days we will read sections of books. I’ve tried to break up the books so that not too much is assigned for any given day and so that there are periodic breaks in the reading load. You know better than anyone else how quickly or how slowly you read. Make sure to review the schedule so that you can plan in advance and pace yourself accordingly. Don’t be afraid to ask questions or come for help.

**ACADEMIC Honesty**

The University adheres to a strict policy regarding cheating and plagiarism. These activities will not be tolerated in this class. Become familiar with the policy and what constitutes plagiarism ([http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/cheating-plagiarism.html](http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/srr/cheating-plagiarism.html)). Any cheating or plagiarism will result in failing this class and a disciplinary review by the University. These actions may lead to probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Using sources verbatim or paraphrasing without giving proper attribution (this can include phrases, sentences, paragraphs and/or pages of work)
- Copying and pasting work from an online or offline source directly and calling it your own
• Using information you find from an online or offline source without giving the author credit
• Replacing words or phrases from another source and inserting your own words or phrases
• Submitting a piece of work you did for one class to another class

**Turnitin**

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to www.turnitin.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Ability Success Center at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Ability Success Center as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Ability Success Center. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Student Services**

A complete list of all academic support services is available on the Academic Success section of the SDSU Student Affairs website.

For help with improving your writing ability, the staff at the SDSU Writing Center is available in person and online.

Counseling and Psychological Services offers confidential counseling services by licensed psychologists, counselors, and social workers. More info can be found at their website or by contacting (619) 594-5220. You can also Live Chat with a counselor http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/cps/therapist-consultation.aspx between 4:00pm and 10:00pm, or call San Diego Access and Crisis 24-hour Hotline at (888) 724-7240.

**Copyright Policy**

SDSU respects the intellectual property of others and we ask our faculty & students to do the same. It is best to assume that any material (e.g., graphic, html coding, text, video, or sound) on the Web is copyrighted unless specific permission is given to copy it under a Creative Commons License. More information about the use of copy written material in education as part of the
TEACH Act and Copyright Fair Use Guidelines. Whenever possible, you should attribute the original author of any work used under these provisions.

**NETIQUETTE (ETIQUETTE)**

Netiquette is online etiquette. It is important that all participants in courses be aware of proper online behavior, especially in a digital history course, and respect one another.

Use appropriate language for an educational environment:

- Use complete sentences
- Use proper spelling and grammar
- Avoid slang and uncommon abbreviations
- Do not use obscene or threatening language

Remember that the University values diversity and encourages discourse. Be respectful of differences while engaging in online discussions. Find SDSU’s netiquette guidelines at this link: [http://its.sdsu.edu/learning-management-system/student-netiquette](http://its.sdsu.edu/learning-management-system/student-netiquette). For more information about Netiquette, see *The Core Rules for Netiquette* by Virginia Shea.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR BLACKBOARD**

Student support for Blackboard is provided by the Library Computing Hub, located on the 2nd floor of Love Library. They can be reached at 619-594-3189 or hub@mail.sdsu.edu

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Required:**

- Electronic Readings available as PDFs via Blackboard and through article databases
- Required full texts:


**Suggested:**

William Rankin, *After the Map*, University of Chicago Press.

**CALENDAR OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

Readings should be completed before coming to class on the day for which they are assigned. You must bring a copy of the texts with you to class (either in hardcopy or on your screen).
WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION: HOW DO HISTORIANS “DO” DIGITAL HISTORY?

Reading:
- “Every tool is a weapon: Why the digital humanities movement needs public history”
- Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris, *The Methods and Skills of History*, Preface and Introduction, Chapters 1-3

In-class Workshop: Introduction to Digital Collections at SDSU (w/Dr. Pam Lach); Historical Research On the Internet

WEEK 2: BLURRING BOUNDARIES: HISTORY AND PUBLIC HISTORY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Reading:
- *Letting Go?* “Introduction” (p. 10-15); “Participatory Design and the Future of Museums” (p. 17-33).
- Furay and Salevouris, Chapters 5-7

In-class Workshop: Understanding and Using WordPress

DUE: Auto-Ethnography Essay

WEEK 3: HISTORICAL EVIDENCE, VARIETIES OF DIGITAL HISTORY, HISTORICAL EVIDENCE IN THE DIGITAL

Reading:
- *Letting Go?* “Get Real! The Role of Objects in the Digital Age” (p. 56-67)

In-class Workshop: Timeline Tools

WEEK 4: LIFECYCLE OF THE DIGITAL HISTORY PROJECT

Reading:
- NYPL, “Planning Digital Projects for Historical Collections”

In-class Workshop: Omeka, Part I

DUE: Very rough draft of your *Project Proposal Abstract* (250 words)
WEEK 5: “I BUILT IT, NOW WHAT?:” AUDIENCE/PUBLIC/ENGAGEMENT

Reading:
- *Letting Go?* “Where Are the Best Stories? Where Is My Story?--Participation and Curation in a New Media Age” (p. 34-43); “Whose Questions, Whose Conversations?” (p. 68-79); “The ‘Dialogic Museum’ Revisited: A Collaborative Reflection” (p. 80-95);
- The Unquiet Librarian (blog post), “Crowdsourcing and Curating Collective Memory, Legends, and Local History with Facebook Groups”
- Explore a crowd-sourcing project (e.g., NYPL Menu Transcription Project, Civil War Diary Transcription, War Department Records Transcription along with the project blog, or one of your own choice).

In-class Workshop: Omeka, Part II – Plugins and Neatline

DUE: *Project Proposal and Work Plan*

WEEK 6: BUT WILL IT WORK?: USEABILITY

Reading:

In-class Workshop: Personas and other UX activities

DUE: Mid-Term

WEEK 7: WHO’S IN CHARGE: “EXPERT” VS. USER AUTHORITY

Reading:
- *Letting Go?*, “From A Shared Authority to the Digital Kitchen and Back” (p. 124-137); “Public Curation: From Trend to Research-Based Practice” (p. 194-205).
- Erin Scime, “The Content Strategist as Digital Curator”
- Roy Rosenzweig, “Can History be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past”

In-class Workshop: Viewshare

DUE: *Outcomes and Audiences*


**WEEK 8: DATA, DATA, AND MORE DATA (OH, AND DATA)**

*Reading:*
- Data Modeling 101; “An Introduction to Metadata”; The Dublin Core Metadata Initiative

*In-class Workshop:* Google Tools

*DUE:* Project Progress Report

**WEEK 9: SPATIAL HISTORY: GIS AND BEYOND**

*Reading:*
- Zephyr Frank, “Layers, Flows, and Intersections: Historical GIS for 19th Century Rio de Janeiro” (19 February 2013) (the first ~6 min. are introductory remarks; talk ends around 1:03:00).

*In-class Workshop:* Mapping Tools

**WEEK 10: HISTORY TO-GO: MOBILE HISTORY APPS AND MORE**

*Reading:*
- Assess a mobile history project of your choosing (List TBA)

*In-class Workshop:* Visit with mobile-app developers

**WEEK 11: SUPPLEMENTING AND RECREATING THE REAL: AR AND VR FOR HISTORY**

*Reading:*
- “CI-Spy: Designing A Mobile Augmented Reality System for Scaffolding Historical Inquiry Learning. Mixed and Augmented Reality-Media, Art, Social Science, Humanities and Design,” with Gurjot Singh, Doug Bowman, David Hicks, Todd Ogle, Aaron Johnson,
Rose Zlokas, Thomas Tucker, and Eric Ragan. ISMAR-MASH'D, p. 9-14, 2015 IEEE International Symposium

In-class workshop: AR and VR workshop with “Team Awesome”

WEEK 12: DON’T FORGET WORDS: NARRATIVE AND WRITING FOR THE WEB

Reading:

In-class Workshop: HTML

WEEK 13: LOOKING FORWARD: ASSESSMENT, FUNDING, THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL HISTORY

Reading:
• “Tenure, Promotion and the Publicly Engaged Academic Historian” (2010).
• Review other discussion of evaluating DH work at CDHI Resources Page.
• Familiarize yourself with the guidelines and previous winners of one category of digital project grants, either from NEH (Digital Preservation or Digital Startup Grant), IMLS, or a statewide humanities council (such as NCHC).

In-class Workshop: Project Updates; Writing and Submitting a Grant Application

WEEK 14: WORK, WORK, WORK!

Individual work on projects. In-Class or at home. Lab help available.

WEEK 15: IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Students will share their projects with the class; everyone will have an additional week to incorporate suggestions, revise, and clean their projects.

FINAL PROJECT DUE: TBD