

DOING DIGITAL HISTORY

[SCHEDULE](#)[READINGS AND RESOURCES](#)[PARTICIPANT POSTS](#)[ABOUT](#)

CATEGORY ARCHIVES: PARTICIPANT POSTS

Posts by the participants, aggregated from their sites.

August 15, 2014 by Andrew Denson

THREE IMMEDIATE STEPS

As we conclude the institute, we have been asked to identify three things that we will do in the near future to put some of what we learned here to work. I have a number of ideas, but the following are actions that I am pretty certain I can take in the next two semesters.

1. My department will be engaging in a curriculum revision this year. I'm on the committee directing this process. I will push for the inclusion of a digital competency objective in the new curriculum documents and for a digital history course. My department will probably not accept the first item, but most likely it will accept the second. I will work with the director of our public history program and our library's new digital initiatives person to begin developing the course.

2. I will pursue the project I outlined in my blog yesterday. Several colleagues and I have been talking with a local community group about helping to organize and present a collection of oral histories, text records, and images related to the African American community in Haywood Co., NC. We will incorporate this work into several undergraduate courses over the next few semesters, with the goal of creating a digital archive of these materials for inclusion in my university's existing Appalachian heritage site.

3. I will migrate my courses for the spring away from Blackboard to a site under my own control (a reconstructed version of this one, most likely). Take that, Blackboard!

Source: [Three Immediate Steps](#)

August 15, 2014 by admin

CODING EXERCISE

I'd like to introduce my students to coding—not because I'll expect them to build something from scratch (unless they want to) but basically to demystify how pages are constructed and structured. I could imagine an activity in which they go through the CSS and HTML lesson on Codecademy as a weekend assignment. During the next class period we would then discuss their experience; perhaps we could also have a

web services staff member on hand and then, using Firebug, look at the coding of digital history sites (again to explain and demystify).

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#post-38

August 15, 2014 by admin

DIGITAL OPTIONS FOR HISTORY 319: THE RISE OF MODERN AMERICA

In the fall, I am teaching two courses. One, a public history practicum course, will include significant play with digital tools. I have a clear vision of what I want the class to accomplish, which digital tools might be helpful, and how I can integrate both teaching and experimentation into the course.

I have found it much more difficult, in my nine years as a professor, to integrate digital methods and projects into my more traditional courses. I've spent some time these past two weeks thinking about just that. I think the key issues are class size (45 students), class composition (this is a mid-level course that fulfills general education requirements, so not all students are history majors), and learning objectives.

For my first foray into this realm, I am going to make two changes to existing class assignments, currently listed on the syllabus as “in-class group work” and “final presentation.”

In the past, I have developed a series of in-class group assignments designed to teach students to read secondary sources more critically and to use scholarship to interpret primary sources. Despite the fact that students know exactly what I will ask them to do in class, they are rarely prepared. I am going to adapt this assignment as a way to help students read together and begin to address core questions BEFORE class.

In addition, I always assign a final presentation so that students have an opportunity to draw some conclusions about what the class was “about” in a big picture way. While I have always encouraged students to think creatively about this, I am going to devote some class time to introducing simple technologies they can use to design more interactive and interesting presentations.

I still feel a bit tentative about this, which is why I am reluctant to post an actual syllabus.

Both of these ideas are still information for me.

Source: Digital Options for History 319: The Rise of Modern America

August 15, 2014 by admin

A DIGITAL STORY ASSIGNMENT FOR MY US SURVEY COURSE

This is the first of two posts about teaching. Below are directions for the digital story assignment for my survey course. The directions also describe the traditional paper assignment.

Section assignments require students to think like a historian. Doing so demands thoughtful consideration of why the story/narrative is an important genre within history. What is it about history that lends itself to this treatment? How do we tell persuasive stories about the past? Please begin this process with a more basic question: what are the characteristics of a good story?

The course is divided into five sections and at the end of each section students will be given a question. Students are required to complete four of the five assignments. The first assignment is required of all students. Students may select which of the remaining assignments they wish to omit. Each assignment is worth 100 points. Students are required to write a traditional

essay at least three full pages long and no longer than five pages (900-1500 words) for the first section assignment.

For all remaining assignments students can chose the medium in which they want to work—traditional essay or digital story—as long as they fulfill the requirement of two essays and one digital story over the course of the semester. The digital story must be five to ten minutes long. For the papers your name **must** be on the first page, pages **must** be numbered, and standard fonts and margins **must** be used (Times New Roman, 12 point, one inch).

All assignments require students to make an argument, support it with evidence synthesized from lecture notes, the e-text, the primary document PDFs, and the discussion board activities. The two most important components to master for these assignments are the argument and the primary source evidence. No additional research is required or necessary to produce excellent work on the papers, but students may augment their essays with the following electronic newspaper sources available from our library: ProQuest Historical Newspapers. No other outside sources may be used **without the expressed, written permission of the TA or the instructor**. Wikipedia is not allowed. You are welcome to discuss your answers with your classmates, but you **must** submit an original work of your own scholarship.

The digital story requires analytical thinking and explication of evidence but the presentation format is different, oral and visual not written. Students should remember that visuals, sound, and tone can have an important rhetorical effect if deployed well. Students may use iMovie or Audacity or any other equivalent video-editing program; students may also simply narrate a PowerPoint if their video making skills are rudimentary. Students must narrate their digital stories and must include an argument and evidence to support the argument, the bulk of which should come from the primary documents in the assigned PDFs but approximately a quarter from original research. This assignment, like all others, requires thought and preparation. The images need to be selected with great care and they need to relate to the narrative and analysis contained in the digital story. Please note: digital story telling is not sitting and reading a script while looking at the computer camera. In addition to images, students may use music as long as it is in the public domain. Students will need to engage in some rudimentary library research to find the information they need. For the digital story students may find images at one of several approved internet sites where the images are available in the public domain: the UH Digital History site; the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs site; the National Archives site; various sites in the Creative Commons (meaning there are no copyright restrictions on usage), including the Morgue File, Wylio, WorldImages, and

Google Advanced Image Search (To use the usage rights filter option, select “advanced image search” on the main Google Images page. Once in the “advanced image search” page, you will find the usage rights options at the bottom of the page. In the usage rights menu you can select one of four options; “labeled for reuse,” “labeled for commercial reuse,” “labeled for reuse with modification,” or “labeled for commercial reuse with modification.”). You may also use any other site that the professor or the TA approves. The digital story must include source attributions (listed on the last frame). The digital story assignment will be graded according to the traditional A, B, C, D, F scale defined below and not according to video editing skill, though as with a paper particularly sloppy work will not help the grade.

To do well on these assignments—paper and digital story—students must plan their work. For papers outlines are recommended as an initial step before writing. For digital stories the concept of the outline is transferred to a storyboard whereby students not only outline their content but also the visuals that will be used to demonstrate the pertinent points.

Digital stories must be loaded on YouTube (you can create a channel for the purposes of this class) with the link sent to the TA and me. Papers **must** be submitted to the Turnitin.com link on the course Blackboard page. We will check for

originality, and students who submit plagiarized work will face serious academic consequences.

Late assignments will be penalized. For each day a section assignment is late its maximum grade will be reduced as follows: A- is the maximum for a paper one day late, B+ for a paper two days late, B for a paper three days late, and so on including weekends.

Source: A Digital Story Assignment for my US Survey Course

August 15, 2014 by admin

A SIMPLE VISUAL LITERACY ASSIGNMENT

Nancy Beck Young and I had an interesting conversation about using the digital to teach primary source analysis in a gen-ed, survey course (mine is 1877-present) context. Part of the challenge in courses like these is usually that students are non-majors, and likely don't have very much primary source experience. My goals are to teach them critical analysis—especially, visual literacy—, and also how to put together evidence to form an argument. I was thinking about creating a visual source annotation assignment with a platform like ThingLink, and Nancy's experience with digital stories (iMovie or Prezi, or even PowerPoint) has made me think that this

might be a good way to teach students to do the work of assembling and using evidence.

I think these would be fairly simple assignments, and could be done without very much tech training.

Visual Literacy (5 per semester): choose, from this week's course materials, one image, and annotate this using ThingLink. Your annotations must attend to background, context, and close analysis. You must have at least ten separate annotations, of these, no more than three can be links to other digital sources (be careful that this source is reputable-this might have to be another handout, or a "transferrable skill"). The others must include your own original analysis (at least a paragraph for each), which you can supplement with additional links, as necessary and appropriate. Be prepared to informally present your ThingLink project in class (about 5 minutes). It will also be posted on our course management site.

"Visual literacy" is one of the learning objectives for this gen-ed course, which I think this assignment would help to satisfy.

Source: a simple visual literacy assignment

August 15, 2014 by admin

DIGITAL DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENT

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In my online survey course students will engage in weekly discussions about the primary documents I have assigned. For studying the New Deal I plan to give them a word cloud of FDR's first inaugural address and ask them to compare and contrast the concepts highlighted in the word cloud with what they think they know about this iconic speech.

Here is the word cloud and a link to the speech
<<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5057/>>:



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This entry was posted in [Uncategorized](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

.entry-utility

Source: [Digital Discussion Assignment](#)

August 15, 2014 by admin

REVISION OF AMERICA IN THE SIXTIES COURSE WITH DIGITAL ASSIGNMENT

Below is a revision of my “America in the Sixties” course which I will teach in the spring of 2014. (Lucky for me I’m on sabbatical in the fall). In order to add this assignment, I had to give up a “role playing” game. For more on these role playing games see: [Reacting to the Past](#). Though I’m willing to give up this game for this course, I strongly encourage members of the digital history community to familiarize themselves with this innovative student-centered learning technique pioneered by Mark Carnes of Barnard College.

Course Outcomes: (Derived for common Departmental and AHA-tuning-in project standards)

1. Knowledge of era: Students will use course materials to make connections between past and present issues.
2. Thinking skills: Students will demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills necessary for interpreting and using sources as basis for thesis/argument.
3. Academic/Professional Standards (Writing): Students will be able to write competently, including using correct mechanics and style appropriate for audience.
4. Academic/Professional Standards

(Oral/Visual/[**Digital**]Presentation): Students will present work with professional appearance and demeanor.

Readings:

- 1) Peter B. Levy, ed., *America in the Sixties—Right, Left, and Center: A Documentary History* (Praeger, 1998).
- 2) David Maraniss, *They Marched Into Sunlight: War and Peace, Vietnam and America, October 1967* (Simon & Schuster, 2003)
- 3) Assorted scholarly readings available via jstor or posted online.

Requirements:

- 1) Two papers (27.5% of grade.) (See attached)
- 2) Class assignments and participation (25% of grade)
- 3) **One group “digital” assignment (25% of grade)** (4-5 students per group)

A. Goals of Assignment: The object/goals of this assignment are threefold:

1. *To enhance student research skills and critical thinking skills.*
2. *To enhance student understanding of the time period.*
3. *To enhance student skills and comfort in using digital technologies*

B. To fulfill this requirement student can chose one of two options.

1. Compose and post a blog, using Word Press, on a topic of your choice. For a sample of a blog see:

<http://etiquette.umwblogs.org/>. Please note that this blog, much like a formal paper, contains an argument, supported by evidence drawn from primary and secondary sources, and references in Chicago Manual of Style format. The blog post is roughly 10-12 pages long, includes visual media and its creators have considered its design as well as its content. (Further clarification on the assessment of the blog will be posted.)

2. Produce a video documentary and post on You Tube (preferably a private channel) on a topic of your choice. The video should focus on a theme examined in the course applied to the local level (York College, the York community, or your home community), such as the rise of the counterculture in York or the sexual revolution and York College. It must make use of primary sources and students should consider making use of sources available at the Special Collections Department at York College and/or the York Historical Society. (Further clarification on the assessment of the production will be posted.) Your video production should include audio—music and/or narration and must include references to source material. The documentaries will be apx. 10-15 minutes long.

3. Alternatively, students can produce a radio program

following the same rules for the video documentary. For a good example of a radio documentary, listen to one of the segments on “Will the Circle Be Unbroken: An Audio Documentary of the Civil Rights Movement.”

[Such an assignment aligns with both my program’s (major’s) Academic/Professional Standards outcome and with the College Mission statement which calls for “thoughtful application of relevant technology.”]

Please be well-advised that you will not be able to successfully complete this assignment if you put it off to the end of the semester. Time will be set aside for in-class work on it but student groups are expected to meet regularly out of class. Specific deadlines for the two projects, including selecting the topic, identifying key sources, and developing a draft for peer review, will be distributed next week.

Source: Revision of America in the Sixties Course with Digital Assignment

August 15, 2014 by admin

SKETCHING DIGITAL PROJECTS FOR
UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

Today at Doing DH, we're talking about using digital projects in undergraduate teaching, led by Jeff McClurken of the University of Mary Washington. Jeff asked us to sketch and workshop some project ideas. Here is what I came up with, based on some conversations I and several colleagues have had this summer with a community group in our region. It's still a bit vague.

Working Title:

Haywood Co. African American Archive

Introduction:

This summer, a community group contacted me and several of my colleagues regarding a project involving African American history in western North Carolina. The leaders of this group have been recording oral histories and gathering textual materials and images documenting the black community in Haywood County, NC, and they have asked for help in organizing and presenting this material. The African American presence in southern Appalachia is often overlooked in both academic sources and by the regional heritage industry, so this project offers an opportunity to address a neglected aspect of the history of the southern highlands. I would like to create a

course project that would result in the digital presentation of a portion of this material.

Digital course or “digitally inflected?”

Digitally inflected. This project would form a research component of an upper-level undergraduate course on either modern US history or Appalachian history. Upper-level courses are capped at around 35 students, and our courses are generally full.

Individual or group-based?

This project would be group-based. Different groups would work with different kinds of materials or with different small parts of this community archive. I should explain that we are currently talking with the local group about the scope and contents of their collections, so the details are still a bit vague.

At the moment, I envision two stages. In the first stage, students would work with members of the community group to identify which materials should be made publicly available and then prepare those materials – by transcribing oral interviews, for instance. In the second stage, student groups would present and interpret selected materials.

The goal would be to produce the beginnings of an online archive of these materials, plus brief interpretive essays or multi-media presentations. My hope is that this could be a multi-stage project spanning several semesters, with different classes working with small discrete sections of the community archive.

My university has an existing Appalachian digital heritage project, one that has not been terribly active in recent years, but that includes blogs, textual materials, and audio and video files. My hope is that this African American history archive could become a part of that existing project, making use of the digital architecture already in place.

Partnerships:

- Local history group, Pigeon Community Center (Waynesville, NC)
- Digital Heritage, WCU Mountain Heritage Center

Goals:

- Students would work with community members to define the goals of the project, select, and organize archival materials for public presentation.
- Students would analyze and interpret heretofore unexamined primary sources tied to local history.

Justification:

This project would represent “community engagement,” which my department and the university administrators will like. It would also represent an authentic research experience with a public expression.

Source: *Sketching Digital Projects for Undergraduate Teaching*

August 15, 2014 by admin

MINOR SUCCESS WITH VISUALIZATION OF YORK RIOTS

York Riots of 1969: Many Eyes Visualization

One of the three riots that I am examining took place in July 1969 at the very same time that Neil Armstrong took mankind’s first step on the moon. By 1969, most contemporaries felt that the riots of the era had passed. They had also concluded that the riots of the era differed significantly from the race riots that had taken place earlier in the century. Specifically, they argued that there were few physical clashes. Some even called the disorders of the sixties “commodity” because of the prevalence of looting (and arson). In so far as shooting took place, it was deemed to be largely reserved to the actions of the police, state troopers, and poorly trained national guardsmen, and to snipers, though sniper fire in most riots was vastly over-

estimated. This visualization of all of the recorded incidents that took place in York during 1969 suggests that this was not always the case. No incidents of looting were recorded and arson was relatively infrequent. In contrast, there were multiple attacks on people and their homes, most often with rocks (or bricks) and with guns. While York became famous in 2002 when its mayor was arrested for one of the murders that had taken place in 1969, it is remarkable that more people were not killed. Hopefully, I'll be able to map the riot in the near future.

Source: [Minor success with Visualization of York Riots](#)

August 15, 2014 by admin

A DIGITALLY-INFLECTED HISTORICAL METHODS COURSE

Yesterday was the first day since the seminar began that I didn't post anything to my blog — but I will make up for it today with a long one. Last summer, I worked with a group of three colleagues to revamp our undergraduate methods course (and even spent about 90 minutes on the phone with Jeff McClurken to hear about the decisions UMW's History Department had made when doing the same thing the previous year). I remember saying at the time that we should include some digital history, but since I didn't have any good ideas

about how we might do that, neither of my colleagues were willing to jump on my bandwagon. But I will be teaching the course in Spring 2015, and now I have some tools and concepts to incorporate.

All History and Social Studies Education students take this course, ideally in the second semester of their sophomore years or first semester of their junior years. The goal is to serve as a pivot from introductory courses to more advanced ones, giving students tools they can use in all their upper-level history courses. That goal is a key factor, for me, in which Digital History tools I want to emphasize (as well as which assignments I absolutely cannot change). We have broken down the course objectives into their constituent parts, and created a shell of five modules that will emphasize specific skills and ideas, regardless of which person teaches the course and what its content focus is at any point in time. The whole thing is still very much a work in progress, which means it's a great time to incorporate new methods.

So here are some thoughts I had, broken down by course objective.

HST 3000: Historical Practice and Theory (Spring 2015)

Description & Goals: This three credit hour course is an introduction to key concepts and skills essential to the work of professional historians. This includes the following topics: the nature and types of history; the critical reading and analysis of primary and secondary sources; efficient and ethical research practices; writing skills; documentation style; and presentation and public speaking skills. The course is required for history majors, and it should be taken at the end of the sophomore or beginning of the junior year. This course is designed to prepare students for success in all upper level History courses. This course also fulfills the Writing in the Discipline (WD) requirement.

Communication skills (writing and speaking/presentation)

- Use Blackboard internal wiki to do initial drafting/commenting/revision workshop (and then repeat at least once with the drafting/peer review/revision process for another assignment)—I have a feeling students wouldn't want to make this experience public
- WordPress blog with weekly posts (instead of weekly Blackboard journals or internal Blackboard blog)
- Use Animoto to make a movie version of their project proposal, instead of giving an in-class presentation (keep other presentations)

Critical reading and analysis of primary and secondary sources

- first step here is in-class modeling of how we analyze a primary source, next is to send students out to find new sources—different types—and practice that analysis: one example is to use ThingLink to annotate an image they've found (as their blog post/journal entry for the week)
- I liked Diane's post about text-mining runaway slave ads—use those or Documenting the American South slave narratives as the basis for a text-mining assignment and blog post or journal
- transcription & metadata for one primary source item—I want them to understand what goes into creating the primary sources they find online (and then write blog post or journal entry about the experience)
- use wikis to do parts of historiography jigsaw assignment (each student in a group contributes information about an important question/theme in that group's subfield, based on book reviews and/or journal articles, some of which I select for them) outside of class
- Write History Engine episode? (I don't know if there's time for this in the existing structure—it requires a lot of revision. But it fits with the goals of the course [one of which is to ingrain the habit of revising all written work], so I'll see how the calendar works out.)

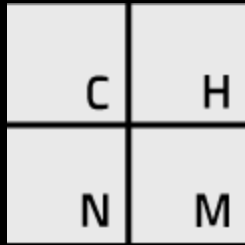
Efficient and ethical research practices

- Use Bookworm (Chronicling America option) to identify appropriate keywords for searching other databases (esp. primary sources)
- Work in Zotero: selecting and monitoring appropriate citation formats based on document type, organizing materials, taking notes, exporting into footnotes/bibliography/annotated bibliography

*The course overall builds to final paper of about 3000 words—that needs to remain because it's a departmental priority. The standard book review also needs to remain, as do at least some of the in-class presentations. Since one of the course goals is to practice skills students will use in all upper-level courses, the assignments need to line up with what they are likely to see elsewhere. I also still need to use Blackboard on occasion (our Writing Across the Curriculum QEP requires that we submit and grade one assignment using a common Waypoint Rubric, and Blackboard is our route into that).

Source: A Digitally-Inflected Historical Methods Course

OLDER POSTS



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