

History 427/527  
Digital History  
Dr. John R. Bawden  
Spring 2020

**Meets:** Monday 5-730 UMOM 307

**Course Credit:** 3 hours

**Pre-requisites:** History 101 & 102

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**Office Hours:** MW 9-12, 1-3, UM on Main Street 305 (or by appointment)

### **Course Overview**

Computers and the worldwide web have transformed historical research, analysis, and presentation. Scholars from around the world communicate electronically. Rare manuscripts, once inaccessible, are available to anyone with an internet connection. Google's vast library of digitized books is searchable by word, phrase, topic, and within specified time periods. Humanities scholars engage in large-scale collaborative projects, encode documents, and tell stories using interactive, data-rich maps. This course contemplates the promise and peril of these trends while students conduct research and generate content for several online projects.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Introduce students to the history of digital technology and its impact on historical practice.
2. Familiarize students with the challenges and possibilities of the new media for humanities scholarship.
3. Introduce students to web technologies and applications used in the digital humanities.
4. Create and contribute to digital history projects.

### **Digital Projects**

Activity 1: create a [Wikipedia user account](#) and select an article for improvement. Every student will become a contributor to the world's largest and jointly written online encyclopedia.

Activity 2: Learn about Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and present historical research making use of either <http://storymaps.arcgis.com/en/> or <https://timeline.knightlab.com/>.

Activity 3: Consider the implications of virtual reality (VR) --<https://vr.google.com/earth/>-- and augmented reality (AR) for history education. Use 360 cameras, in collaboration with Dr. Brendan Beal, for a project related to historic landmarks in the Montevallo area.

Activity 4: Scan and create metadata for materials from the university's Annie Crawford Milner Archives. Create a digital exhibit from these materials for the class Omeka website:  
<http://carmichaeldigitalprojects.org/archivingmontevallo/>.

### **Course Assessment**

Activity 1: 15%

Activity 2: 20%

Activity 3: 15%

Activity 4: 20%

Participation: 30%

A: 100-90% B: 89-80% C: 79-70% D: 69-60% F: 59-0%

### **Attendance and Participation**

Good participation means making comments, asking questions, and working well in your assigned groups. You will come to class having carefully reviewed the assigned articles or websites. Be prepared for my questions or the questions of your classmates. Your participation grade is a composite of your attendance and the quality of your participation on those days. You will receive a “zero” for participation if you miss more than three class sessions.

### **Fishbowl Discussion**

We will “Fishbowl” some of the reading material. On these days, you will prepare two written questions about each of the assigned readings. Three students, chosen at random, will form a “panel” responsible for answering the classroom’s questions.

### **Withdrawal Deadline**

The last day for students to withdraw from a course and receive a grade of “W” is **Monday, March 16.**

### **Graduate Level**

Students taking History 511 should speak with me about a historiographical essay related to the digital humanities. This assignment will be assessed along with all other requirements that appear in the syllabus.

### **ForUM Email**

You are responsible for monitoring and managing your account regularly, even during breaks. You are responsible for all announcements, requests, and/or sensitive information delivered to your UM e-mail account, including information related to this course. You may electronically forward your UM e-mail to another e-mail address (e.g., @gmail.com, @hotmail.com), but at your own risk. The University is not responsible for the handling of forwarded e-mail. Having e-mail forwarded does not absolve you from the responsibilities associated with communication sent to your official UM e-mail address. If you have any questions regarding or problems with your UM email account, you should contact the Solution Center (205-665-6512). The Solution Center is available Monday – Thursday, 8:00 am-7:00 pm; Friday, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

### **Disability Policy**

The University of Montevallo provides equal opportunity to qualified students. If you have a disability (medical, physical, learning, psychological, etc.) and wish to request disability-related accommodations to complete course requirements, contact Disability Support Services (located in Main Hall, rear entrance; 665-6250). Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course objectives. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

To claim as one’s own the ideas or words of another is plagiarism. Consult with me if you are unsure about how to cite sources. An assignment on which plagiarism or cheating has occurred will receive no credit, i.e. a “zero,” and an Academic Dishonesty Incident Form concerning the incident will be kept on file in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

### **Course Schedule**

WEEK 1 – 1/6

Introductions

What is digital history?

Read: Cohen and Rosenzweig, “The Promise and Perils of Digital History,”

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/introduction/>

Visit: <https://goo.gl/EPfjGa> (De Soto in the Americas)

Visit: [http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the\\_history\\_of\\_american\\_slavery/2015/06/animated\\_interactive\\_of\\_the\\_history\\_of\\_the\\_atlantic\\_slave\\_trade.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/life/the_history_of_american_slavery/2015/06/animated_interactive_of_the_history_of_the_atlantic_slave_trade.html) (The Atlantic Slave Trade)

Fishbowl Discussion

## WEEK 2 – 1/13

Survey of digital tools

The history of digital history

Read: Cohen and Rosenzweig, “Exploring the History of the Web,”

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/exploring/index.php>

Visit: <http://libguides.utoledo.edu/digitalhumanities/home>

Fishbowl Discussion

## WEEK 3 – 1/20

HOLIDAY – MLK Jr. Day

## WEEK 4 – 1/27

Open source history, interactive possibilities

Deconstructing Wikipedia

Read: Cohen and Rosenzweig, “Getting Started,” <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/starting/>

Visit: <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/tkotwim/the-american-soldier>

Visit: <https://www.theclio.com/>

Read: <https://www.theverge.com/2017/9/3/16226038/wikipedia-deleted-wiki-titles-articles>

Fishbowl Discussion

## WEEK 5 – 2/3

Technical skills needed for basic and advanced practice

Read: <https://doinghistoryinpublic.org/2014/07/03/why-historians-should-learn-how-to-code/>

Read: <https://www.wired.com/insights/2015/02/should-we-really-try-to-teach-everyone-to-code/>

Read: <http://observer.com/2017/01/harvard-mit-get-27m-to-research-artificial-intelligence-from-humanities-perspective/>

### **Digital project #1 due**

Discussion: Why would a historian learn to code?

## WEEK 6 - 2/10

Historical GIS (geographic information systems)

New ways of mapping the past and present

Guest: Jo McGinnis

Read: <https://library.wustl.edu/faculty-project-uses-gis-to-explore-history-of-racial-violence/>

Read: Natalie A. Zacek, “Reading the Rebels and Mining the Maps: Digital Humanities and Cartographic Narratives”

## WEEK 7 – 2/17

Visualizing text, data mining, big data

Architecture and aesthetics of digital history

Evaluating history websites

Visit: <http://digitalharlem.org/>

Read: Joshua Sternfeld, “Harlem Crime, Soapbox Speeches, and Beauty Parlors: Digital Historical Context and the Challenge of Preserving Source Integrity” *AHR*, 2016

## WEEK 8 – 2/24

Who owns the past?

Intellectual property

Read: Cohen and Rosenzweig, “Who owns the past?” <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/1.php>

Read: <http://chronicle.com/article/Pushing-Back-Against-Legal/127690/>

Visit: <http://goo.gl/mLkYRW>

Fishbowl Discussion

WEEK 9 – 3/2

MOOCs

Storytelling with maps

Students present preliminary work on project #2

WEEK 10 – 3/9

Meet with Dr. Brendan Beal

Virtual Reality and 360 Cameras

Visit: <http://km.cx/projects>

Digitizing document and editing software

**Digital project #2 due**

WEEK 11 – 3/16

Meet with Mr. Carey Heatherly in front of the Annie Crawford Milner Archive, basement level

Consult the presidential papers

Discuss activity #4 and the class digital exhibit

SPRING BREAK

Week 12 – 3/30

Meet in front of the Anna Crawford Milner Archive, basement level

Research day

WEEK 13 – 4/6

Meet in front of the Anna Crawford Milner Archive, basement level

Research day

**Activity #3 due**

WEEK 14 – 4/13

“Archiving Montevallo” groups to meet

Finding an audience and marketing the product

Preserving digital history and sources born digital

Read: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2015/05/28/preserving-the-born-digital-record/>

Read: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/preserving/index.php>

Fishbowl Discussion

WEEK 15 – 4/20

Digital humanities critique

Read: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_humanities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_humanities)

Skype in with guest

**Digital project #4 due**

Final Exam, Monday April 27, 630-830