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Course Description
This capstone course will introduce you to the many ways that digital media is shaping the way we research, write about, collect, preserve, and interpret history. In focusing on the theory and practice of digital history you will encounter leading authors and debates in the field, digital sites that serve as exemplary work, and the tools that you will need to build a digital public history site by the end of the course. By April, you should be versed in definitions and debates of the field, skilled at critically examining digital history work, and familiar with methodologies that digital historians use.

Course Learning Goals
- explore and employ the variety of tools that historians use in their digital work, including wikis, maps, blogs, and databases  
- learn how to assess digital work  
- understand copyright as it applies to doing history on the web  
- build confidence in your ability to continue learning new digital skills  
- understand the promises of digital history for public audiences, and employ scholarly and practical energy towards that end

Assigned Texts

Kristen Nawrotzki and Jack Dougherty, *Writing History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2013), http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/h/12230987.0001.001/1:3/~writing-history-in-the-digital-age?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=toc;xc=1

Most texts in the course will be electronic and links will be provided. I’ll make any .pdfs accessible on the course site.
Requirements and Evaluation

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<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>Weekly assignments via blog</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
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<td>Individual performance per group contract</td>
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<td>Group project</td>
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Attendance, evidence of preparation for class, and participation:
You are expected to attend class **on time** and to participate in class discussions. If you are sick or need to miss class for any reason, you should alert the professor in advance by email or by phone. If an absence is deemed justifiable (immediate family emergency or illness), you will be given an opportunity to make up the work. Please note that missing class to volunteer, work, or meet with other professors **does not** count as an excused absence. If you miss class more than once without excuse, your final grade will drop by a half letter each additional time you miss.

You are expected to read materials assigned each week, participate in class, and attend class regularly. This means that you ask questions, contribute to class discussions, and generally engage in what’s going on in the classroom. To facilitate your engagement, arrive on time, pay attention, and take notes. You may be expected to give impromptu presentations.

Weekly assignments:

Each week you will be given an assignment that urges you to think critically about the course readings and methodologies we will encounter. You will respond to assignments on your own blog, which I will aggregate on the main course blog.

On blogging: practicing digital history includes public writing and thinking about the field. Blogging is an important way that ideas are communicated about digital history work (just check out our readings!) and so we will also use the medium to communicate. I urge you to use your real name, as it establishes a thoughtful web presence, but also understand that you may have reasons for remaining anonymous. We’ll talk more about the issue of privacy in class and can address your preferences as you move forward in setting up your blog.

Portfolio:
In the course, you will also build your own professional, digital portfolio. I included this assignment because I’d like to see you take control of your digital identity. In the last third of the class we will discuss what a strong portfolio looks like and I will guide you in creating your own.

For the course blog and your portfolio, you will need to register a domain name with Reclaim Hosting. Reclaim Hosting came out of University of Mary Washington’s “A
Domain of One’s Own” initiative, which encourages “individuals to explore the creation and development of their digital identities.” Reclaim Hosting is meant to provide affordable domain hosting and support for students; a year’s worth of hosting costs $25, less than most college textbooks.

Group project:
Arguably the most important aspect of learning digital history is to begin your own practice. To that end, and as part of a group, you will build a digital public history site using archival collections from the Museum of History and Holocaust Education and the KSU Archives (see project descriptions below).

The project will require a number of steps:
1. Once you’ve been assigned to a group and project, you will need to meet with me and staff of the KSU Archives (depending on your project) to learn more about the collections and to map out a research plan. This meeting should take place in weeks 4 and 5 (class dates during these weeks are January 28 and February 4).

2. Your group will need to construct a contract—one that spells out the project as conceived by week 7. The contract should include the project’s mission; a calendar of work; a list of tools that you will use to build the site and justification of their use; and a basic division of labor in the group. These are due by week 8—February 25.

3. Though we will consistently be checking in on the project’s progress, you will give a presentation of the project draft on April 1. You will receive feedback from me, Dr. Jennifer Dickey, Dr. Tamara Livingston (of the KSU Archives), and Heather Oswald (also of KSU Archives).

4. On the last day of class, April 29, we will have a public presentation of your revised and final course projects. I will invite staff from the Dept. of Museums, Archives, and Rare Books as well as faculty from the History Department.

For your group work, I urge you to consult the Collaborator’s Bill of Rights.

Projects:
You will be building your digital, public sites using collections at Kennesaw State University. Project descriptions follow:

- **Photographs and meeting minutes from the Marietta Housing Authority (MHA).** These collections will allow you to build a site that focuses on public housing in the South after World War II. The MHA was founded in 1940 and continues to offer low-income housing options for seniors and families.

- **Records from the Bell Bomber collection.** Located in Marietta, the Bell Bomber plant constructed B-29 airplanes during World War II. The KSU Archives holds 240 images, oral histories, and other records pertaining to the
history of the plant. A site using these collections would offer insight into ways that World War II effected change in the South.

- **The history of KSU.** The KSU Archives has amassed a large collection of materials related to the history of the university. The materials, especially images, have a particularly strong focus on the built environment of the campus. A digital site using these collections would document change over time at the university and the footprint of KSU in Cobb County.

- **Edmund Padgett collection (MHHE).** Edmund Padgett was an infantry officer with the 10th Armored Division during World War II. The collection includes letters, documents, photographs, and material culture related to his service in the European theater. This collection is a good one to explore life on the battle lines and on the home front during WWII.

**Group presentations:**
Please note I expect you to offer formal and professional presentations of your project, both in draft and final form. On these days, you should dress appropriately (business casual) and should have prepared a succinct and engaging introduction to your project, including its mission, methodology, site structure, and conclusions.

**Student Services:** The Office of Disabled Student Support Services (Student Center, Room 268A) offers services to aid disabled students with their academic work. Arrangements for special services should be made at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made.

**Writing Center:** The KSU Writing Center is a free service offered to all KSU students. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you throughout the writing process on concerns such as topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and mechanics. Rather than edit your paper for you, writing assistants will help you learn strategies to become a better writer on your own. For more information or to make an appointment (appointments are strongly encouraged), visit http://www.kennesaw.edu/english/WritingCenter or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

**Academic Honesty:** Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or
substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s). Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one-semester suspension requirement.

**Course Schedule**

**Jan 7: Introduction to the Course**

**Jan 14: What is digital history? What is digital public history?**

How does the digital medium affect the work of historians? What possibilities does it raise for public historians?


Assignments: Sign up for Reclaim Hosting site

Using Jeffrey McClurken’s guide to reviewing digital history sites (link below), complete a review of one of the following sites:


Case studies:

In the Valley of the Shadow, [http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/](http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/)
The Emancipation Project, [http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/emancipation/](http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/emancipation/)
Virtual Paul’s Cross Project, [http://vpcp.chass.ncsu.edu/](http://vpcp.chass.ncsu.edu/)
Hull House and Neighborhoods, [http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/urbanexp/contents.htm](http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/urbanexp/contents.htm)
Jan 21: Finding/collecting/preserving on the web

Tools: Zotero, Omeka


Assignment: Digital Scavenger Hunt

Find a digital collection compiled from multiple physical institutions/repositories. Identify at least two contributing repositories.

Find a protected Wikipedia article about a historical topic. Click on the ‘View History’ tab at the top to examine how the page has been edited.

Find a public domain film clip depicting an historical event.

Using a newspaper archival collection, find an article related to a historical event or period that interests you (for ex., the New Deal, fall of the Berlin Wall, the Civil Rights Movement).

Jan 28: Digitization and managing digital collections
*Meet at the KSU Archives, 2nd floor of Sturgis Library, in LB 209
*Groups should schedule meetings with me or Archives staff to learn more about project collections

Feb. 4: Visualization and Narrative, part 1: Data and evidence
How do digital historians use and manage data?
*Groups should schedule meetings with me or Archives staff to learn more about project collections
Tools: StorymapJS, Viewshare, Google Maps

- Trevor Owens, “Defining Data for Humanists: Text, Artifact, Information, or Evidence?,” *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1, 1 (April 2012),
  [http://tedunderwood.com/2012/08/14/where-to-start-with-text-mining/](http://tedunderwood.com/2012/08/14/where-to-start-with-text-mining/)
- Richard White, “What Is Spatial History?” Spatial History Lab: Working paper; Submitted 1 February 2010,

**Assignment**: Assignment: Choose one case study to review (again using Jeffrey McClurken’s guide):
Gilded Age Murder, [http://gildedage.unl.edu/](http://gildedage.unl.edu/)
The Stadiumville project: [http://stadiumville.gsu.edu/](http://stadiumville.gsu.edu/)
Digital Harlem: [http://digitalharlem.org/](http://digitalharlem.org/)

Feb 11: Visualization and Narrative, part II: Storytelling
How do digital historians create narratives and arguments using data or visualization?
What does digital storytelling look like?

- Cameron Blevins, “Topic Modeling Martha Ballard’s Diary,” April 1, 2010,
- Brennan Collins, “Stadiumville and Deep Maps,” History@Work, December 2, 2014,

**Assignment**: Create Storymap (details to come) and
Feb 18: Understanding Copyright
Guest lecture: John Marshall, Associate Legal Counsel for KSU

- About Creative Commons, http://creativecommons.org/about
- The Visual Communication Guy, “Can I Use that Picture? The Terms, Laws, and Ethics for Copyrighted Image”

Assignment: TBD

Feb 25: Designing sites with users in mind

*Student contracts due

- “Downgrading your Website,” CooperHewitt Labs: http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/downgrading-your-website-or-why-we-are-moving-to-wordpress/

Assignment: Critique the usability and design of one of the following online exhibits (or one of your choosing) using principles laid out in readings:
Hollywood Goes to War, http://marb.kennesaw.edu/hollywoodandwar
Abraham Lincoln: An Extraordinary Life, http://americanhistory.si.edu/lincoln/introduction
Integrating Ole Miss, http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/olemiss/home/
Mar 4: To code or not to code?
(Mar 3 is the last day to withdraw from the course without penalty)


Assignment: Complete HTML & CSS tutorial on http://www.codecademy.com/

Mar 11 Crowdsourcing:


Explore these sites:
Direct Me NYC, 1940, NYPL, http://directme.nypl.org/
Operation War Diary, Zooniverse, http://www.operationwardiary.org/
Our Marathon, Northeastern University, http://marathon.neu.edu/
Papers of the War Department, RRCHNM, http://wardepartmentpapers.org

Assignment: TBD

Mar 28: In-class workday
March 25: **Building personal portfolios**


April 1: Present draft projects

April 8: Spring break

April 15 (in-class workday)

April 22: Bringing people to your projects, bringing your projects to the people

- Anne Lindsay, “#VirtualTourist: Embracing our Audience through Public History Web Experience,” *The Public Historian* vol. 35, no. 1 (February 2013), 67-86.

Explore these sites:
Hurricane Digital Memory Bank: [http://www.hurricanearchive.org/](http://www.hurricanearchive.org/)

April 29 (last day) Project and portfolio presentations (MHHE staff and History Dept. faculty invited)