



# DIGITAL HISTORY

Ver. 1.2

## Essential Facts

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Instructor: Professor Colleen Dunlavy, Department of History, UW-Madison

Office – 5109 Humanities, 608.263.1854

Office hours, Spring 2016 – Tuesdays, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Email – [cdunlavy@wisc.edu](mailto:cdunlavy@wisc.edu)

Seminar meetings – Wednesdays, 5:00-7:00 p.m., in the [DesignLab](#) at College Library (2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Media Studio 2)

## Seminar Description

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The term “digital history” has become ubiquitous, but what does it mean and what all does it encompass? This seminar is designed to give graduate students what you might think of as “digital literacy” — a basic grounding in:

- the range of forms that digital history currently encompasses,
- the debates among historians that they have stimulated, and
- (at least some of) the underlying technologies.

In scope, the seminar aims for broad rather than deep learning. The goal is not to make you a digital historian (though that might happen), but to expose you to methods and tools that might be useful for your own research and teaching and to give you the knowledge and confidence to speak intelligently on the subject, should you have occasion do so (e.g., in a job interview).

We will begin by exploring the controversies among historians that digitization in historical scholarship has generated in recent years. The rest of the semester is divided into two parts. The first offers a hands-on introduction to a series of tools for *conducting* historical research, for *analyzing* and *interpreting* historical sources, and for *presenting* the results of research to academic audiences as well as to the broader public. The second gives you opportunity to develop your own project—by exploiting the tools introduced in Part 2 or by exploring other tools of particular relevance to your work.

Note that I have sought to avoid duplicating topics on which workshops are regularly offered around campus. You can keep tabs on the many workshops offered around campus by consulting these pages:

- UW Library workshops, e.g., citation managers:  
<http://www.library.wisc.edu/help/events/workshops/>);

- Graduate School’s Office of Professional Development workshops: <http://grad.wisc.edu/pd/events/list/>; and
- DoIT’s Software Training for Students, which covers an impressive number of tools: <http://sts.doit.wisc.edu/classlist.aspx>.

These sites are also linked on our Learn@UW website – click the Links menu item. I have also included an array of links to digital history sites on the web.

## Pre-requisites

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NONE. The seminar is designed to accommodate students at all skill levels. I have tried to tailor the content to take account of your pre-existing skills and your interests (hence, the Google survey that you completed). By no means do I profess to be an expert in all of the digital tools that we will explore—in some cases, I will be learning alongside you—so this seminar will oftentimes have a collaborative feel. For example, I’ve made all of you “contributors” to our WordPress blog at <https://hist710digitalhistory.wordpress.com/>.

## Requirements and assessment

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1. Informed, engaged participation in seminar discussions; contributions to our seminar blog; and participation in peer reviews, including co-leadership of the peer-review segment of one seminar—25%
2. A series of small projects, mainly based on your own research and writing, to expose you to various tools for translating print-based historical research into digital forms, e.g., infographics, theory comix, ebooks—50%
3. Independent project of your choice, e.g., remediation of your own work such as a seminar paper or dissertation chapter (i.e., translating it into a new-media genre); building a website around your research interests; or exploring a new tool of special relevance to your research or teaching interests—25%.

For our weekly schedule, see the next page.

## Schedule

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The assigned readings for the first week, and occasional readings thereafter, are available either through links below or on our Learn@UW website. Don't forget to explore the Links page on our Learn@UW site as well.

### January 20 – Introductions

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No assignment.

## Part 1 – Conceptual/historiographical orientation

### January 27 – Thinking about digital history

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During seminar – Discussion of assigned readings:

- Grafton, Anthony. "The Footnote from De Thou to Ranke." *History and Theory* 33, no. 4 (1994): 53. If you prefer, of course, you can read his book instead—*The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
- Browse the outline version: Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006) at: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/>.
- Ernst, Wolfgang. *Digital Memory and the Archive*. Ed. and intro. by Jussi Parikka. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2013: Ch. 1, "Let There Be Irony: Cultural History and Media Archaeology in Parallel Lines," pp. 37-54. [Originally published in *Art History* 28, no. 5 (November 2005): 582–603.]
- Grafton, Anthony. "Apocalypse in the Stacks? The Research Library in the Age of Google." *Daedalus* 138, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 87-98.
- White, Richard. "What Is Spatial History?" Stanford University Spatial History Lab Working Paper, 1 February 2010. Available at: <https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29>.
- Guldi, Jo, and David Armitage. *The History Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Available for download through the UW Libraries catalog or at: <http://historymanifesto.combridge.org>.
- Denbo, Seth, et al. "History as a Book Discipline (Forum)." *Perspectives on History* (April 2015): 19-27.

## Part 2 – Exploring Digital Tools

With the issues in mind that were raised by last week's readings, we turn in this segment of the seminar to a sampling of digital tools that seems especially useful for historians and a series of assignments designed to give you some hands-on experience with them.

Our "reading" assignments in this part of the seminar (some still TBA) are brief, how-to works, often on the web. Also, to prepare for each week's topic, plan to spend some time trolling the internet for relevant sites. If you use Google, I'd recommend setting the timeframe to the last year (Search Tools – set Any Time to Past Year), since digital technologies are changing so quickly. When you find a particularly interesting or useful page or site, post a brief notice on our blog to point the rest of us to it.

Beginning the second week (Feb. 10), we will divide our two-hour seminar between a collective evaluation of the assignments that are due in seminar that week and an introduction to the digital tool that you will explore in the following week's assignment.

To turn in your assignment, go to Learn@UW – Discussion, select the appropriate week/topic, create a new thread and attach your assignment (or provide a link to it).

**TIME MANAGEMENT ALERT:** The digital assignments are due by noon on the Tuesdays before seminar. Each week, be sure to set aside some time to review the other seminar members' work between noon on Tuesday and our seminar meeting at 5:00 pm on Wednesdays.

### February 3 – The CAT Evaluative Frame and Infographics

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- No digital assignment due this week.
- In preparation for seminar this week, read:
  - American Historical Association's *Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship in History*: <http://historians.org/teaching-and-learning/digital-history-resources/evaluation-of-digital-scholarship-in-history> (also posted on Learn@UW).
  - Jason Lankow, Ross Crooks, and Josh Ritchie, *Infographics: The Power of Visual Storytelling* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), ch. 8, "What Makes a Good Infographic?" (on Learn@UW; the book is available online through the library catalog).
  - easel.ly's *Complete Guide to Infographics* at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/InfographicBook/CompleteGuideToInfographics.pdf>; a copy is also available on Learn@UW.
  - Samples of infographics on the web and related websites, e.g., this is a useful review of websites/software for creating infographics: <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2015/08/20/20-cool-tools-creating-infographics/>.
- During seminar:
  - Introduction to the C-A-T (Conceptual-Aesthetic-Technical) and utility-soundness-beauty evaluative frames
  - Introduction to infographics
- Digital assignment due next week: Use easel.ly (<http://www.easel.ly/>) – or another tool, if you prefer – to turn *this syllabus* into an infographic or to create one on a topic of your choosing.
  - To submit an infographic created on easel.ly, click Download and choose Save as pdf, give your pdf a file name that includes your last name, then upload the pdf to a new thread on our Learn@UW Discussion topic for this week.

### February 10 – Theory Comix

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- Digital assignment due in our Learn@UW dropbox by 12:00 pm on Tuesday, Feb. 9: the infographic that you created on easel.ly.
- Before seminar,
  - Evaluate everyone else's infographics using the C-A-T or utility-soundness-beauty evaluative frames.

- Read/browse/listen:
  - DesignLab page on Theory Comix – be sure to browse the Examples links;
  - Comic Life, the software we'll be using: <http://comiclifecom.com/>;
  - Prof. Jon McKenzie, UW-Madison Professor of English and Director of the DesignLab on the digital humanities and theory comix: <http://wpt.org/University-Place/gay-science-theory-comix>.
- During seminar:
  - Peer review of infographics, launched by discussion leaders
  - Introduction to Theory Comix
- Digital assignment due next week: a theory comic based on a research question of particular interest to you.

### February 17 – Data Visualization

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- Digital assignment due in our Learn@UW dropbox by 12:00 pm on Tuesday, Feb. 17: a theory comic that draws on your research or research interests
- Before seminar,
  - Evaluate everyone else's theory comix using the C-A-T or utility-soundness-beauty evaluative frames.
  - Read:
    - The DesignLab's handout on data visualization tips and sources at <https://designlab.wisc.edu/images/PDF/data-viz.pdf>
    - Stephen Few, "35. Data Visualization for Human Perception," in The Encyclopedia of Human-Computer Interaction, eds. Mads Soegaard Rikke Friis Dam, 2d ed., Interaction Design Foundation, <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/book/the-encyclopedia-of-human-computer-interaction-2nd-ed/data-visualization-for-human-perception>
- During seminar:
  - Peer review of theory comix, launched by discussion leaders
  - Introduction to data visualization tools
- Digital assignment due next week: a visualization of data relating to your research interests

### February 24 – Graphic Essays

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- Digital assignment due in our Learn@UW dropbox by 12:00 pm on Tuesday, Feb. 23: a visualization of data relating to your research interests
- Before seminar,
  - Evaluate everyone else's data visualization using the C-A-T or utility-soundness-beauty evaluative frames.
  - Read:
    - DesignLab page on the Graphic Essay, <https://designlab.wisc.edu/graphic-essay>. Be sure to explore the examples.

- Check out the Atavist webtool for storytelling at <https://atavist.com/>. For examples of Atavist stories, see The Atavist Magazine at: <https://magazine.atavist.com/>.
- During seminar:
  - Peer review of data visualizations, launched by discussion leaders
  - Introduction to graphic essays and ebooks
- Digital assignment due next week: a remediation of a paper/diss. chapter of your own into a graphic essay or ebook

### March 2 – Building a Website with WordPress

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- Digital assignment due in our Learn@UW dropbox by 12:00 pm on Tuesday, March 1: a research paper or diss. chapter that you have remediated into a graphic essay or ebook
- Before seminar,
  - Evaluate everyone else’s graphic essay or ebook using the C-A-T or utility-soundness-beauty evaluative frames.
  - Read:
    - The DesignLab’s handout on portfolio and professional website at <https://designlab.wisc.edu/images/PDF/Portfolio%20handout.pdf>
    - Browse websites and pay attention to what you like and don’t like.
- During seminar:
  - Peer review of graphic essays or ebooks, launched by discussion leaders
  - Introduction to using WordPress to build a website
- Digital assignment due next week: a WordPress website on a topic relevant to your research interests

### March 9 – Copyright and Fair Use / Citing Digital Sources

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- Assignment due by 12:00 pm on Tuesday, March 8: a link to your WordPress website (email it to Prof. Dunlavy)
- Before seminar,
  - Evaluate everyone else’s WordPress website using the C-A-T or utility-soundness-beauty evaluative frames.
  - Read:
    - UW Library’s Research Guide on copyright and fair use: <http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/c.php?g=177941&p=1169847>
    - The DesignLab’s infographic on copyright: <https://designlab.wisc.edu/images/Copyright-Flowchart.jpg>
- During seminar:
  - Peer review of websites, launched by discussion leaders
  - Discussion of copyright and fair-use issues and citations of digital sources
  - Discussion of preliminary ideas for independent (or team) projects

## Part 3 – Independent (or Team) Projects

In this last segment of the seminar, you will have several weeks to develop an independent project or, by collective agreement, a collaborative project with one or two other students. You

may choose to use the digital tools introduced in Part 2 of the seminar to “remediate” a larger piece of your own work (e.g., by translating it into a graphic essay or ebook) or to build a website. Or you may choose explore other tools that seem especially suitable for your interests and goals, e.g., podcasts, videos, GIS, OMEKA.

### March 16 – NO SEMINAR MEETING

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On Tuesday, March 15, I will meet individually with each of you (appointments TBA) to discuss your ideas for your independent project.

### March 23 – SPRING BREAK

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### March 30 – Workshop

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- Reports on individual projects, collective brainstorming and feedback

### April 6 – Workshop

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- Reports on individual projects, collective brainstorming and feedback

### April 13 – Workshop

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- Reports on individual projects, collective brainstorming and feedback

### April 20 – Workshop

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- Reports on individual projects, collective brainstorming and feedback

### April 27 – Presentation of independent projects

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- Four/five students will showcase their final project for peer review (feedback and brainstorming)

### May 4 – Presentation of independent projects

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- Four/five students will showcase their final project for peer review (feedback and brainstorming)

## Final Projects – due on May 11

Submit your final project by uploading it to our Learn@UW dropbox or, if it is a website, sending me a link. Deadline: 5:00 p.m.