Course Description
This seminar has two main purposes: first, to provide a structure for you to produce a substantial research-based essay; and second, to offer an introduction to the theory and practice of digital history. For this latter, topical emphasis, we will explore emerging concepts and tools as well as the possibilities, limitations, and implications they present for historical methodologies in research and writing. Learning goals include:

- To become familiar with and develop facility with one or more digital practices, including tools and techniques related to textual analysis, research management, digital primary sources, access issues, and modes of publication.
- To understand theoretical and methodological issues that these digital tools raise for the practice and philosophy of history.
- To gain conceptual fluency with scholarship about digital history and its potential impacts on history professions, historical narrative, and the humanities more generally.
- To develop critical apparatus for evaluating and situating digital history work.
- To consider your own relationship/approach to digital history.

Your major work in this course will be to produce an article- or chapter-length work of original scholarship rooted in primary research based upon a topic within your own field. As you develop your topic, you should consider consulting with your advisor or other faculty with expertise in the literature you are engaging. This course will provide you a schedule and framework to produce (the draft of) an article of publishable quality. To that end, assigned readings are lighter than in colloquia, and they will be concentrated in the first half of the semester. Many of our discussions will focus on the research and writing process, sometimes in conjunction with the digital history and sometimes independent of it. The course will guide you through several intermediate products – proposal, bibliography, literature review – as well as the peer-review process and a presentation. Learning goals include:

- Develop a robust set of historical questions and design an effective proposal and a workable plan to pursue them.
- Gain additional experience with research in primary sources of multiple types.
- Complete a focused literature review or historiographical analysis that contextualizes the significance of your work and its possible challenges, advances, and audiences.
- Hone your skills at historical analysis, argumentation, narrative construction, writing, and presentation.
- Learn how to provide constructive and meaningful critiques of others’ work and respond productively.
Course Requirements

- **Research Paper** – The bulk of your grade will be based upon your research essay, which should be modeled as a draft of a journal article, volume chapter or other professional essay: substantial length (30-40 pp), thoroughly researched and documented, well supported theoretically and historiographically, clearly and effectively organized, and well written. There will be several stages for you to develop and workshop this project among colleagues – proposal, bibliography, literature review & rough draft. These intermediate steps are extremely important.

- **Weekly(-ish) Assignments** – During the first half of the semester, you will complete several short writing/research assignments, of which some will be related to your research paper and others will focus on digital history. On several occasions, I will post these on NB (an online community forum – see below) for the class to review prior to our weekly meeting, and once you will work within a group to develop a presentation for the class about a digital tool. These assignments will also be an important part of your class participation and grade.

- **Reading** – For our common readings, we will use an online collaborative reading tool called NB (nb.mit.edu). You will read and respond: post comments, ask questions, respond to others’ thoughts, highlight important or confusing areas, and seed discussion ideas. You can make comments to yourself, to instructors only, or to the whole class. While you should be responsible for and ready to discuss all readings posted each week, some will be designated as primary (typically the first 2 or 3 on the list below, see NB for specifics), and upon which you should focus your closest attention.

- **Discussion** – You be expected to participate actively in weekly discussions. Your close reading, thoughtful preparation, active listening, and ready participation are essential, both for your own experience and that of your colleagues. The quality of the feedback you offer in peer-critique is also crucial. With our reduced number of class meetings, attendance at each seminar is expected, barring the occasionally unavoidable emergencies of life.

- **Grade Breakdown (approximate):**
  - Research essay = 65% (includes proposal, lit review, presentation)
  - Participation = 20% (includes class discussion, NB comments, peer-critique)
  - Assignments/Group Presentation = 15%

**Required Readings**


Jack Dougherty and Kristen Nawrotzki, eds., *Writing History in a Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2013), http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dh.12230987.0001.001. (Referenced below as WHDA; all assigned articles can be accessed through this portal, as well as on NB and through the CU Libraries site. You can also use the open-review version (2012) at http://writinghistory.trincoll.edu/, which includes more images.) Various articles and book chapters, all of which will be available on NB (nb.mit.edu).

**References that never go out of style**

- Strunk and White, *Elements of Style* – This is a classic and should be right next to the dictionary on everyone’s writing desk. Copies are readily attainable.

**Class Schedule** (subject to slight variation)

**Jan 15 – Course Introduction**

Class field trip: Media Archaeology Lab, curator: Eric Izant

**Readings**

- Explore other materials on the MAL site: [http://mediaarchaeologylab.com/](http://mediaarchaeologylab.com/)

**Assignment:** Get signed up for NB, familiarize yourself with the interface, add the bookmarklet to your browser’s bookmarks/toolbar.

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**Jan 22 – What is Digital History?**

**Readings**


**Assignment:** Write a brief (2-page) review of a digital history project/site (i.e. not a “tool” like Zotero, but the production of historical materials/narratives through a digital platform; see some examples below). What kind of project is this? What is the nature of the digital tools it uses to collect, analyze or access the materials? What are the audiences for which it is designed and who are its authors? What kinds of narratives, context, or inquiries does it prompt? How successful do you find its digital platform and historical grounding?

- Valley of the Shadow: (dir. William G. Thomas III and Edward L. Ayers), [http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/](http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/) (or other more recent projects by Thomas, [http://railroads.unl.edu/blog/?page_id=170](http://railroads.unl.edu/blog/?page_id=170)); see also a recent article that showcases the Valley of the Shadow project and the issues around preservation:


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**Jan 29 – Knowledge Construction and Access**

**Readings**


Assignment: 1) Look through this web page as a refresher on developing and implementing search strategies for CU History graduate students (grey boxes open when you click): http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/research/subjectguides/history/instruction/HIST5000.htm.

2) Test the accuracy of the Times Digital Archive (1785-2007) database: http://libraries.colorado.edu/record=e1000348~S3. You will not be able to see the raw text, but pull up PDFs of some of the articles and use the “Find within article” search to highlight some of the words you see in the articles. How accurate does the underlying text seem to be? Compare and contrast older and newer articles. Bring your findings (either printed and marked up on paper or in your laptop) to class.

Feb 5 – New Reading: Text Mining & Visualization

Readings


Assignment: 1) Try out one or more text mining/visualization tools on something related to your own research and write up a brief (1-2 page) analysis. Did this allow you to learn something new? Ask new questions? What does it obscure? Where else would you go next with this kind of tool? Possible tools include:

• Google’s nGram, https://books.google.com/ngrams (mines the Google books database… or samples of it).

• Voyant, http://voyant-tools.org/ (you upload your own text(s) here)

• Tools listed on TaPoR, http://www.tapor.ca/

2) Explore some of the groups and their libraries available on Zotero: https://www.zotero.org/groups. A group and library that is quite substantial, public, and open membership is: Digital Humanities: https://www.zotero.org/groups/digital_humanities. You can also search groups related to particular tools/methods (text mining) or topics (land-use history, history of skateboarding). Do you recognize any of the group members? What types of items are included in the library? How are they organized? What types of information are included in records for individual works? What isn’t there? Bring your thoughts and questions to class.
Feb 12 – Research Challenges, Old and New + Proposal Workshop

Readings

- NB: Read & comment on colleagues’ proposals.

Assignment: Prepare a draft proposal of the research project that you will undertake over the course of the semester. Be sure to clearly explain the topic, your central research question(s), your methodology, and the primary sources that you will utilize. (See Elements of a Research Proposal handout for details). **These are limited to 5 pages max, double-spaced!** Email your proposal to me by **5 pm on Friday February 7** so that I can post them on NB where everyone can read them and comment on them before class. We will spend part of this class period discussing and critiquing the proposals in relation to the readings.

Feb 19 – Research Management – Zotero (please bring laptop)

Guest Speaker: Sebastian Karcher

Readings

- Ansley Erickson, “Historical Research and the Problem of Categories: Reflections on 10,000 Digital Notecards,” *WHDA*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dh.12230987.0001.001](http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dh.12230987.0001.001)

The following may be useful to better understand Zotero and Papermachines:


**Assignment:**
Download either Zotero for Firefox or Zotero Standalone and the connector for whichever browser you use in advance of class. Installation instructions are available here: [http://zotero-manual.github.io/zotero-manual/installing-zotero](http://zotero-manual.github.io/zotero-manual/installing-zotero). Start building a Zotero library for your research topic (primary and/or secondary sources). Many databases allow you to export citations to Zotero. You can also use Zotero for Firefox, Zotero Standalone + browser extensions, or the Zotero bookmarklet to import web pages, PDFs, etc. from a web browser or mobile device. Add tags, notes and attachments as appropriate. Once you build up a substantial list, you can try analyzing/visualizing your data using plugin like Paper Machines or creating a bibliography from it.

**Feb 26 – History & Theory**

**Readings:**


• Tom Scheinfeldt, “Theory, Method, and Digital Humanities,” in *Hacking the Academy: New Approaches to Scholarship and Teaching from Digital Humanities*, ed. Daniel J. Cohen and Tom Scheinfeldt, (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2013), [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dh/12172434.0001.001/1:2--hacking-the-academy-new-approaches-to-scholarship?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=fulltext;xc=1#2.11](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dh/12172434.0001.001/1:2--hacking-the-academy-new-approaches-to-scholarship?g=dculture;rgn=div1;view=fulltext;xc=1#2.11)

• Stefan Tanaka, “Pasts in a Digital Age,” *WHDA*, [http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dh.12230987.0001.001](http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/dh.12230987.0001.001).


**Assignment:** Continue to build your Zotero library/preliminary bibliography of secondary works that will form the core of your literature review; try organizing it by tag, as well as traditional formats.

**Mar 5 – New Tools**

In small groups, you will each report upon your research and exploration about a digital history tool or emerging methodology, either one outlined in the list below or found elsewhere. We will begin planning for your group on February 5. Your assignment will include the following:

• Your group will each choose ONE article for the class to read as a whole. You will need to give me the web address or .pdf of the article no later than Feb 26, for posting
on NB. You can select from the initial bibliography to be distributed or use something you find elsewhere.

- Your group will prepare a 20-minute presentation for the class that will demonstrate the tools practical features (how it works), analytical possibilities (what it shows or obscures), conceptual effects (what it means), and scholarly reviews (what people have said about it; bibliography). These should all be shareable in some fashion – i.e. there should be some document, Zotero library, etc. that will allow classmates and others to access your materials.
- You will individually write up a short (ca. 2-page) review of the tool (do you think this is useful or problematic?) and what implication it might have for your own work, (either this semester’s project, your anticipated dissertation/thesis research, or your field writ broadly), whether or not you intend to use the tool, now or in the future. How would it change your or others’ approaches to this topic or field of inquiry?

Some potential tools/methodologies groups might explore, include:

- **Crowdsourcing:** includes digital oral history, citizen scholarship, crowd editing, co-creation of knowledge, facebook
- **Digital Archives:** collection, preservation, digital forensics
- **Gaming:** history games as modes of research, learning, and teaching
- **Online Exhibits:** Omeka, Neatline, web design, public history
- **Spatial History:** mapping places, visualizing data in space and time
- **Text Encoding/Scholarly Digital Editions:**
- **Topic Modeling:** uncovering topics in a document collection
- **Visualization/Text Mapping:**
- **Wikipedia:** open source issues, co-creation of knowledge, popular access

*Other possibilities found at:*

- [http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh](http://www.neh.gov/divisions/odh)
- [http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/](http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/)

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**Mar 12 – Writing, Publishing & the Profession**

**Readings**

- PhD Comics (Nick Shockey and Jonathan Eisen), “Open Access Explained!”, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5rVH1KGBCY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5rVH1KGBCY)
• Duke University, Center for the Study of the Public Domain, “What Could Have Entered the Public Domain on January 1, 2014?”  
  http://web.law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2014/pre-1976  

Assignment: Submit a literature review/historiographical analysis of no more than 5 pages that frames and discusses your research paper in terms of pertinent secondary literature.

Mar 19 - NO CLASS  
We will schedule individual appointments

Apr 9  MEETINGS  
to discuss your research and writing progress.

And, in the meantime, read the following essays about writing…and use them as a space to share ideas and struggles. We’ll discuss some of these when we reconvene on April 16.

Read:

Full Draft of Essay due Friday April 11 to D2L by 12noon
Drafts will be posted to NB, and in groups of three you will review and post comments on them to each other by Tuesday, April 15.

April 16 – Workshop of Draft Essays  (Class location TBA)
Authors to have read all comments within group, come ready with questions/response. Authors will subsequently post responses to each NB comment, and include a plan for revision by Friday, April 18.

April 23 – Optional open class (Class location TBA, possibly at Innisfree)
Available for continued group workshop and to consult with me about the feedback I will post in response to your drafts/comments by Tuesday, April 22.

April 30 – Presentations (Class location TBA)
Prepare an 8-minute presentation about your project for the class, and respond to questions (time-permitting).

Final Essays are due to D2L on Monday, May 5 by 5pm.
**And now for the fine print:**

**Academic Misconduct.** All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the student Honor Code and academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information can be found at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html) and at [http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/](http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/). Note: I take this issue very seriously and expect that you will submit only your own work, completed for this course only.

**Accommodation Policies.** If you qualify for accommodations due to a disability, please submit a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. ([http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/), 303-492-8671, C4C N200) or If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html).

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires faculty to make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance without inhibiting or penalizing those students who are exercising their rights to religious observance. If you anticipate any class conflicts due to religious observance, please notify my so that we can arrange necessary accommodations. See policy details at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html).

**Classroom Conduct.** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with dignity, understanding, and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. These standards of conduct pertain to on-line interactions through email or discussion boards as much as they would a physical classroom. If a student does not participate in online activities with respect and understanding for the instructor or fellow students, the instructor may remove posts and take further actions as necessary. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. The instructor will gladly honor requests for use of alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise the instructor of this preference so that s/he may take the appropriate action. For complete policy statements see: [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html) and [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code).

**Discrimination and Harassment.** The University of Colorado’s Policy on Discrimination and Harassment, on Sexual Harassment, and on Amorous Relationships applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status, should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH and the campus resources available to assist individuals who believe they have been harassed can be obtained at [http://www.colorado.edu/odh/](http://www.colorado.edu/odh/). For detailed policies and procedures and resources, see also [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html).