

## History 100.04: Digital History

Fall 2019 Sarah J. Purcell (she, her, hers)

Course website: <https://his100.sarahjpurcell.sites.grinnell.edu/fall-2019/>

T/TH 1:00-2:20 pm HSSC N3170

Office Hours: T/TH 2:30-4:00 pm, and by appointment. I am here to help you learn this semester. Please come see me during office hours or make an appointment, so I can speak with you one-on-one. E-mail me to make an appointment or if you have any questions or problems. I am available!

This course provides an introduction to issues of historical causation, argumentation, and evidence and will particularly introduce students to digital methods of historical inquiry. With a special focus on U.S. history in a local and global context, students will create and study existing digital projects to see how history and the digital humanities intersect. Course topics will include: archives, digital storytelling, mapping, virtual reality, working with humanistic data, computational analysis of text, and more. No prior technical skills are necessary.

Along the way, we will think a lot about how to do good history. What makes a good historical question? How can we use digital tools to analyze primary and secondary sources to help us answer historical questions? How do digital technologies change or help the communication of historical narratives and interpretations?

We will develop skills in reading, writing, and speaking—as well as some level of skill in various digital platforms and data methods. We will also think critically about data and data analysis, ethics, and applications. All this, while also learning to be better historians.

History 100 is a course designed to make students familiar with how history works as a professional practice. As we learn about digital history methods, we will develop skills in five key areas:

- Textual Analysis and Conceptualization
  - Using key historical concepts such as cause/effect, unintended consequences, truth v. interpretation, “the past as a foreign country,” and reading against-the-grain.
- Historiographical Dialogue and Debate

- Identifying different historiographical and methodological approaches for thinking about the past and framing historical inquiry (i.e. local, intellectual, political, diplomatic, social, economic, cultural, gender, global)
- Writing
  - Crafting short essays that provide a clear thesis, appropriate evidence, and a sense of the larger historical context of their topics.
- Research
  - Formulating a viable research question and produce an annotated bibliography that investigates it using appropriate primary and secondary sources.
- Presentation
  - Delivering formal oral presentations of historical research with attention to clear argumentation, successful use of supporting evidence, self-positioning in relevant secondary scholarship, and engaging style.

Books: (make sure you have the right editions)

Robert Allison, ed. *Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Written by Himself* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Bedford/St. Martin's (2016)

Jenny L. Presnell, *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (2019)

Optional purchase: Storycenter, *Storytellers Cookbook* (Note: This is NOT available at the bookstore. You can purchase a PDF online here:

<https://www.storycenter.org/inventory/digital-storytelling-cookbook> AND the PDF is available through the Grinnell College Libraries catalog

\*Articles for this class can be linked to directly from this syllabus and/or found on e-reserve through P-web "Library Resources"

### **Student Responsibilities and Evaluation:**

- This class meetings for this course will have many different kinds of activities but will always be highly participatory. We will work through tutorials, discuss readings, work on individual and group projects, and more. From time to time you will need to meet with a small group or to view a film outside of class. Students are expected to attend all classes having done the reading/homework and ready to

discuss them. Learning is a collaborative process, so speak up and share your ideas with your class-mates! Engage with the sources, and share your ideas.

- Not everyone in this class (including the instructor) will have the same level of expertise with all the digital tools we are experimenting with this semester. What is expected is that we all *engage* with the tools and try very hard to learn new things. Perfection is not expected. You should try to achieve some level of mastery in *some* areas that interest you, but that can take many forms. Valiant efforts will be rewarded, and you will have lots of chances to prove yourself by commenting on process as well as demonstrating products.
- All assignments must be turned in on time and good order. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with normal fonts and margins, in a 10 or 12-point font. All citations must be in footnotes or endnotes in University of Chicago style. Further guidelines for papers will be handed out in class. You will also be responding to informal prompts and writing informal posts in a journal (on P-web), which do not need to conform to style.
- Extensions (for sickness or other emergency) cannot be granted unless they are approved ahead of time. Late assignments will receive a deduction of one-half letter grade per day and will not be accepted more than two days late.
- Please familiarize yourself with the Student Handbook guidelines about academic dishonesty at Grinnell, and abide by the rules. Collaboration is encouraged in digital history; just be sure to acknowledge your collaborators openly and to avoid it if you are expressly instructed to do so.
- Please check your email regularly, since I will use email to make class announcements. We will balance between email, P-web, class website, and Outlook OneDrive as information sources and places to turn in assignments. Always look carefully at each assignment and be sure you are depositing your work in the correct place.
- You will have the opportunity to meet many staff/faculty members in class who are collaborating with Prof. Purcell and who can help you with projects, platforms, etc. Some of them will have extra office hours to help you with projects. Watch for information in class and on P-Web. You may also want to consult with mentors in the DASIL Lab (HSSC 1<sup>st</sup> floor south)—I will announce their hours. Look on the course website for a tab labeled “people who can help.”

- Please note: poor attendance will seriously hurt your grade in this class. You cannot participate if you are not in class. If you must miss class for an activity or athletic event, please arrange your absence with me at least one week in advance. Especially in group work—your group needs you to be in class.
- Please do not check email or text messages or work on other non-relevant things during class. We will obviously be using technology for class, and you may use electronic devices, but it's important to keep your attention focused on class materials. Don't tempt yourself to divide attention by opening unrelated tabs. Keep your FOCUS on class.
- From time to time Prof. Purcell will post items of interest to our class on Twitter. You can follow her at @SarahJPurcell and follow news of the class at our class hashtag #GrinDigitalHistory if you wish. Feel free to use an anonymous, disposable Twitter account, or practice your professional Twitter presence as "yourself."
- I strive to create a fully inclusive classroom, thus I welcome individual students to approach me about distinctive learning needs. In particular, I encourage students with disabilities to have a conversation with me and disclose how our classroom or course activities could impact the disability and what accommodations would be essential to you. You will also need to have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Student Disability Resources, John Hirschman, located on the 3rd floor of Goodnow Hall (x3089).

#### Grading:

Document Analysis paper	5%
Reflection Journal Questions	2% each (a total of 8%)
Mapping History Paper	10%
Midwife's Tale Paper	10%
Annotated Bibliography	15%
Final Reflection Paper	15%
Digital Story	15%
Class Collaboration	7%
Class Participation	15%

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#### Course Schedule

**Thursday, August 29** Historical Thinking/ Digital Methods

Introduction to the course & to one another

- Dan Kaiser "Grinnell Stories" blog <http://grinnellstories.blogspot.com/>

## **Tuesday, September 3:** History: Truths, Sources, Arguments

### Readings:

- John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 1-4
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 1 & 108-112
- Arthur H. Leavitt, "What Are Archives?" *The American Archivist* 24 (1961): 175-178 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40290033>
- Browse: <http://shapeofhistory.net/>

## **Thursday, September 5:** Is the Past a Foreign Country? What is Digital History?

### Readings:

- John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 5-6
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 1-13 & 191-192
- Stephen Robertson, "The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History," in *Debates in the Digital Humanities 2016* available at: <http://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/debates/text/76>

Fun to explore if you have time or interest:

- Benjamin Schmidt blog "Sapping Attention" <http://sappingattention.blogspot.com/>
- History as Data Science: <http://history-lab.org/>

## **Tuesday, September 10** Archives & Digitization

Visit Grinnell College Special Collections, meet with Chris Jones, Grinnell College Archivist and Librarian/ Demonstration of Digitization in "The Digs"; Discussion & workflow demonstration of Grinnell College digitization projects,

### Readings:

- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 108-117
- Nancy Chaffin Hunter, Kathleen Legg, and Beth Oehlerts, "Two Librarians, an Archivist, and 13,000 Images: Collaborating to Build a Digital Collection," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* (2010): 81-103 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/648464>
- Stephanie Kingsley, "Making Digital History Accessible," *Perspectives on History*, May 2017: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2017/making-digital-history-accessible>

## **Thursday, September 12:** Metadata and Digital Grinnell

Meet with Cecilia Knight, Acquisitions and Discovery Librarian and Mark McFate, Digital Library Applications Developer

Readings:

- Anne J. Gilliland, "Setting the Stage," *Introduction to Metadata*, ed. Murtha Baca, Third Edition (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2016):  
<http://www.getty.edu/publications/intrometadata/setting-the-stage/>
- Michael J. Kramer, "Going Meta on Metadata," *Journal of Digital Humanities* 3 (2014):  
<http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/3-2/going-meta-on-metadata/>

**Due in class: Document analysis of one primary-source document in Digital Grinnell.**

## **Tuesday, September 17:** Structuring and Visualizing Data

In class: Talk with Katherine Walden, Digital Liberal Arts Specialist, about Data, Structure, Visualization

Readings:

- Karl W. Broman & Kara H. Woo, "Data Organization in Spreadsheets," *The American Statistician* 72 (2018): 2-10
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, Chapter 11  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00031305.2017.1375989>
- Explore this site: "Historical Data Visualization," Harvard Business School:  
<https://www.hbs.edu/businesshistory/courses/resources/historical-data-visualization/Pages/default.aspx>

## **Thursday, September 19:** Mapping as Visualization: The challenges for history

Readings:

- Anne Kelly Knowles, "GIS and History," in *Placing History* (Redlands, CA: ESRI Press, 2008), 1-26.
- Geoff Cunfer, "Scaling the Dust Bowl," in *Placing History* (Redlands, CA: ESRI Press, 2008), 95-122 <http://downloads2.esri.com/ESRIpress/images/133/knowles.pdf>
- Explore: Civil War Washington: <http://civilwardc.org/>

**Friday, September 20 at 5:00 pm**

**Reflection Journal questions due in P-Web**

**Tuesday, September 24:** Spatial History/ Immersive History

Please bring your smartphone to class (if you have one), and please download these free apps before you come: Fractured Tour; Within; Google Street View

Readings: (notice links between data journalism and history)

- Hans Harmsen, "Greenland's Hand-Sized Wooden Maps Were Used for Storytelling, Not Navigation," *Atlas Obscura*, May 2, 2018  
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/greenland-wooden-maps-ammassalik>
- Explore: Mitch Fraas and Benjamin Schmidt, "Mapping the State of the Union," *Atlantic* (January 4, 2015):  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/01/mapping-the-state-of-the-union/384576/>
- Explore: "Railroads and the Making of Modern America," University of Nebraska at Lincoln: <http://railroads.unl.edu/>

**Thursday, September 26 PROF. PURCELL OUT OF TOWN at a conference, no class meeting**

**Friday, September 27 5:00 pm Mapping History paper due on P-Web**

**Tuesday, October 1:** Making maps

In class: Exercise on Google MyMaps (postal data)—please register for a Google account before you come to class (you can use an anonymous account that you dispose of after the semester, and you do not have to use Gmail).

Reading:

- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, Chapter 9
- Mark J. Stegmaier and Richard T. McCulley, "Cartography, Politics—and Mischief," *Prologue* 4 (Winter 2009): 4-13,  
<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2009/winter/gilman-map.html>

**Thursday, October 3:** Geographic Information Systems

In class: GIS Exercise; ArcMap (postal data)

Reading:

- Sarah E. Bond, "How Is Digital Mapping Changing the Way We Visualize Racism and Segregation?" *Forbes*, October 20, 2017  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/drsarahbond/2017/10/20/how-is-digital-mapping-changing-the-way-we-visualize-racism-and-segregation/#322069aa33fa>
- Kurt Schlichting, Peter Tuckel, and Richard Maisel, "Great Migration of African Americans to Hartford, Connecticut, 1910-1930," *Social Science History* 39 (Summer 2015): 287-310, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/591592>

**Friday, October 4 5:00 pm**      **Reflection Journal questions due in P-Web**

**Tuesday, October 8:** Mapping Grinnell

Mapping Projects experiment with Google, ArcMap

Reading:

- Cameron Blevins and Jason Heppler, “Geography of the Past,” <http://cameronblevins.org/gotp/>
- Iowa Township Project DASIL blog posts:
  - <https://dasil.sites.grinnell.edu/2019/04/land-census-and-digital-humanities-the-iowa-township-project/>
  - <https://dasil.sites.grinnell.edu/2019/04/the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-data-collection/>
  - <https://dasil.sites.grinnell.edu/2019/06/close-encounters-with-oral-history-uncovering-womens-history/>
- In case you want it: 3-hour tutorial on ArcGIS: <https://www.lynda.com/ArcGIS-tutorials/Welcome/147014/165949-4.html>

**Thursday, October 10** Text Analysis Tools: Techniques and Visualizations

In class: Voyant Tools, AntConc analysis of S&B files

Readings:

- Ben Blatt, *Nabokov’s Favorite Word is Mauve*, Introduction
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 193-195
- Michelle Moravec, “‘Under This Name She is Fitly Described’: A Digital History of Gender in *The History of Woman Suffrage*,” *Women and Social Movements* (Alexander Street, March 2015): <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/moravec-full.html>

**Friday, October 11** Reflection Journal questions due at 5:00 pm due on P-Web

**Tuesday, October 15** Topic Modeling

Reading: Topic Modeling and History

- David M. Blei, “Topic Modeling and the Digital Humanities,” *Journal of the Digital Humanities* 2 (2012): <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/2-1/topic-modeling-and-digital-humanities-by-david-m-blei/>



- Megan R. Brett, "Topic Modeling: A Basic Introduction," *Journal of the Digital Humanities* 2 (2012) <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/2-1/topic-modeling-a-basic-introduction-by-megan-r-brett/>
- Robert K. Nelson, "Of Monsters, Men—and Topic Modeling," *New York Times*, May 29, 2011: <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/of-monsters-men-and-topic-modeling/?r=0;>
- Explore: Mining the Dispatch: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/pages/home>

### **Thursday, October 17 A Midwife's Tale**

Film Discussion: "A Midwife's Tale"

Watch: "A Midwife's Tale," dir. Richard Rogers, 1997 (90 min.) Watch the film on any campus-networked computer here:

<https://grinnell.kanopystreaming.com/video/american-experience-midwife-s-tale>

Note: Must be on Grinnell College network to watch the video

Reading:

- Cameron Blevins, "Review: A Midwife's Tale," <http://www.cameronblevins.org/posts/review-a-midwifes-tale/>

### **Friday, October 18 Paper on "Midwife's Tale" due at 5:00 pm in P-web**

Paper: How might digital history tools change "A Midwife's Tale?" What could Laurel Thatcher Ulrich do differently if she were a digital historian and approaching this project today? How could you analyze Martha Ballard's diary and her life using digital tools?

### **FALL BREAK OCTOBER 19-27**

### **Tuesday, October 29 Olaudah Equiano**

Reading:

- Robert J. Allison, ed., *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Written by Himself*, Third Edition (Boston: Bedford, 2016).
- "Colloquy with the Author: Vincent Caretta and 'Equiano the African'" *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 38 (2009): 1-14, <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/268711>

Explore Digital Equiano:

- See links in Emily M. N. Kugler, “Visual Networks of British Abolitionist Networks,” <http://www.emilymnkugler.com/working-papers/2014/10/28/visual-narratives-of-british-abolitionist-networks>
- Runaway Slaves in Britain: Bondage, Freedom, and Race in the Eighteenth Century: <https://www.runaways.gla.ac.uk/>
- The Abolition Project: <http://abolition.e2bn.org/>
- The Equiano Project: <http://www.equiano.org/index.html>
- Visualizing Abolition: <http://visualizingabolition.org/>

**Thursday, October 31** Topic Modeling Equiano

In class: Experiment with topic modeling Equiano

Reading:

- Matthew McClellan, The Talking Book: <http://dighist.fas.harvard.edu/courses/2015/HIST1993/exhibits/show/modeling-equiano/equiano--historical-context>

**Tuesday, November 5** Mapping Olaudah Equiano with Natural Language Processing

In Class: Using Stanford Named Entity Recognition (NER) to map Olaudah’s text

- Andrew J. Torget and John Christensen, “Mapping Texts: Visualizing American Historical Newspapers,” *Journal of Digital Humanities* 1 (2012): <http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-3/mapping-texts-project-by-andrew-torget-and-jon-christensen/>

**Wednesday, November 6** Reflection Journal questions due at 5:00 pm in P-Web

**Thursday, November 7** PROF. PURCELL OUT OF TOWN at a conference, class will meet with Gina Donovan, Instructional Technologist

Digital Storytelling as documentary; Video and audio editing introduction in class

Reading:

- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, Chapter 12
- SKIM: Storycenter *Digital Storytelling Cookbook; Digital Storytelling: Form and Content* (online book in PDF form)
- Listen to podcast: “Episode 101: John Demos, How Historians Write about History,” *Ben Franklin’s World Doing History*, <https://www.benfranklinsworld.com/episode-101-john-demos-historians-write-history/> (45 minutes)

**Tuesday, November 12** : Producing Digital Grinnell Stories: Narrative, Storytelling, and History

Reading:

- Jill Lepore, "Historical Writing and the Revival of Narrative," Nieman Narrative Journalism Conference, NiemanReports:  
<http://niemanreports.org/articles/historical-writing-and-the-revival-of-narrative/>
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, Chapter 11
- Andrea Eiding, "Land of the Lost: Digital Projects and Longevity," *Unwritten History*, July 17, 2018, <http://www.unwrittenhistories.com/land-of-the-lost-digital-projects-and-longevity/>

Optional resources:

- TEDtalk playlist: "How To Tell a Story"  
[https://www.ted.com/playlists/62/how\\_to\\_tell\\_a\\_story](https://www.ted.com/playlists/62/how_to_tell_a_story)
- Carolyn O'Hara, "How To Tell a Great Story," *Harvard Business Review*, July 30, 2014:  
<https://hbr.org/2014/07/how-to-tell-a-great-story>

**Thursday, November 14** Defining a topic & Preliminary story research

Reading:

- Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, "Owning the Past," *Digital History*, Center for History and New Media, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/> (Be sure to read all the sections of this chapter down to "Will You Get Sued?")
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 17-27 & Chapter 10

**Due in Class: Preliminary story topic selection turn in "Digital Story Pre-Assignment Questions sheet"**

**Tuesday, November 19** Researching Digital Stories & Putting them in context

Reading:

- SKIM: Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 28-188
- Before class, listen to the following podcast: "Ben Franklin's World, Episode 66 Simon P. Newman, How Historians Find Their Research Topics,"  
<https://www.benfranklinworld.com/episode-066-simon-p-newman-how-historians-find-their-research-topics/> (44 minutes)

**Thursday, November 21** Researching Digital Stories

In class: work on research and scripts

**Tuesday, November 26** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

In class: peer support on scripts, work on projects

**Thursday, November 28**                    **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Tuesday, December 3** Worktime in class

**Draft of annotated bibliography due in class**

**Thursday, December 5** Worktime in class

**Friday, December 6** **Draft of Digital Story video due on OneDrive at 5:00 pm**

**Tuesday, December 10** In class: Peer support on finished drafts of stories

**Thursday, December 12** Worktime in class

**Friday, December 13: Final version of Digital Story video due at 5:00pm in OneDrive**

EXAM WEEK December 16-20

**Thursday, December 19 2-5 PM** **Final Project Showcase (everyone must attend)**

- **Classroom group presentations of final videos**
- **Turn in individual reflection paper with final annotated bibliography (a paper copy) to Prof. Purcell**