

## **HIS 100.04 Digital History: Local & Global**

Fall 2022    Tuesday & Thursday 1:00-3:50 pm    HSSC S2314

Course website: <https://arcg.is/oPLOrO>

Professor Sarah J. Purcell (she/her)

Open Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 10:00-11:50 am & by appointment

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Please email, call, or text me any time for help with class, or with anything else. Come by my office during open office hours, or make an appointment to see me.

I encourage you to take care of yourself. Let me know what you need, and try to share any concerns before they become severe. I am VERY flexible (especially right now), and I will always listen to you. Share your triumphs, too.

Please get in the habit of contacting me frequently and of connecting with your classmates.

We are studying in a time of global crisis, and life will not always proceed as we envision it. I expect flexibility from you, and you may expect it from me. Please communicate, so we can help one another adapt.

Please, wear a mask when you are in class and in my office. I have a chronic illness that necessitates protection against COVID.

### **Course Objectives**

Course Focus:

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, 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?

### Skills Objectives:

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.

## Student Responsibilities:

- To be a good part of the peer community in this course, you must be present and participate.
- Connect to the course hub on PioneerWeb to stay on top of readings and assignments. P-web will also feature course announcements and other required material.
- Join in all small-group work, online discussion posts, online activities, and live discussions.
- Communicate with Prof. Purcell frequently.
- Read your email daily, and be sure to respond to any requests (such as requests to fill in surveys) from Prof. Purcell and your peers.
- Turn in your assignments by the deadlines, but if you need extensions or other flexible arrangements, do NOT be afraid to ask for them. Prof. Purcell expects you to ask for help, and she will give it. We do have some collaborative projects, and you'll need to stay accountable to your partners.
- Consult and follow the rules for Academic Honesty in the Grinnell College Student Handbook and the college catalog. You can see the academic catalog policies on academic honesty here:  
[http://catalog.grinnell.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2537#Honesty in Academic Work](http://catalog.grinnell.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2537#Honesty_in_Academic_Work)
- Follow University of Chicago (17th Edition) style citations in footnotes or endnotes for all assignments in this course, unless the assignment directs you explicitly to do something else. You may consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* online through the Grinnell College Library catalog here (off-campus you will need to log into the Library through its proxy server): <https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html>
- Engage respectfully and vigorously with your classmates. We will *certainly* disagree many times over the semester as we debate primary and secondary sources (and even current events), but keep in mind our common goal of advancing group knowledge. Be respectful and well prepared.
- Engage with the material, and be ready for controversy and difficult subjects. We are studying a series of events and cultural forms full of racism, violence, and disorder of all kinds. Take care of yourself as you learn to engage with difficult topics from the past that are, nonetheless, vital to understanding the world.

Note: Some of our primary sources may contain extremely offensive language and imagery. To quote literary scholar Dr. Koritha Mitchell, we are scholars, “not re-enactors, so we need not let the text dictate what we *give life to* in the classroom ([korithamitchell.com](http://korithamitchell.com)).” The same goes for our discussion. We can’t eliminate all racist, sexist, and other offensive language in our sources—but we always need to remember the historical context. Some slurs are too much. I, for one, do not ever say “the N-word” out loud (or typed in a discussion board), and I expect no one to do so in this class. If you want to read a quotation out loud (or type one) with the word in it, just say “N” or “N-word,” instead. Please be sensitive to other slurs, also, and feel comfortable substituting a similar short-hand substitution in our discussions. We have to grapple with these concepts, but we do not have to give voice to hatred.

## Student Support:

- You can expect support from Prof. Purcell for any kind of need (personal or academic) in this class. Feel invited to call, text, or email her at any time. If you have any questions or need help of any kind, you can always start by asking Prof. Purcell, who will meet with you privately in person or Webex any time—just email her for an appointment.
- You may consult with the Grinnell College Reading, Writing, and Speaking Center on any assignment in this course. Make an appointment [here](#).
- If you experience any tech problems at all, please let Prof. Purcell know, and she will help you contact the relevant Grinnell College office to get help solving your issues. We can also work around any tech issues with class materials.
- For health needs (physical and mental), please consult with Student Health and Wellness [here](#) or visit the SHAW office on the lower level of the Forum.
- 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.
- 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.

If you require accommodation for any diagnosed disability, please speak with Prof. Purcell during the first few days of class. Grinnell College (and Prof. Purcell) provide reasonable accommodations. Students must also arrange their accommodations with Accessibility and Disability Services; contact Jae Hirschman at 641-269-3710 or email [hirschma]. Information available [here](#).

**Attendance is important to this class, so please attend if at all possible. That being said, we all know that illness can/will happen, and you should NOT attend class if you are ill. Please email Prof. Purcell (if possible) if you are ill, and we will make arrangements for how you can keep up with course work on a flexible schedule (according to how ill you are). You don't need to provide a doctor's note, or to give Prof. Purcell details about your health challenge, just reveal that you need to be out of class, and we will adjust.**

If you need to miss class for a religious holiday, athletic team event, or other co-curricular activity, please tell Prof. Purcell in advance, and she will support you.

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**Books:** All required books are for sale/rent at Pioneer Bookshop and on 2-hour reserve at Burling Library. Talk with Prof. Purcell if you need help accessing books.

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

John Arnold, *History, A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford UP (2000)

Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters*, Wiley (2018)

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

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

### Grading and Deadlines

Grades will be assigned in the course according to the following formula:

Document Analysis Paper	10%
Mapping Grinnell Assignment	10%
Equiano Reflection Assignment	5%
Mid-term Take-home Exam	15%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Final Reflection Paper	15%
Group work/peer support	10%
Digital Story	15%
Class Contribution/Participation	15%

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."

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

### UNIT ONE: History, Sources, Data, Truth

**Thursday, August 25** Course Introduction

Readings:

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

- “Browse: Edith Renfrow Smith: Through the Eyes of a Pioneer,”  
<https://edithrenfrowsmith.sites.grinnell.edu/>

**Tuesday, August 30** History: Truths, Sources, Arguments

Readings:

- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 1-13 & 108-112
- Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters*, Chapters 1-4

NOTE: Prof. Purcell has received a summons for jury duty for all of September, read your email frequently in case she gets assigned to a jury. We will have alternate plans, and she will communicate clearly what happens via email.

**Thursday, September 1** What is Digital History?

Readings:

- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 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 6** True Stories: Archives & Digitization

Tour of Grinnell College archives with college archivist Chris Jones, library assistant Allison Haack, and project archivist Laura Michaelson. Walk through digitization process of Digital Grinnell.

Readings:

- John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapter 4
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 108-117
- Society of American Archivists, “What Are Archives?”  
<https://www2.archivists.org/about-archives>

Listen to:

- “Doing History” Podcast (part of “Ben Franklin’s World” podcast series) Episode 75: Peter Drummey, How Archives Work (54:16)  
<https://benfranklinworld.com/episode-075-peter-drummey-archives-work/>

**Thursday, September 8** Metadata and Digital Grinnell

Meet with Dr. Liz Rodrigues, Humanities and Digital Scholarship Librarian

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/>

**Tuesday, September 13** Structuring and Visualizing Data

Meet with Dr. Liz Rodrigues

Readings:

- Karl W. Broman & Kara H. Woo, "Data Organization in Spreadsheets," *The American Statistician* 72 (2018): 2-10, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00031305.2017.1375989>
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, Chapter 11
- Visualizing Abolition: <http://visualizingabolition.org/>
- Stephanie Kingsley, "Making Digital History Accessible," *AHA Perspectives on History*, May 1, 2017, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2017/making-digital-history-accessible>
- Explore this site: "Historical Data Visualization," Harvard Business School: <https://www.hbs.edu/businesshistory/courses/resources/historical-data-visualization/Pages/default.aspx>

**Thursday, September 15** Data and History

**Document Analysis Paper Due on P-web by 5:00 pm**

**UNIT TWO: HISTORY AND MAPPING**

**Tuesday, September 20** 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>
- **In-class** we will watch the first **30 minutes** of this documentary: *Ken Burns: The Dust Bowl*, Episode I "The Great Plow Up," dir. Ken Burns, 2012 (1:53)

**Thursday, September 22** Spatial History

## Readings:

- 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>
- 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>

Browse: Pay particular attention to the thesis statement, maps, and notes

- 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>

## **Tuesday, September 27**      Geographic Information Systems

Meet with Tierney Steelberg, Digital Liberal Arts Specialist

Tool: ArcGIS online

## Readings:

- 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/>
- Iowa Township data code book: [https://grinco-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/purcelsj\\_grinnell\\_edu/EgD2cwDwv0BGovjgEoh-aLoBwaU3fbkPioRoC3YVd6ZKMA?email=steelber%40grinnell.edu&e=s2Ejuq](https://grinco-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/purcelsj_grinnell_edu/EgD2cwDwv0BGovjgEoh-aLoBwaU3fbkPioRoC3YVd6ZKMA?email=steelber%40grinnell.edu&e=s2Ejuq)

## **Thursday, September 29**      Mapping Grinnell

Meet with Tierney Steelberg

Work on mapping exercise

- Explore: “Railroads and the Making of Modern America,” University of Nebraska at Lincoln: <http://railroads.unl.edu/>
- Explore: Civil War Washington: <http://civilwardc.org/>
- Explore: Mapping Slavery in Detroit: <http://mappingdetroitslavery.com/>



- Explore: “Exploring Chronicling America Newspapers,” Library of Congress, <https://loc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/media/index.html?appid=3c6a392554d545bdb1c083348ef56458&center=-97.5126;39.6376&level=3/&loclr=eacam>

**Friday, September 30** Mapping Grinnell Assignment due by 5:00 pm on P-web

### UNIT THREE: HISTORY AND TEXT ANALYSIS

**Tuesday, October 4** Text Analysis Tools: Techniques and Visualizations

Tool: Voyant

Readings:

- Ben Blatt, *Nabokov’s Favorite Word is Mauve*, Introduction
- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 193-195
- Timothy Shortell, “The Rhetoric of Black Abolitionism: An Explanatory Analysis of Antislavery Newspapers in New York State,” *Social Science History* 28 (2004): 75-109, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40267834>

**Thursday, October 6** Text Analysis and Topic Modeling

Tool: Scholar’s Lab

Readings: 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;](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>

**Tuesday, October 10** A Midwife’s Tale

Film Discussion: “A Midwife’s Tale”

Watch: “A Midwife’s Tale,” dir. Richard Rogers, 1997 (90 min.) Watch the film here: [https://fod-infobase-com.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/p\\_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=44085](https://fod-infobase-com.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/p_ViewVideo.aspx?xtid=44085)

Readings:

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

- John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapters 5-7

**Thursday, October 13** Work on Take-Home Midterm

**Friday, October 14** Take-Home Midterm due by 5:00 pm on P-web

October 15-23 FALL BREAK

#### UNIT FOUR: DIGITAL EQUIANO--GLOBAL

**Tuesday, October 25** Olaudah Equiano's World

Readings:

- Robert J. Allison, ed., *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Written by Himself*, Third Edition (Boston: Bedford, 2016).

**Thursday, October 27** Discussing Equiano's Narrative

Readings:

- Robert J. Allison, ed., *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Written by Himself*, Third Edition (Boston: Bedford, 2016).

**Tuesday, November 1** Digital Equiano

Explore Digital Equiano:

- 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: <https://equiano.uk/>
- Equiano's World: <http://www.equianosworld.org>
- Matthew McClellan, The Talking Book: <http://dighist.fas.harvard.edu/courses/2015/HIST1993/exhibits/show/modeling-equiano/equiano--historical-context>
- Visualizing Abolition: <http://visualizingabolition.org/>

**Thursday, November 3** Digital Equiano experiments

Readings:

- 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/>

- Explore: <http://mappingtexts.org/>

**Friday, November 4** Equiano reflection assignment due by 5:00 pm on P-web

#### UNIT FIVE: DIGITAL STORYTELLING--LOCAL

**Tuesday, November 8** Digital Storytelling as History

2:30 p.m. Visit the Grinnell College archives to examine primary sources.

Readings:

- Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, Chapter 12
- Listen to podcast: “Episode 101: John Demos, How Historians Write about History,” *Ben Franklin’s World Doing History*, <https://www.benfranklinworld.com/episode-101-john-demos-historians-write-history/> (45 minutes)
- Listen to podcast: “Episode 66: Simon P. Newman, How Historians Find Their Research Topics,” *Ben Franklin’s World*, <https://www.benfranklinworld.com/episode-066-simon-p-newman-how-historians-find-their-research-topics/> (44 minutes)

**Thursday, November 10** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories: Narrative, Storytelling, and History

In class meet with Gina Donovan, Instructional Technologist, to talk about production process

Readings:

- 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

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>
- Storycenter *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*; *Digital Storytelling: Form and Content* (online book in PDF form)

**Tuesday, November 15** Defining a topic & Story research

Breakout groups available with Instructional Technologist Gina Donovan & Librarians

**Due at end of class to Prof. Purcell: Preliminary story topic selection turn in “Digital Story Pre-Assignment Questions sheet”**

Readings:

- 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

**Thursday, November 17** Researching Digital Stories & Putting them in context

Readings:

- SKIM: Jenny L. Presnell, *Information-Literate Historian*, pp. 28-188

In-class: Work on research and scripts

**Monday, November 21 5:00 pm Script Draft Due** to Prof. Purcell and your peer group partners via email

**Tuesday, November 22** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

In class: peer support on scripts, work on projects

**Thursday, November 24 THANKSGIVING NO CLASS MEETING**

**Tuesday, November 29** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

In class: work on projects Instructional Technologist Gina Donovan & Librarians available

**Thursday, December 1** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

**Friday, December 2 5:00 pm Draft of Digital Story due** on OneDrive (one copy per group)

**Tuesday, December 6** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

In class: peer support on digital story drafts, work on projects

**Thursday, December 8** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

In class: work on projects

**Friday, December 9** **FINAL DIGITAL STORY VIDEO DUE on OneDrive by 5:00 pm**

**FINALS WEEK: Tuesday, December 13 2:00 pm Final Project Showcase (everyone must attend)** This event takes place in our classroom.

- Group presentations of final digital story videos
- Turn in individual reflection paper with annotated bibliography to Prof. Purcell under “Assignments” tab on P-web by 9:00 pm