

## History 295.02 Digital History: Investigating the Past

Fall 2018 Sarah J. Purcell

Course website: [https://sarahjpurcell.sites.grinnell.edu/digital\\_methods/](https://sarahjpurcell.sites.grinnell.edu/digital_methods/)

M, W, F 8-9:50 Burling Library Computer Lab (located in the basement)

Office Hours: M, W, F 1:15-2:45 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 will introduce students to methods used in the digital humanities, with a special emphasis on applications to historical studies. Students will create projects and study existing digital projects, with a special focus on U.S. History in a global context. Readings will include primary sources as well as recent contributions to theory in digital humanities. We will learn general principles of working with humanistic data as well as techniques such as digital storytelling, digital mapping, and computational analysis of text.

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.

Books:

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

Shawn Graham, Ian Milligan, Scott Weingart, *Exploring Big Historical Data: The Historian's Macroscope* (2016)

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 if available through the Grinnell College Libraries catalog

Ben Blatt, *Nabokov's Favorite Word Is Mauve* (2017)

\*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 constantly change 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 (especially later in the semester) 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 and ready to discuss it. 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 (details to come), which do not need to conform to style.

Extensions (for sickness or other emergency) will not 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.

Make plans to meet with our class mentor, Sophia Stern; she can be of great help—look for an announcement of her hours in class and on P-Web. Sophia is tech-savvy and a talented, advanced history major: she has a lot of expertise to share. You will also 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 (ARH 130)—I will announce hours.

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.

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.

If you require accommodation for any diagnosed disability, please let me know during the first week of class. Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations, and I'm happy to help you in any way I can.

#### Grading:

Digital Story	15%
Experimental Results Reports	2% each (a total of 8%)
Midterm Paper	10%
Journal	5%
Final Project	20%
Final Reflection Paper	15%
Class Collaboration	7%
Class Participation	20%

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#### Course Schedule

#### Week One:

**Friday, August 31** What is Historical Thinking?

#### Reading:

- Sam Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts," *The Phi Delta Kappa International* 80 (March 1999): 488-499 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20439490>
- Jon A. Levisohn, "Historical Thinking and Its Alleged Unnaturalness," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 49 (2017): 618-630 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00131857.2015.1101364>
- Available to help you: Paul Boyer, *U.S. History: A Very Short Introduction* --**Ask if you want a copy!**

## Week Two:

**Monday, September 3:** What is digital history? How does digital history relate to the Digital Humanities?

How does technology enable us to ask different historical questions?

How can technology help us answer historical questions?

How does technology change the communication and consequences of historical interpretations?

Readings:

- *Exploring Big Historical Data*, Preface & Chapter 1
- Douglas Seefeldt and William G. Thomas, "What is Digital History?" *Perspectives on History*, May 2009: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2009/intersections-history-and-new-media/what-is-digital-history>
- 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>
- Benjamin Schmidt blog "Sapping Attention": <http://sappingattention.blogspot.com/>
- 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>

## Wednesday, September 5: Archives

What is an archive? Visit Grinnell College Special Collections, meet with Allison Haack, Library Assistant, Special Collections and Archives

Reading:

- Arthur H. Leavitt, "What Are Archives?" *The American Archivist* 24 (1961): 175-178 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40290033>
- Paul Conway, "Preservation in the Age of Google: Digitization, Digital Preservation, and Dilemmas," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* (2010): 61-79 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/648463>

**Friday, September 7:** Databases and Exhibits: Discussion & workflow demonstration of Grinnell College digitization projects, Digital Grinnell & Fedora/Islandora architecture, meet with Liz Rodrigues, Digital Scholarship Librarian and Mark McFate, Digital Library Applications Developer

Reading: What is Metadata? What is involved in creating a digital archive/exhibit/collection?

- 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/>
- 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>
- **SKIM** Michele Kimpton and Carol Minton Morris, "Managing and Archiving Research Data: Local Repository and Cloud-Based Practices," in *Research Data Management: Practical Strategies for Information Professionals*, ed. Joyce M. Ray, 223-238 (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2014). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt6wq34t.14>

## Week Three: Digital Storytelling

### Monday, September 10: History Lab

In class: Demonstration of Digital Grinnell digitization workflow with Chris Jones, Special Collections Librarian and Archivist of the College & Explore Digital Grinnell and archives to conceptualize digital projects

Reading: Narrative, Storytelling, and History

- Jill Lepore, "Historical Writing and the Revival of Narrative," Nieman Narrative Journalism Conference, NeimanReports: <http://niemanreports.org/articles/historical-writing-and-the-revival-of-narrative/>
- National Museum of African American History and Culture, "African Muslims in Early America," (note: this is basically a website, but with a narrative flow: how would you narrate it?): <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/collection/african-muslims-early-america>
- "Women and Labor, The Story of Mollie West," Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University (how would you narrate this one?), <https://womenandlaborthestoryofmolliewest.wordpress.com/>
- StoryCenter *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*

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>

**Wednesday, September 12:** Digital Storytelling as documentary

Video and audio editing introduction in class; Meet with Gina Donovan, Instructional Technologist

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

Reading:

- 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)

**Friday, September 14:** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

Reading:

- 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/>

**Week Four: Digital Storytelling**

**Sunday, September 16 at 5:00pm due on P-Web: Digital Story script draft**

**Monday, September 17:** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

In class: peer support on scripts, work on projects

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?”)

**Wednesday, September 19:** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories

**Thursday, September 20 at 5:00 pm due on P-web draft of Digital Story video**

**Friday, September 21:** In class: Peer support on finished drafts of stories

**Final version of Video due at 5:00 on Sunday, September 23 on P-web**

## Week Five: Visualizing Data

**Monday, September 24:** Historical Preservation, Public History, Immersive Experience, and Gaming

In class: Meet with David Neville, Digital Liberal Arts Specialist, Grinnell College Immersive Experiences Lab

Reading:

- Andrew M. Koke, "Virtual Reality and the Classroom: How Historians Can Respond," *Perspectives on History* 55 (2017): 27-29 <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2017/virtual-reality-and-the-classroom-how-historians-can-respond>
- Nicholas Tréprier, "The Assassins' Perspective: Teaching History with Video Games," *Perspectives on History*, May 2014: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2014/the-assassins-perspective>
- Carly A. Kocurek, "Play, Things: Games, Materialism, and the Production of Culture," *Velvet Light Trap* (Spring 2018): 66-70 <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/686904>
- Optional Video: Maxime Durand, Ubisoft, "From Dreams to Realities: Performing History in the Assassin's Creed Video Game Series," <https://youtu.be/rheZCOql9kg>

**Wednesday, September 26:** Structuring and Visualizing Data

In class: Talk with Katherine Walden, Digital Liberal Arts Specialist, about Data, experiment with Iowa Township data

Reading:

- *Exploring*, chapter 2 & 5
- "Historical Data Visualization," Harvard Business School: <https://www.hbs.edu/businesshistory/courses/resources/historical-data-visualization/Pages/default.aspx>
- "The Feminist Forebears of Affective Design" <http://common-place.org/book/vol-18-no-1-despain/>
- "The Shape of History: Reimagining Elizabeth Palmer Peabody's Historical Visualization Work," <http://shapeofhistory.net/>
- Recommended: Matthew Lincoln, "Best Practices for Using Google Sheets in Your Data Project" (March 26, 2018): <https://matthewlincoln.net/2018/03/26/best-practices-for-using-google-sheets-in-your-data-project.html>

**Friday, September 28:** Mapping as Visualization: The challenges for history

Readings:

- Anne Kelly Knowles, “GIS and History,” in *Placing History* (Redlands, CA: ESRI Press, 2008), 1-26.
- Ian Gregory, “Exploiting Time and Space: A Challenge for GIS in the Digital Humanities,” in *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 58-75.
- 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/>

## Week Six: Mapping History

### Monday, October 1: Space, Time, and History: Historical Mapping

Readings: (notice the links between data journalism and history)

- 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>
- 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>
- 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/>
- Vincent Brown, “Slave Revolt in Jamaica, 1760-1761: A Cartographic Narrative”:  
<http://revolt.axismaps.com/>
- William G. Thomas III and Kaci Nash and Robert Shepard. "Places of Exchange: An Analysis of Human and Materiél Flows in Civil War Alexandria, Virginia," *Civil War History* 62, no. 4 (2016): 359-398. <https://muse.jhu.edu/>
- Explore: “Railroads and the Making of Modern America,” University of Nebraska at Lincoln: <http://railroads.unl.edu/>

### Wednesday, October 3: Making maps

In class: Exercise on Carto and Google Maps (postal data)

Reading:

- 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>

### Friday, October 5: Geographic Information Systems

In class: GIS Exercise (postal data)



Reading:

- 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>

**Week Seven:** Mapping Space, Analyzing Texts

**Monday, October 8:** Mapping Projects experiment with Carto, Google, GIS

Reading:

- Cameron Blevins and Jason Heppler, "Geography of the Past," <http://cameronblevins.org/gotp/>
- Iowa Township Project
- In case you want it: 3-hour tutorial on ArcGIS: <https://www.lynda.com/ArcGIS-tutorials/Welcome/147014/165949-4.html>

**5:00 pm due on P-web Mapping Experimental Results**

**Wednesday, October 10:** History and Textual Analysis

Reading:

- Ben Blatt, *Nabokov's Favorite Word is Mauve*, Introduction-Chapter 3

**Friday, October 12** No Class Meeting

Reading:

- Complete Ben Blatt, *Nabokov's Favorite Word is Mauve*

**Week Eight:** Primary Sources and Textual Analysis

**Monday, October 15:** Getting Data

Reading:

- *Exploring*, Chapter 2 & 3

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 15 at 5:00 PM Midterm Paper due in P-Web**

**Wednesday, October 17:** Text Analysis Tools: Techniques and Visualizations

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

Readings:

- 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>

### 5:00 pm due on P-Web Text Analysis Experimental Results Note

**Friday, October 19:** Grinnell History Wikipedia edit-a-thon

Readings:

- University of Minnesota History Department, Survival Guide for Project Management and Digital History, “Resources for Project Managers”: <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/digitalhistoryprojectmanagement/project-management/useful-links>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How\\_to\\_run\\_an\\_edit-a-thon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_run_an_edit-a-thon)

OCTOBER 22-28 FALL BREAK

**Week Nine:** Modeling Topics and Networks

**Monday, October 29:** Topic Modeling

Reading: Topic Modeling and History

- *Exploring*, Chapter 4
- 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/>
- Sharon Block, “Doing More with Digitization: An Introduction to Topic Modeling of Early American Sources,” *Common-Place* 6 (January 2006): <http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-06/no-02/tales/>
- 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;)
- Mining the Dispatch: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/pages/home>
- History as Data Science: <http://history-lab.org/>

**Wednesday, October 31:** Network Analysis for History

In class: Grinnell faculty data in Palladio

Reading:

- *Exploring*, chapter 6
- The case of Paul Revere:  
<https://kieranhealy.org/blog/archives/2013/06/09/using-metadata-to-find-paul-revere/>
- Shin-Kap Han <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/chwe/ps269/han.pdf>

**Friday, November 2:** Networks in Practice—mapping the networks of Grinnell College Faculty

In class: Grinnell faculty data in Gephi

Reading:

- *Exploring*, chapter 7

**5:00 pm due in P-Web Palladio and Gephi Experimental Results Note**

**Week Ten:** Networks and Beyond

**Monday, November 5:** Mapping/Networking Silences

In class: Quaker data in NetworkX

Reading:

- Lauren F. Klein, “The Image of Absence: Archival Silence, Data Visualization, and James Hemings,” *American Literature* 85 (2013): 661-688.
- Martin Grandjean on Historical Network Analysis.  
<http://www.martingrandjean.ch/complex-structures-and-international-organizations/>
- Maeve Kane, “For Wagressero’s Wife’s Son: Colonialism and the Structure of Indigenous Women’s Social Connections, 1690-1730,” *Journal of Early American History* 7 (2017): 89-114

Project Management/ Choosing Project Teams

**Wednesday, November 7:** Olaudah Equiano

Reading

- Robert J. Allsion, 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, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/268711>

**Friday, November 9:** Digital Equiano

Reading:

- *Exploring*, Conclusion
- 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/>

## **Week Eleven: Digital Equiano**

### **Monday, November 12: Topic Modeling Equiano**

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

In class: Experiment with topic modeling Equiano

### **Wednesday, November 14: Mapping Olaudah Equiano**

In Class: Using Stanford 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/>

### **Friday, November 16: Networks in Equiano**

In class: Experiment using Stanford NER data to employ Palladio, Gephi, or Network X to look at networks in Equiano

**5:00 pm Mapping, Text Analysis, OR Network Analysis of Equiano Experimental Results Note due**

## **Week Twelve: Digital Projects**

(See class website and talk with Prof. Purcell for recommended data sources)

**Monday, November 19** Students will design and execute group historical projects

**Wednesday, November 21**

November 22-November 23 Thanksgiving Break—no classes

**Week Thirteen:** Digital Projects

**Monday, November 26**

**Wednesday, November 28**

**Friday, November 30**

**Week Fourteen:** Digital Projects

**Monday, December 3**

**Wednesday, December 5**

**Friday, December 7**

**Week Fifteen:** Digital Projects

**Monday, December 10**

**Wednesday, December 12**

**Friday, December 14** Showcase of final projects

**FINAL EXAM PERIOD:** Friday, December 21 9:00 a.m. Final Reflection paper due in P-Web