History 2816A / Digital Humanities 2130A
Introduction to Digital History

Fall Term
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-5:30 pm, UCC65

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Office hours for this course: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30 pm

Course website:
http://williamjturkel.net/teaching/history-2816a-introduction-to-digital-history-fall-2016/

Course Description

Digital History refers to the use of computers, computer programs, digital media and other electronic technologies to teach, communicate, simulate, preserve, access, analyze, research, present and publish interpretations of the past. In this course you will learn how historical content is produced, presented and published in digital form; how to find and evaluate digital primary and secondary sources; and how to use computational techniques to work with digital resources. No programming experience or previous background in the subject area is required.

Course Objectives

- Discover the enormous range of historical sources, both primary and secondary, that are available online in digital form
- Learn to utilize sources that are 'born-digital'
- Apply computational tools to the scholarly activities of **discovering**, **annotating**, **comparing**, **referring**, **sampling**, **illustrating** and **representing** (Unsworth)
- Be able to critically engage with the emerging methods of digital history and digital humanities
- Evaluate and determine strategies for historical practice with digital sources and tools

In-class Activities, Evaluation and Assignments

There are two 2-hour sessions per week. For the first hour each day, I will explain and demonstrate the use of particular computational methods or tools on a range of digital historical sources. For the second hour, you will practice using the tool or method in class and I will go around and answer questions and provide assistance. We will follow the in-class work with a group discussion. At the end of each class you will upload a copy of your day's notebook to the OWL Site.

In-class hands-on work   30%
Short assignments (3)   30%
Final research project   40%

The short assignments (2-5 pages each) will test your understanding of the course material and your ability to apply the techniques that you have learned. In the final research project you will be asked to use the computational analysis of sources to support or question historical claims made in the scholarly literature on a particular topic. You will also be asked to reflect on the aspects of the process that you felt were successful or not, about other ways that the technology might be used to assist the historian in his or her work, and things that historians should be cautious or critically aware of when using similar tools. More information about the assignments and ways to approach them will be discussed in class.

OWL Site

The OWL Site for the course will only be used to submit coursework and assignments. All other course material will be available on the course webpage.

Required Software

To get the most out of this class, you will need a Windows, Mac or Linux laptop, which you should bring to every class.

You will also need a **desktop** student license for Wolfram Research's *Mathematica* software. (Don't let the name scare you, you won't need any particular experience with mathematics to do well in this course). A license for the software is US $45 per semester, or US $70 for a one-year subscription.

http://www.wolfram.com/mathematica/pricing/students-individuals.php

You don't have to purchase anything else for the course.

All slides will be made available on the course website.

Schedule

- **Th Sep 8**
  Slides. 1A: Introduction to Digital History
  Readings. Andrews and Burke, "What Does It Mean to Think Historically?"
  https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically
- **Tu Sep 13**
  Slides. 1B: Word Frequency
  Assignment. SHORT ASSIGNMENT 1 (due Sep 29; zero date Oct 11)
- **Th Sep 15**
  Slides. 2A: Text Search
- **Tu Sep 20**
  Slides. 2B: N-gram Frequency
- **Th Sep 22**
  Slides. 3A: KWIC
- **Tu Sep 27**
  Slides. 3B: Pattern Matching
- **Th Sep 29**
  Slides. 4A: Capitalized Phrases
  SHORT ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE
- **Tu Oct 04**
  Slides. 4B: Collocations
  Assignment. SHORT ASSIGNMENT 2 (due Oct 20; zero date Nov 01)
- **Th Oct 06**
  Slides. 5A: Associations
- **Tu Oct 11**
  Slides. 5B: Named Entities
  SHORT ASSIGNMENT 1 ZERO DATE
- **Th Oct 13**
  Slides. 6A: Timelines
- **Tu Oct 18 – NO CLASS**
- **Th Oct 20 – NO CLASS**
  SHORT ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE
- **Tu Oct 25**
  Slides. 6B: Maps
  Assignment. SHORT ASSIGNMENT 3 (due Nov 10; zero date Nov 22)
- **Th Oct 27 – NO CLASS – FALL STUDY BREAK**
- **Tu Nov 01**
  Slides. 7A: Batch Downloading
  SHORT ASSIGNMENT 2 ZERO DATE
- **Th Nov 03**
  Slides. 7B: Corpus Search

- **Tu Nov 08**
  Slides. 8A: Document Vectors
  Assignment. FINAL ASSIGNMENT (due Dec 06)
- **Th Nov 10**
  Slides. 8B: TF-IDF
  SHORT ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE
- **Tu Nov 15**
  Slides. 9A: Markup Languages
- **Th Nov 17**
  Slides. 9B: Scraping
- **Tu Nov 22**
  Slides. 10A: Page Images and OCR
  SHORT ASSIGNMENT 3 ZERO DATE
- **Th Nov 24**
  Slides. 10B: Image Processing
- **Tu Nov 29**
  Slides. 11A: Identifying and Classifying Images
- **Th Dec 01**
  Slides. 11B: Photogrammetry and Georectification
- **Tu Dec 06**
  Work on final assignment in class.
  FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE.

Late Work and Attendance

Participation in the in-class activities is a key component of this class. I expect you to attend every class and participate in the day's activities. This includes asking and answering questions in class.

In general, I don't like to penalize late work. Each assignment will have a suggested due date and, a few weeks later, a zero date. If you hand in your assignment before the zero date, you will receive full credit for your work. After the zero date, it will be worth nothing.

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, you must provide valid medical or other supporting documentation to the Dean's office as soon as possible and contact me immediately.

Regarding absence for medical illness, see the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western

http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/

for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.