

## **HIS8900: Topics in Digital History**

Dr. Jacqueline Beatty

[Jacqueline.beatty@villanova.edu](mailto:Jacqueline.beatty@villanova.edu)

Summer Session III, 2021

\*N.B. This course syllabus is subject to revision by the instructor.

### **Class Meetings Held via Zoom:**

<https://villanova.zoom.us/j/94380752890?pwd=ZXVjNmQxQnRRV1VNS2RJZFISbkhVUT09>

### **Office Hours: M 3-5pm and by appointment, Held via Zoom:**

<https://villanova.zoom.us/j/99866192533?pwd=OG96NmQ0TC9veU1NVDhzODQ1MlpWQT09>

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**Course Description:** Historians are now living and working in a digital age, and as such, must confront and engage in the theory and practices of digital history. Throughout this course, we will grapple with the challenges of doing digital history through the use of digital theory, methodology, and tools in historical study and practice. Students will become familiar with the current state of the field of digital history; experiment and work with a variety of public projects, research methods, and pedagogical tools; and employ these skills to their own historical work and interests. Topics to be covered include: building a professional web presence; digital public history; information architecture and design; digital collections and preservation; crowdsourcing; data and text mining; topic modeling; mapping, visualizations, and spatial history; open access and open source materials; and the future of digital history in the profession. We will engage with new and innovative readings and projects relating to digital history, work on developing digital skills and literacy, and by the end of the semester, students will create a proposal for a hypothetical work of digital history which would utilize research methods, create educational materials, or build a public project based on each student's individual professional goals and interests.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To introduce students to the theory, methodology, appropriate use, and practice of digital history
- To familiarize students with the state of the field of digital history
- To provide students with a working knowledge of the basic tools and methods of digital history
- To demonstrate the importance of the use of digital technology for the practice of history
- To encourage students to create and maintain a permanent, professional, digital scholarly identity

### **Required Materials:**

- All readings available free via our course Perusall site (see note below)
- Sign up for an account (and be sure to use your @villanova.edu email accounts for the education discount) at [www.reclaimhosting.com](http://www.reclaimhosting.com) (\$30)—see directions on Week 1 of course schedule

**Perusall Readings:** This semester, all of our reading activity will be conducted on an online platform called Perusall. Perusall enables conversations on the readings themselves. Therefore, your reading and engagement with the reading from Perusall will be a contributing factor in your

participation grade. Perusall's algorithmic grading system includes the time spent engaged with the reading, comments and questions on the content, conversations with each other, reactions, and upvotes. All readings must be completed by the time class begins each week.

Students should register a Perusall account immediately upon reading this syllabus. Go to [www.perusall.com](http://www.perusall.com), create an account with your Villanova credentials, and use the code BEATTY-MKGY4. I advise that you bookmark the page, but it will also be listed on our Blackboard site. Students should familiarize themselves with the functionality of the site; I suggest that you experiment with Perusall's capabilities by using the syllabus as a sample reading assignment.

**Course Policies:** Students will, above all, be respectful to each other and to the instructor. As this course will be conducted remotely, access to the necessary software and technology is paramount. Students must activate their Villanova Zoom accounts, and utilize their Villanova credentials to sign-in to weekly class meetings and office hours (links at top of first page of syllabus).

Our classes meetings will generally be conducted in two segments: discussion and lab/practicum, relatively split in half with a 10-15 minute break depending on students' preferences, which we can work out during our first meeting. During class, I require that students have their **videos on**. During practicums, I advise that students have two screens if possible; their primary screen should be used by each student to work through the tools, and the secondary screen should be used for the Zoom meeting (it is fine if students log out and then back in during the break window to accommodate a second screen for the lab/practicum portion). If you do not have access to a second monitor screen, that is fine; a tablet or phone will be sufficient for Zoom (though you will need to download the app).

When completing readings, I strongly advise that you click through the links provided (it's akin to reading footnotes in traditional historiographical monographs), and be sure to read the comments made by users/readers at the end of readings that are blog posts.

**A note on lab/practicum work:** Each week, we will be experimenting with different tools relevant to work in digital history. In addition to readings, you will also complete (often very brief) lab prep work; this should be done before coming to class, just as you do with readings. The in-class lab work (as it is labeled on the course schedule) will be done in class, though you are welcome to explore the tools in advance of our meetings.

Importantly, I would like to stress that messing up or breaking things is okay (and even encouraged!). It's a great way to learn new DH tools and processes, and as tools and methods are always evolving, it's inevitable! Don't get discouraged when things are challenging; use each other as a support system for working through the tools, and take a break when you need to. You will not master everything this semester, but you will gain the strong foundation that you will need to continue pursuing digital history methods, strategies, and tools if they are part of your professional goals and development.

**Office of Disabilities and Learning Support Services:** It is the policy of Villanova to make reasonable academic accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. You must present verification and register with the Learning Support Office by contacting 610-519-5176 or at [learning.support.services@villanova.edu](mailto:learning.support.services@villanova.edu) or for physical access or temporary disabling conditions,

please contact the Office of Disability Services at 610-519-4095 or email [Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu](mailto:Stephen.mcwilliams@villanova.edu). Registration is needed in order to receive accommodations.

**Academic Integrity:** All students are expected to uphold Villanova's Academic Integrity Policy and Code. Any incident of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for disciplinary action. For the College's statement on Academic Integrity, you should consult the Enchiridion. You may view the university's Academic Integrity Policy and Code, as well as other useful information related to writing papers, at the Academic Integrity Gateway web site: <http://library.villanova.edu/Help/AcademicIntegrity>.

**Graded work:**

25% Course Participation

20 % Weekly Blog Posts

15% Written Review & In-Class Presentation of *Current Research in Digital History* Article

40% Final Project: Digital Project Proposal

**Course Participation:** Participation in a graduate course is critical, especially one in which an understanding of both theory and practice are necessary for success. In this course, participation will include required regular attendance in Zoom meetings (with video on); regular and thoughtful contribution to class discussions; comments, questions, and engagements on the online reading platform, Perusall; and (tangentially) comments on classmates' blog posts and engagement with your class peers on Twitter (follow and use the hashtag #NovaDH2021).

**Weekly Blog Posts:** Students will create and maintain a blog on their personal sites where they will engage with the weekly reading and reflect on each week's individual lab work. Each piece—both the weekly readings reflection and weekly lab write-ups/reflections—should be posted separately (and labeled as such), and must be between 250-500 words (please include word count at end of post). Students must also subscribe to each of their classmate's blogs, and comment regularly on these posts. Weekly Readings Reflection Blog Posts are due Mondays at noon; Lab Write-ups/Reflections are due on the Wednesdays following each class, by 9PM (so, you have roughly 48 hours to complete those posts after lab work is completed). Weekly Readings Reflection Blog posts should synthesize the arguments and conversations of each week's assigned readings. Lab write-ups/reflections are more informal and can be written in the first person; students should discuss their successes and challenges with each tool, questions they still have, and how they might use those or similar tools in their professional work.

**Written Review & In-Class Presentation of *Current Research in Digital History* Article:** Each student will read, review, and present one article of their choice from an issue of *Current Research in Digital History*. Students should peruse all three available issues here (<https://crdh.rrchnm.org/volume/>) and come prepared to sign up for an article during our first meeting. Each student will write a written review, due by the time class starts on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, to consist of 750-1000 words and to be posted on each student's blog. The review should summarize the arguments and findings of the piece, and analyze the article's content as you would with a book review (evaluating contributions to the field and contextualizing the piece relative to the scholarship we will have read and discussed over the course of the semester). Students' in-class presentations will take place during the second segment of our last class on August 2<sup>nd</sup>; presentations will be Pecha-Kucha style (<https://www.pechakucha.com/>) and should be no more than 5 minutes long.

Students must utilize timed PowerPoint slides for their presentations, to be made via screen sharing on Zoom.

**Final Project: Digital Project Proposal (Research, Teaching, or Public Project):** Each student will create a proposal for a hypothetical digital history project relevant to their research and/or professional interests modeled after the NEH's Digital Humanities Advancement Grant application process. The proposals must be 7-10 pages in length (Times New Roman, 12pt font; single-spaced; 1-inch margins; Chicago-style endnotes only). Each proposal will include the following sections: Project Overview/Abstract; Statement of Significance and Innovation; Environmental Scan; Activities and Project Team; and Final Products and Dissemination. More specific guidelines and the project's evaluation rubric will be provided on our class Blackboard page; the relevant overview is provided on the NEH's website (see page 6: Application Package, <https://www.neh.gov/sites/default/files/inline-files/Digital%20Humanities%20Advancement%20Grants%20NOFO%20June%202021%2020210115-HAA.pdf>). Students should submit informal proposal ideas to the instructor (via email) no later than Week 4/June 28; the instructor will provide feedback via email correspondence with each student. Final submissions will be due **August 3 at noon**.

**Grading Scale:**

Letter Grade	Range
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	Below 60

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 June 7: Introductions; What is Digital History?; Building a Web Presence

Reading:

- On Digital History
  - Seefeldt and Thomas, “What Is Digital History?”  
<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2009/what-is-digital-history>
  - Cohen and Rosenzweig, *Digital History*, “Introduction”; “Exploring the History Web”; and “Getting Started”: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/>
  - Robertson, “The Differences between Digital Humanities and Digital History”  
<https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/ed4a1145-7044-42e9-a898-5ff8691b6628#ch25>
  - Cohen et al, “Interchange: The Promise of Digital History”
- On the Internet:
  - “How does the Internet work?”: <http://web.stanford.edu/class/msande91si/www-spr04/readings/week1/InternetWhitepaper.htm>
  - “What is an API?”: <https://www.freecodecamp.org/news/what-is-an-api-in-english-please-b880a3214a82/>
  - Lee, “40 Maps that explain the internet”: <https://www.vox.com/a/internet-maps#list-2>
- On Professionalism and the web:
  - Posner, Varner, & Coxall, “Creating your web presence”:  
<http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/creating-your-web-presence-a-primer-for-academics/30458>
  - Heather Cox Richardson, “Should Historians Use Twitter? Pt 1”:  
<http://histsociety.blogspot.com/2013/09/should-historians-use-twitter-part-1.html>  
and “Should Historians Use Twitter? Part 2”:  
<http://histsociety.blogspot.com/2013/10/will-blog-posts-and-tweets-hurt-junior.html>
  - Bennett, “Historians and Digital History: Why Do Academics Shy Away from Digital History?”: <http://activehistory.ca/2013/06/historians-and-digital-history-why-do-academics-shy-away-from-digital-history/>

Lab Prep work:

- Purchase a ReclaimHosting account (<https://reclaimhosting.com/>), and make note of your username/password. Choose a domain name that is professional (generally first/last name, or reflective of your work—see Posner et al for advice).
- Create twitter handle (if you don’t already have one). Tweet an introductory message with our class hashtag (#NovaDH2021)

In Class Lab: Building a Web Presence and Basic Content Management Systems (WordPress)

- Install WordPress; Create Blog; subscribe to classmates’ blogs.

### WEEK 2 June 14: Digital Public History

Reading:

- Hsu, “Lessons on Public Humanities from the Civic Sphere”:  
<https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/0c337efc-8ed6-4af0-b997-5bdae84ce0d8#ch24>

- Maurantonio, “Archiving the Visual”
- Owens, “Games as Historical Scholarship” <http://www.playthepast.org/?p=4365>
- Anne Lindsay, “#VirtualTourist: Embracing Our Audience through Public History Web Experience”
- C&R, “Building an Audience,” *Digital History*: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/audience/>
- Brennan, “Public, First”: <https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/11b9805a-a8e0-42e3-9a1c-fad46e4b78e5#ch32>
- Wyman et al, “Digital Storytelling in Museums: Observations and Best Practices”

In Class Discussion: Evaluating Digital Projects

- In Groups, evaluate 3 digital projects based on our collective evaluation standards (groups TBD in class)

Lab Prep Work:

- Create a free CodeCamp account: <http://freecodecamp.org/learn>

In Class Lab: Coding Basics

- HTML, HTML 5, CSS: <https://www.freecodecamp.org/learn/responsive-web-design/>

### **WEEK 3 June 21: Information Architecture and Design**

Reading:

- Cohen & Rosenzweig, “Designing for the History Web,” *Digital History*: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/designing/>
- “Information Architecture Basics”: <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/information-architecture.html>
- “Information Architecture,” in *Web Style Guide*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (read all chapter contents, see right side menu): <https://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/3-information-architecture/index.html>
- Ethan Marcotte, “Responsive Web Design”: <https://alistapart.com/article/responsive-web-design/>

At Home work for your site:

- Map an information architecture plan for your site (do this by hand, on paper!); build those pages and menus.
- Choose a theme and implement it.
- Customize your site’s design (color, font, header, etc.).

In Class Lab: Responsive Web Design

- Responsive Web Design Principles, Responsive Web Design Projects: <https://www.freecodecamp.org/learn/responsive-web-design/>

### **WEEK 4 June 28: Digital History and Education**

Reading:

- Marsh, “Omeka in the Classroom”
- Trépanier, “The Assassin’s Perspective; Teaching History with Video Games”: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2014/the-assassins-perspective>
- Saxton, “Wikipedia and Women’s History: A Classroom Experience”: [https://www.fulcrum.org/epubs/xw42n885n?locale=en#/6/34\[chp06\]/4/2/4\[p86\]/1:0](https://www.fulcrum.org/epubs/xw42n885n?locale=en#/6/34[chp06]/4/2/4[p86]/1:0)

- Rosinbum, “Using Digital History in the Classroom: Three Simple Principles”: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2019/using-digital-history-in-the-classroom-three-simple-principles>
- Robinson, “Building Archives, Training Scholars”: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/september-2020/building-archives-training-scholars-teaching-history-through-collaborative-digital-projects>
- Dauer, “The Digital Polarization Initiative”: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2019/the-digital-polarization-initiative-teaching-history-and-information-literacy>
- Explore Teaching History resources via RRCHNM: <https://rrchnm.org/category/projects/content/teaching-resources/#projects>

Lab Prep Work:

- Prep ideas for in-class lab activity (see below)

In Class Lab: Teaching with Games

- Choose a grade level: elementary, middle, or high school
- Creating a Game Design Document <https://www.dundoc.com/>
- For lab reflection post, include the content you created during lab

Final Project proposal ideas due via email by midnight, June 28

### **WEEK 5 July 5: No Class in Observation of July 5 Holiday**

### **WEEK 6 July 12: Collections and Preservation; Citizen History and Crowdsourcing**

Reading:

- Stauffer, “My *Old Sweethearts*: On Digitization and the Future of the Print Record”: <https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/16446b2e-6dc7-49b0-baeb-3c1e050234cf#ch19>
- C&R, *Digital History*, “Collecting History Online”: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/collecting/>
- C&R, *Digital History*, “Owning the Past”: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/>
- C&R, *Digital History*, “Preserving Digital History”: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/>
- Rosenzweig, “Can History Be Open Source?”
- Sherratt, “Life on the outside: Collections, contexts, and the wild, wild web”: <https://medium.com/open-glam/life-on-the-outside-collections-contexts-and-the-wild-wild-web-4d334ccddee2>
- Causer, et al, “Transcription Maximized, expense minimized?”

Lab Prep Work:

- Create a Wikipedia account (<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:CreateAccount&returnto=Wikipedia%3ANew+account>)
- Bring your own research/written materials for Wikipedia edit-a-thon (see below instructions)

In class Lab: The Citizen Historian

- Write your own Wikipedia article or edit an existing article on which you have expertise
- Work through two crowdsourced transcription projects (to be provided in class)

## **WEEK 7 July 19: Mapping, Timelines, Spatial History, Visualization**

Reading:

- Richard White, “What is Spatial history?”:  
<https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/media/images/publication/what%20is%20spatial%20history%20pub%2020020110.pdf>
- Gregory and Healey, “Historical GIS: Structuring, Mapping and analysing geographies of the past”
- Theibault, “Visualizations and Historical Arguments”:  
<https://writinghistory.trincoll.edu/evidence/theibault-2012-spring/>
- Elena Friot, “Go Go Gadget, Gephi”:  
<https://elenamfriot.wordpress.com/2013/12/13/go-go-gadget-gephi-the-misadventures-of-a-newbie-dher/>
- Weingart, “Networks Demystified 8: When Networks are Inappropriate”:  
<http://www.scottbot.net/HIAL/index.html@p=39600.html>
- Ayers and Nesbit, “Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American South”

Lab Prep Work:

- Explore Google Earth and ArcGIS (links below)
  - Google Maps and Google Earth:  
<https://programminghistorian.org/en/lessons/googlemaps-googleearth>
  - ArcGIS Story Map <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories> and <https://learn-arcgis-learngis.hub.arcgis.com/>
- Prepare questions for Erica Hayes, Falvey Digital Scholarship Librarian
  - Erica Hayes, [erica.hayes@villanova.edu](mailto:erica.hayes@villanova.edu); <https://library.villanova.edu/about-falvey/contact-us/staff/erica-hayes>
  - Digital Scholarship at Falvey: <https://library.villanova.edu/digital-scholarship>

In class Lab: Visit and Conversation with Erica Hayes

## **WEEK 8 July 26: Open Access, Open Source: Scholarship and Building Community in the Digital Humanities**

Reading:

- Posner, “Here and There: Creating DH Community”:  
<https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/c6b8f952-acfd-48b6-82bb-71580c54cad2#ch22>
- Watch: Copyright, Exceptions, and Fair Use: Crash Course Intellectual Property #3”:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q\\_9O8J9skL0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_9O8J9skL0)
- Tryon, “‘Blogging, scholarship, and the Networked Public Sphere’ Draft”:  
<http://www.chutry.wordherders.net/wp/?p=2307>
- O’Malley, “Evidence and Scarcity”:  
<http://theaporetic.com/history/evidence-and-scarcity/>
- Takats, “Evidence and Abundance”:  
<https://quintessenceofham.org/2010/10/18/evidence-and-abundance/>
- Agarwal, “A History Dissertation Goes Digital”:  
<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/summer-2017/a-history-dissertation-goes-digital>
- “Open Access Overview”:  
<http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>
- Cohen, “Treading Water on Open Access”:  
<http://dancohen.org/2012/09/25/treading-water-on-open-access/>

Lab Prep Work:

- Creative Commons Licenses: go over and choose one for your site (and post it there): <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>
- Download Zotero <https://www.zotero.org/download/>
- Download Tropy <https://trophy.org/>
- Collect bibliography for Zotero Lab and research photos for Tropy Lab (see below)

In Class Lab: Research Tools

- Build a Zotero library for a research project (assemble historiography)
- Build a Tropy library with your own research photos (have prepared from previous research trip, or go to the Villanova library archive or another institution and get photos)

### **WEEK 9 Aug 2: What's next?**

Reading:

- Posner, "What's Next: The Radical, Unrealized Potential of Digital Humanities"  
<https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/a22aca14-0eb0-4cc6-a622-6fee9428a357#ch03>
- Blevins, "Digital History's Perpetual Future Tense":  
<https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/4555da10-0561-42c1-9e34-112f0695f523#ch26>
- Chun et al, "The Dark Side of the Digital Humanities":  
<https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled/section/ca35736b-0020-4ac6-9ce7-88c6e9ff1bba#ch38>

No Lab Prep work or In-class Lab

*Current Research in Digital History* Written Review and Presentations due

**Final Projects due by August 3 at noon, via email to [jacqueline.beatty@villanova.edu](mailto:jacqueline.beatty@villanova.edu).**