

## HIS 326

### Digital History

### COVID 19 Revised Syllabus 03/20/2020

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LB 3244, Monday and Wednesday 3 - 4.15pm

### COVID 19 Adjustments

I have made numerous adjustments to the schedule, assessment, and procedures for the course in response to the ongoing COVID 19 Crisis. As the situation is fluid, I may be obliged to make more changes in the coming weeks. Each syllabus will be dated to reflect the most up to date information and expectations.

First and foremost, I was to reassure every single student in the class that I will be making every effort to maintain continuity of instruction in the course, while at the same time that all of you are also afforded the maximum level of flexibility and opportunity to participate according to your situations. *Nobody will be penalised* for any issues relating to the current health crisis. Some of you may get ill. Some of you may need to care for relatives who are ill. Some of you may simply have less time, or less stable schedules in the next few weeks. *None you will have your grade suffer unduly as a result of these unprecedented conditions.* That is the bottom line of all of the adjustments to the class. Everyone will have the opportunity to participate as much as they are able, and to receive the best quality instruction I am able to deliver through alternative methods, but those of you who are not will be offered generous, flexible alternatives to ensure you finish the class and receive a fair, meaningful grade.

To make it easier for you all, all major adjustments have been highlighted in the syllabus in blue text. Please take a moment to read through, and make a note of anything you wish to discuss with me directly. I am more than willing to make further adjustments for students according to their specific conditions, and indeed, I am relying on you all to keep me informed about yourselves, and any peers you may be concerned about in the weeks to come.

Finally, I want to offer words of kindness to you all in difficult times. I realise that this humble class is no longer a top priority for many of you, and that we face difficult times ahead. My *primary concern*, is your well-being, mentally, physically, and financially. If anyone needs someone to talk to, I encourage them to reach out to me if they wish. All of us must now embrace a mode of life that is more generous, more thoughtful, and more humane than the day to day existence of life prior to this crisis. Having lived through a serious disaster before, I can assure you all, that this will be difficult, but it is also a time to discover that we are at our best when we are helping one another, working together, and looking out for one another. This class continues as only a small and insignificant part of that general effort, and I hope that you all, at

the very least, can find in our remaining time together (while physically apart) ways to remain social, to interact, to inspire, and to reassure each other. Whatever else comes out of this crisis, I want to assure each and every one of you that you have been fine students, and I am proud of your work so far, and look forward to seeing what you can and will achieve going forward.

I realise that it is highly unusual to break from the normal business-like format of a college course syllabus to address these kinds of concerns directly and frankly. However, one of the adjustments that I believe we are all going to have to make in the coming weeks and months is becoming more humane in all of our dealings, particularly text-based interactions where it is easy to slip into a sterile professional tone that, in normal times provides a reassuring neutrality, but in times such as these, can feel cold, aloof, unfeeling and callous. It can be as simple as acknowledging to one another that we feel anxious, uncertain and occasionally overwhelmed. Even better, as I have tried to do here, take pains to extend as much generosity of spirit and consideration to others as you can. As we deal with an indeterminate period of social distancing, it is now more important than ever that we compensate for the physical distances we endure with candour, courage, and kindness.

Take care of yourselves, but also take care of one another. I regret that I may not see you all again face to face, but I have enjoyed the time we spent together and your work thus far this semester as a class has been commendable.

#### Classes:

With the shift to alternative teaching methods, classes will now be *primarily* asynchronous, text-based work via MyCourses. Currently, several live sessions are still scheduled through the end of the semester. Students are encouraged to contact me if they have hardware or time limitation that prevent them from attending live sessions. The *most important* live sessions are the dedicated focus group sessions with groups working on Final Projects. This is an opportunity for you to get together to work with one another, and to receive live guidance and feedback from me regarding your project. All other activities will have no strict scheduling and can be engaged with when students have time and space to do so.

As the COVID 19 Crisis continues to develop and change, so too may the class. All and any changes will be communicated to you via MyCourses.

**Office Hours:** Now that the class is effectively online, I will be holding office hours online by appointment. My schedule is now very flexible, and I will be available to meet with students on an individual or group basis through Zoom or Google Hangouts. If you have limited access to these services, I will also be available through live chat, telephone, and email as always. I am strongly encouraging all students if they have any questions or concerns, to contact me via email to arrange a session.

#### Course Description

The advent of computers and the internet have transformed our world. The discipline of history

might seem an unlikely candidate for radical transformation through technology, but that's exactly what's underway right now. From transforming access to new forms of collaboration to an entirely new set of publishing platforms, digital technology has changed the way we think about and do history at every level. In this class, we will examine the rise and impact of digital tools on the practice and theory of history, and consider the many ways it challenges us all to rethink our approach to the past. Students will be introduced to the variety of innovative ways that working historians are integrating new technologies into their study of the past, and will then apply what they've learned to creating their own digital history project.

**Addendum: The emergence of the COVID19 Health Crisis has necessitated the unexpected move from in-person classes to alternative, online delivery. While an unplanned disruption, this is also a serendipitous development that obliges us, as a class, to explore the potential and the pitfalls of digital media as a means of learning, collaborating, and teaching. In tackling this challenge, we will all be engaged in pioneering new ways of discovering, learning, and explaining history via digital means.**

### **Grading**

Grades for this course will be determined using the following criteria:

93-100 = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	63-66 = D
80-82 = B-	60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+	0-59 = F

**Grading Addendum: RIT has issued an optional, new grading scheme that includes a Pass/No Pass/Satisfactory Grade that students may opt into at any point during the semester. I will still be awarding all students a letter grade at the end of the semester following the above schema. Additionally, I want to assure students that they *will not* be penalised for difficulties, absences, or other issues that arise from the COVID 19 Crisis. The remainder of the semester is an opportunity to improve your grade, and your peers grades through group work. Short of gross negligence or total absence, it is extremely unlikely that your grade will deteriorate!**

### **Attendance and Participation — 20%**

Attending *and* participating in the class is important, both for your learning and for your peers. Together, we learn more effectively as collaborators and interlocutors than as isolated individuals. In Digital History, where projects require close collaboration, this is even more crucial. Participation means bringing your thoughts, skills, knowledge and ideas to class **in any way you can**. Participating in discussions, doing the assigned readings, and helping your classmates with your own insights and perspectives through questions or answers are all strongly encouraged, and I

strive to create a classroom where everyone can find a way to do so. You are allowed **three** unexplained absences, although I strongly encourage you to attend all the classes! More absences will negatively impact your 20% Attendance and Participation grade.

If you are absent, for any reason, **please contact me** for information about anything you may have missed.

**Addendum: With the class shifting to alternative delivery, what counts as attendance and participation will be significantly different. First and foremost, I will be offering generous consideration to students who are unable to attend live sessions for any reason in the coming weeks. At the same time, I will also be offering generous consideration to those students who *do* continue to attend and participate in the class. Most important of all, you *should make every possible effort* to coordinate and collaborate with your groups on your final projects. This will count as participation, and offer you all an opportunity to gain excellent grades in this category come the end of semester.**

Once again, I am *strongly encouraging* any student who anticipates, or who runs into *any* difficulties in this respect to contact me. I am committed to remaining flexible and working out alternative pathways for students to receive grade for the course that are feasible and fair in a time of rapid change and uncertainty. You *will not* be left out of the class, even in the worst case scenarios.

#### **Homework Assignments — 20%**

Throughout the semester you will be assigned homework assignments, these are tasks designed to reinforce what we have learned in class and to foster engagement with in-class sessions. These do not demand a high workload, but are extremely useful in enriching our class sessions. They also often offer you an opportunity to engage directly in the direction and content of our class discussions. Your contributions will be assessed over the course of the semester as part of your final grade.

Note: Some, **but not all**, of the assignments are noted in the syllabus schedule, some of them will be assigned during the semester.

**Addendum: Homework assignments will be created through MyCourses, and will continue to be a small workload, but offer students a way to engage with materials and ideas. Once again, I am *strongly encouraging* any student who anticipates, or who finds themselves in, a situation where doing the homework assignment becomes too difficult. In such cases, I will work with students on an individual basis to ensure that it does not affect their grades negatively in any way.**

#### **Oral Presentation — 30% (15% each)**

Twice during semester, students will present a short, concise review of an existing digital history project. This is an opportunity to apply the ideas we are learning in the course to assessing actual

digital history projects, and develop your ideas and approach to your final project. Your review should reflect a critical engagement with both the concepts and the practical elements explored in the course. Presentations will be 6-8 minutes, with a brief question and answer section.

**Addendum: The second Oral Presentation Assignment is now a paper of 3-4 pages. However, it is entirely voluntary. Students who elect not to turn in this paper will not be penalised, but will receive a grade equivalent to the grade they received for their first presentation. The second assignment is an opportunity to improve your grade, and you will not be penalised *in any way* for turning it in. In a worst case scenario, you will receive a grade equal to your existing grade for the first Oral Review Presentation. However, if you do turn in a second assignment, you can still improve your grade for this portion of the class.**

***Contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this.***

### **Final Project – 30%**

Digital history has always required a willingness to engage with the unfamiliar as well as close collaboration with others. Bearing this in mind, the class will form small groups to work on a unique digital history project from conception through to publication in a digital format. This project will be hosted on a website, but can take the form a wide variety of media, including maps, videos, podcasts, timelines, interactive exhibits, and games, or a combination of these. More detailed information will be provided early in semester as you form groups and proposals.

**Addendum: This project was always intended to be the major focus of your work in the second half of the semester. Thankfully, it is such that you can continue to work together on it through alternative means. However, I recognise that there will be challenges, difficulties, and compromises necessary to make it happen. I want to allay your concerns, and outline a clear, concise, and comprehensive plan for how we will be tackling this in the weeks to come.**

**1. *You will be receiving ongoing feedback from me on a weekly basis.*** Each week, I will be creating a dedicated discussion thread in MyCourses (one has already been made for Week 10) in which you are encouraged to post a brief, concise review of your work. I will be commenting and offering advice and thoughts on each thread. These threads will also become a part of your project assessment. They are an opportunity to raise flags, identify snags, and develop strategies to keep your work manageable, effective, and fruitful through the remainder of the semester. If *nobody* in your group posts in the discussions, it will raise serious alarms, and I will be moving towards contacting academic advisors and students directly.

**2. *Your projects are not expected to be as extensive, complete, or comprehensive as you planned.*** All of us will need to compromise with the reality of the new conditions. This means that sources may be inaccessible, opportunities to work together may be reduced, and planned features may fall by the wayside. All of this will be factored in (again, the weekly discussions will be an important conduit for you to communicate these issues to me) in the assessment of the final projects.

**3. *I will be making alternatives available.*** There is a slight possibility that some groups will be unable to coordinate and sustain a working relationship in the weeks ahead. While I hope this

is not the case, I am preparing for that possibility. In the event that a group or parts of groups find themselves unable to move forward, I will be creating alternative assessment options tailored to the needs and capacity of individual students that will allow them to receive a final grade. *Nobody* will be penalised, either in groups or as individuals, for the unprecedented situation we find ourselves in. All of this is to say that while we will strive to complete these projects, in whatever form is possible, *even in the worst case scenario that you cannot*, there will be options made available to you.

4. *Presentations have been replaced with peer feedback.* Now that we are no longer meeting in class, your final presentations will now be delivered through peer feedback. This means in the final week of class, each group will post a link to their project websites that will allow others in the class to view their work, and offer remarks in a discussion thread on MyCourses. Not only will this give you an opportunity to make any final changes to your project, it will also allow you to participate in improving and helping your peers with theirs.

### **Academic Honesty**

As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities, one of which is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. A common form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. The representation of another person's work as one's own, or the attempt "to blur the line between one's own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source" — more specifically, the use of an idea, phrase, or other materials from a written or spoken source without acknowledgment in a work for which the student claims authorship. Examples include: the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship; the improper use of course materials in a work for which the student claims authorship; the use of papers purchased online and turned in as one's own work; submission of written work such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent. A student can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper or presentation itself, the source of any idea or wording that he or she did not produce. Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student-writer's own words.

### **Academic Assistance and More Resources**

This classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. I invite you to talk with me about any concerns or situations that may affect your ability to complete your assignments successfully. Additionally, if you have any issues throughout the semester I strongly encourage you to contact the Academic Support Center (ASC). ASC supports students at RIT with services that promote academic success, including course-specific collaborative study groups, study skills counseling, a study skills course, and disability support.

### **Classroom Conduct**

We are all responsible for maintaining a respectful, thoughtful and genuine atmosphere of mutual engagement in the classroom. You're all encouraged to express your thoughts, opinions, and ideas, and to agree or disagree with one another in a respectful manner. We will engage the content with critical thought, imagination, and generosity, and extend the same to one another, and together, enrich the experience for everyone.

**Addendum: Although classes will be held in a strictly online environment, we will still be interacting with one another regularly, and the same fundamental rules of respectfulness, attentiveness, and engagement apply.**

### **Technology Policy**

You are welcome to use laptops for note-taking, displaying readings, and other classroom activities. However, be aware that it is all too easy to be distracted or diverted! You may have to turn off devices to be fully present in discussions, lectures and class activities. If you find yourself becoming distracted, please be prepared to turn your electronic devices off.

**Addendum: Obviously now, more than ever, technology will be a key component of the course. I want to reassure you all that you *will not* be penalised for lack of access to hardware necessary to participate in the course. I will remain flexible through the remainder of the semester as I know that conditions can change.**

### **Class Schedule**

#### **Unit 1: What is Digital History? Theory and Ideas**

##### Week 1

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> of January — Introductions, Expectations, Aspirations.

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> of January — Digital Humanities: A Tour

##### Week 2

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> of January — Martin Luther King Day, No Class.

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> of January — Digital History: A History and a Future?

Roy Rosenzweig and Daniel Cohen, Digital History: A Guide to Gathering,

Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web, [“Introduction”](#) and [“Exploring the History Web”](#).

##### Week 3

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> of January — Getting Started in Digital History.

Roy Rosenzweig and Daniel Cohen, Digital History: A Guide to Gathering,

Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web, [“Getting Started”](#) and [“Becoming Digital”](#).

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> of January — Design, Audience, Purpose, and Presentation



Rosenzweig and Cohen, [“Designing for the History Web”](#) and [“Building an Audience”](#)

Week 4

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> of February – Accessibility, Inclusion, Diversity

[George H. Williams, “Disability, Universal Design, and the Digital Humanities”](#)

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> of February – Oral Review Presentation 1 Due

## **Unit 2: Digital History in Practice**

Week 5

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> of February – DHSS Lab Visit & Brainstorming Session

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> of February – Data Management: Google Sheets, OpenRefine, AirTable, Omeka

Week 6

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> of February – Virtual Cary Archive Demonstration with Stephen Galbraith.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> of February – Wikipedia Edit-a-thon with Rebekah Walker

Week 7

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> of February – Rebekah Walker Talk Data Visualisation 1: Tableau, [RAW.io](#), Plotly, Flourish,

[Hans Rosling, ‘The Best Stats You’ve Ever Seen’, TEDTalk, 2009.](#)

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> of February – Mapping and GIS Systems with Blair Tinker

Week 8

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> of March – Data Visualisation 2: Networks, VosViewer, Gephi, JVis.

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> of March – Publishing Workshop: Wordpress, Wix, Squarespace.

**SPRING BREAK**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> of March NO CLASS

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> of March NO CLASS

## **COVID 19 Adjustments Begin**

**SPRING BREAK EXTENSION**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> of March – NO CLASS

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> of March – NO CLASS

Week 10

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> of March – Photogrammetry and 3D Modelling with Josh Romphf



[The Challenges of Digital Preservation in a Virtual Reality Environment: The Case of Virtual Bethel.](#)

**Live Session 3pm Via GoogleHangouts**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> of March — Games, Gamification, and Digital History.

Trent Hergenrader, “The Place of Games in the Digital Humanities”, *On the Horizon*, Vol. 24, Issue 1, (2016), pp. 29-33.

**Live Session 3pm**

**Reading Discussion Open Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup>-Monday 30<sup>th</sup>**

Week 11

Monday 30<sup>th</sup> of March — XR: The New Frontier

[Sean Kheraj, “The Presence of the Past: The Possibilities of Virtual Reality for History”](#)

**Live Session 3pm**

**Reading Discussion Open Monday-Friday**

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> of April — Built to Last: Digital Preservation and Longevity.

Cohen and Rosenzweig, [“Preserving Digital History”](#)

**Asynchronous Mediated Discussion Open Wednesday-Monday**

Week 12

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> of April — Digital Restoration and Recovery with Helen Davies.

**Live Session 3pm**

**Homework Discussion Group Open Monday-Friday**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> of April — Podcasting the Past, with Ellen Rosen and Jacob Kaucher.

[Benjamin Franklin’s World, Episode 84, Zara Anishanslin, “How Historians Read Sources”](#)

**Live Session 3pm**

Week 13

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> of April — Group 1 Focus Session

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> of April — Group 2 Focus Session

Week 14

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> of April — Group 3 Focus Session

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> of April — Group 4 Focus Session

Week 15

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> of April — Online Project Preview Publication and Discussion

**Live Session 3pm**

**Peer Review and Discussion Open Monday-Wednesday**

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> of April — Final Project Link Due 5pm