

# HIST 390-002: The Digital Past

Fall 2017: Tues/Thurs, 9-10:15a  
224 Planetary Hall

Erin N. Bush

[ebush3@gmu.edu](mailto:ebush3@gmu.edu) | [@HistoriErin](https://twitter.com/HistoriErin)

Office: Robinson B 369B

Office Hours: T/Th 10:30-12p

Welcome to the Digital Past!

What does it look like when we apply digital technology to the study and writing of the past? How must we adapt how we study the past when we're faced with millions of digitized primary and secondary sources—texts, newspapers, photographs, artifacts, maps, and more? What tools can help us make sense of this abundance?

As we attempt to answer these questions, this course will prepare you to use and understand a wide variety of current and emerging digital technologies, including maps, data sets, and visualizations. We'll explore these technologies in the context of an upper-division history class, but no background in history is required. We'll discuss how to find and use digital information for research, including how to write and publish effectively online. We'll explore issues of ethics, copyright and information security, and experiment with a wide variety of online tools and technologies. Additionally, we'll cover advanced search methods and online publishing platforms. Over the course of the semester, students will use these technologies to create and publish an individual digital research project (of their choosing) about a sensational trial in American history.

Our [course site](http://teaching.erinbush.org/f17h390/) at <http://teaching.erinbush.org/f17h390/> is the only authoritative resource for the class. It houses all the information contained in this syllabus PLUS any additional class resources, links, slides, tools and reading & assignment updates. \*\*You are responsible for checking the course site to stay ahead of the assignments.

## Learning Goals

The Digital Past, section 002 has four primary learning goals.

1. You will master the skills that make up the [Mason Core Information Technology](#) requirements.
2. Through your thoughtful written work and participation in class discussions, you will learn to communicate effectively.
3. You will learn to conduct historical scholarship using primary and secondary sources, a wide range of tools, and resources that are available on the web in an effort to publish an original, analytical research project about a sensational trial in American history.

4. You will learn to evaluate information online, understand some of the ethical challenges of digital technology, and balance the trade-offs between technical efficiency and data security.

To achieve these learning goals we will use a combination of reading, writing, exploring, and experimenting with digital tools and materials. You will learn some foundation material, but in most weeks you will attempt to make or do something using your newly-learned skills.

Persistence and a willingness to try many approaches will be key to doing well in this course. For many, this work with digital tools will be a new experience and it is important to remember that a crucial part of learning is failing. Not every exercise may go successfully, and we may make mistakes. If you are willing to reflect on those mistakes and try again, you will learn from them. **I am always available to help should you find yourself stuck or falling behind.** I'm happy to read drafts and review work in progress, but you have to be willing to communicate with me. You can email me any time and we'll schedule time to meet.

## Course Details

### Readings & Tools

You will be required to purchase a domain of your own and server space--which will house all of your work for the semester -- from [Reclaim Hosting](#) for \$30. Students in this class will receive a 10% discount by using the promo code: **reclaim4edu** at checkout.

There are no required books to purchase. All of the assigned readings will be shared on the course site and available to you for free online or through GMU Libraries online access. I expect you to complete all assigned readings before class.

For those of you new to writing in history, I recommend [Mary Lynn Rampolla's, \*A Pocket Guide to Writing in History\*](#) to help you navigate the research and writing.

### Technology

Please bring a working laptop to every class—you'll need it to complete the required in-class exercises. Please charge your battery or remember to bring your

power cord. While I encourage the use of technology, if you are clearly using your devices for things other than coursework, your workshop grade will suffer.

Email is the best way to reach me; I will usually respond within one business day and I will expect the same of you. Mason uses only GMU email accounts to communicate with enrolled students. I will not correspond with non-GMU email addresses.

Computers are awesome, but you must expect that you will encounter problems at some point. Back up your work on an external hard drive or in a [Dropbox account](#). Have a "plan B" for computer use or Internet access should your primary options fail you. **Computer failures are not acceptable as an excuse for late assignments and will not constitute an emergency.**

Please silence all your devices.

## Honor Code

All GMU students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the [University Honor Code](#) not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie about matters related to academic work. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review.

If you are copying and pasting text that someone else wrote, you might be plagiarizing. Pasted or manually retyped text is accurately cited (not plagiarized) only when all of the following three conditions are true: 1) the pasted text is surrounded by quotation marks or set off as a block quote, and 2) the pasted text is attributed in your text to its author and its source (e.g., “As Jane Smith writes on her blog . . .”), and 3) the pasted text is cited in a footnote, endnote, and/or a bibliography.

## Disability Services

Any student who requires special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact me to make necessary accommodations (as soon as possible, please). Students must present appropriate verification from the [Office of Disability Services](#) (SUB I, Room 4205; 703-993-2474). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## Late Work & Attendance

I do not grade for attendance, but I will ask students to sign in so that I can learn names. While attendance is not mandatory, please note that our class time together will be filled with demonstrations and workshops designed to help you learn the skills you’ll need to succeed in this course. If you are not in class, you are responsible for making up the work and learning the skills you’ve missed.

All assignments must be published by the date and time they are due. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade (eg. From a B to a B-) after the deadline. I will deduct an additional 1/3 of a grade for each 24 hours that pass before the assignment is completed.

That said, I do recognize that emergencies can arise; if you have a *documented* emergency, please see me and we can discuss other arrangements.

**Trigger warning:** In this class, we will be covering various types of violent crime, including homicide, assault, and capital punishment. As such, some of the assigned sources can be upsetting or disturbing. If you have specific triggers, please let me know and I will note the assignments accordingly. Please note that these warnings will not release you from the assignment. The trigger warnings are provided to give you the tools you require to complete the assigned work.

## Miscellaneous

Please be mindful of disruptions – including noisy wrappers and spills. Messy food, liquids, and computers don’t usually mix, so please be careful. No tobacco products of any kind.

Your enrollment status is your responsibility.

**Come talk to me.** I am always happy to discuss history in general or this class specifically. Please come see me if you want to ask questions about or discuss the course, assignments, tools, discussion points, and/or your performance in the course. Don’t be shy.

## Assignments and Projects

### Grades (100 points total)

**Skills and Written Assignments (30 points):** I expect each student to be an active participant in class workshops and to complete all the assigned work in a timely manner. Your course site will house all of the work required for this class – either as published evidence of the skills we practice or as longer blog posts which explore a particular topic. In total, we will have seven (7) skills assignments and five (5) written assignments.

Skills assignments will vary by week and will reflect the skills taught during our class time together. All longer written assignments will have a specific prompt and a minimum length requirement. They should be written in a semi-formal scholarly style (with complete thoughts and correct spelling, grammar, and syntax); and are **due on Friday by 5pm** each week they are assigned. Partial responses (including responses that fail to meet the minimum word length or clearly fail to answer the prompt) will receive partial credit. Late posts will lose points.

**Timeline Project (20 points):** Using TimelineJS, a digital timeline tool, you will create and publish a timeline related to a sensational trial in American history. You will work on these projects individually and they will be due on October 19th. We will review the requirements and expectations of this project extensively in class.

**Final Project & Proposal (40 & 10 points):** In lieu of a final exam, each student will complete a digital project that answers a significant question about a sensational trial in American history. You are required to turn in your preliminary project proposals to me before class on November 9th. This proposal is worth 10 points and is required. Final projects are due December 14<sup>th</sup>. The final projects are not simply busy work; they will allow you to demonstrate your mastery of the digital skills that are central to the course. We will cover the requirements and expectations for these assignments extensively in class.

### Important Dates

- September 4 – Labor Day, GMU closed.
- September 5 – Last day to add
- *September 29– Final Drop deadline*
- October 9 – Columbus Day recess, Mon. classes meet on Tues--**we will not have class!**
- November 22-26 – Thanksgiving Recess
- December 9 – Last day of classes
- December 11-12 – Reading Days – NO CLASS
- December 14 – Final projects due.

For the complete list of important semester deadlines, please see the [Registrar's Fall calendar](#).

---

## DRAFT Schedule (\*Any changes will be communicated via the course portal)

### Tues., 8/29 – Introduction to the Course

#### *Class Prep*

- Review the course web site, including requirements & assignments. Come with questions!

*In-class Workshop:* We'll complete the student technology survey and begin searching for domain names.

#### *After Class*

1. Purchase hosting at Reclaim Hosting. Use promo code **reclaim4edu** for 10% off the \$30 fee for a year of hosting. Keep ALL administrative emails from Reclaim Hosting! Please think carefully about the domain name you choose.
2. Set up a Google Account if you don't already have one.

### Thurs., 8/31 – Doing History in the Digital Age

How historians view the world and the types of digital projects do they do.

#### *Class Prep*

- Read: William Cronon, "[Getting ready to do history](#)" [pdf] read pages 1-7 only.
- Read: Douglas Seefeldt and William G. Thomas, "[What is Digital History,](#)" *Perspectives*, May 2009.
- Read: Sam Wineburg, "[Thinking Like a Historian,](#)" *TPS Quarterly*

#### *In-class Workshop:*

We'll explore a digital history project together -- Cornell's "1911 Triangle Factory Fire" Project at <http://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/>.

### Tues., 9/5 – Getting Started

Install and set up your course portfolios

#### *Class Prep*

- **You must have purchased your domain and hosting prior to class.** You must have access to all Admin emails from Reclaim Hosting during class.
- Read: [Introduction to HTML](#), W3Schools

*In-class Workshop:* We'll install and set up your sites; review basic HTML & Wordpress; experiment with posts, pages, plugins & themes.

*Skills Assignment:*

- Create and populate a basic About page.
- Create and publish a basic introductory blog post.
- Install & activate Stargazer theme.
- Install plugins.
- Grant me administrative user access.

### **Thurs., 9/7 – Evaluating the Vast History Web**

Reviewing the good, the bad, and the ugly of online history sites and projects.

*Class Prep*

- Read: [Digital History Reviews](#), *Journal of American History*, Organization of American Historians
- Watch: [Credible Websites?](#) ~ 4 mins

*In-class Workshop:* We'll review the good, the bad, and the ugly of online history projects and sites.

- [Lizzie Andrew Borden Virtual Museum & Library](#)
- [Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive & Transcription Project](#)
- [The 1911 Triangle Factory Fire](#)
- [The Clarence Darrow Digital Collection](#) (entire site or any indiv trial collection)
- [The Vault – FBI Records](#)
- [Crime Museum](#)

*Writing Assignment due Friday, 9/8 by 5pm:* Your post should be 450 - 500 words; written in a semi-formal scholarly style (with complete thoughts and correct spelling, grammar, and syntax). Please include citations in [Chicago Style](#) and hyperlink to all websites or digital sources. Partial responses (including responses that fail to meet the minimum word length or clearly fail to answer the prompt) will receive partial credit. Late posts will lose points per the course policy.

Prompt: Pick a project from the Digital Project List provided and explore it. On your blogs, write your own analytical review of the project. Please address all of the following in your review:

- Content: What is the project attempting to do? Is it successful? How? Is the scholarship sound and current? What is the interpretative point of view? How well is the content communicated to users?
- Design: Does the information architecture clearly communicate what a user can find in the site? Does the structure make it easy for a user to navigate through the site? Do all of the sections of the project function as expected? Does it have a clear, effective, and

original design? How accessible is the site for individuals of all abilities? If it is a website, is it responsive (i.e., tablet/mobile-friendly)?

- Audience: Is the project directed at a clear audience? How well does the project address the needs of that audience?
- Digital Media: Does it make effective use of digital media and new technology? Does it do something that could not be done in other media—print, exhibition, film?

## **Tues., 9/12 – Digital Preservation & Collections**

The politics and realities of preserving our past. How history is digitized and the implications of that.

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Roy Rosenzweig, "[Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era](#)," *American Historical Review*, June 2003.
- Daniel J. Cohen, "[The Future of Preserving the Past](#)," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*, Summer 2005.
- Review: [Digital Preservation Guide from the Library of Congress](#)

## **Thurs., 9/14 – Studying Sensational Trials**

Why study sensational trials? What can they teach us?

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Caleb Crain, "[In Search of Lost Crime](#)," *Legal Affairs*, July/August 2002
- Read: Michael Ayers Trotti, "The Lure of the Sensational Murder," *Journal of Social History* 35 no. 2 (2001): pp 429-443. [Available through Mason Libraries].

*Writing Assignment due Friday 9/15 by 5pm:* Your post should be at least 300 words; written in a semi-formal scholarly style (with complete thoughts and correct spelling, grammar, and syntax). Please include citations in [Chicago Style](#) and hyperlink to all websites or digital sources. Partial responses (including responses that fail to meet the minimum word length or clearly fail to answer the prompt) will receive partial credit. Late posts will lose points per the course policy.

Prompt: Using your usual research methods, gather some facts and sources related to a sensational trial that interests you. Take notes along the way as you do your research. Discuss:

- What are your search strategies? How successful are you at finding useful material? What are your criteria for judging what is reliable and useful and what is not?
- What do you know now about your topic that you did not know previously? What new and remaining questions do you have? In retrospect, how might you approach this task differently?

## **Tues., 9/19 – Searching for Sensational Trials**

How search works. The mechanics of finding a sensational trial. Evaluating trial sites.

### *Class Prep*

- Watch: Google, [How Search Works](#) on YouTube (approx. 3 min.)
- Browse: Douglas O. Linder, [“Famous Trials,”](#) University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law (2017) and come to class with a few trials that interest you.

*In-Class Workshop:* We'll discuss your initial foray into searching for sensational trials and go over advanced search techniques. Online scavenger hunt.

*Skills Assignment:* Post the results of the in-class exercise on your blogs.

## **Thurs., 9/21 – Finding and Evaluating Primary Sources in the Digital Age – Texts, etc.**

Finding and using primary sources. What is a primary source? How are they digitized? Where can you find them? How do you read them?

### *Class Prep*

- Read: [Reference and User Services Association's Primary Sources on the Web](#): Finding, Evaluating & Using (please read these three short sections.)
- Browse: Reference and User Services Association's Primary Sources on the Web: [Primary Sources for American History](#)
- Browse: [History Matters—Making Sense of Evidence](#)
- Browse: [GMU Library History Sources](#).

*In-class Workshop:* We'll read primary sources together and analyze them. We'll also search for primary sources related to your trial(s) of interest using:

- The open web; AND
- Proquest Historical Newspapers or another news archive site; AND/OR
- Museum, library, or archives collection, including the [DPLA](#) and/or [Hathitrust](#).

*Skills Assignment:* Post the results to your blog and give a quick annotation about the kind of information these sources provide.

## **Tues., 9/26 – Finding and Evaluating Primary Sources in the Digital Age – Photographs, etc.**

Finding and using visual primary sources. How to analyze and “read” historic photos.

### *Class Prep*

- Read: [Visual Literacy](#), UC Irvine Libraries
- Read: [The Basics of Visual Literacy](#), University of Maryland



*In-class Workshop:* We'll review and analyze several famous and not-so-famous photographs taken of historic events. Search for photographs related to your trials.

### **Thurs., 9/28 – Useful Secondary Sources – Websites & Wikipedia**

Finding and evaluating secondary sources in the digital age. What is a secondary source? The pros and cons of using Wikipedia.

#### *Class Prep*

- Read: Roy Rosenzweig, "[Can History Be Open Source: Wikipedia and the Future of the Past](#)"
- Watch: [Heavy Metal Umlaut by Jon Udell](#) on YouTube (approx. 8.5 min)
- Browse: Douglas O. Linder, "[Famous Trials,](#)" University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law (2017)

*In-class Workshop:* We'll review some Wikipedia pages about famous trials together; in-class evaluation and analysis of the information contained in Dr. Linder's site.

*Writing Assignment due Friday 9/29 by 5pm:* Your post should be at least 300 words; written in a semi-formal scholarly style (with complete thoughts and correct spelling, grammar, and syntax). Please include citations in [Chicago Style](#) and hyperlink to all websites or digital sources. Partial responses (including responses that fail to meet the minimum word length or clearly fail to answer the prompt) will receive partial credit. Late posts will lose points per the course policy.

Prompt: Discuss one or two of the most interesting or compelling **primary** sources (either textual or photographic or other) that you found related to your trial. What makes them so? What did you learn about the event after "reading" them? How do you think they might be useful for a final project?

### **Tues., 10/3 – Building Context with Secondary Sources – Scholarly Sources**

Finding and using monographs and articles to help you build context.

#### *Class Prep*

- Read: W. Caleb McDaniel, "[How to Read for History](#)"
- Read: Jeffrey S. Adler, "[I Loved Joe, but I Had to Shoot Him: Homicide by Women in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago,](#)" *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, Vol 92, Issues 3 & 4, 2002.
  - Read Intro & Conclusion first – what is his argument? Make a note and bring it to class.
  - Pick a section that seems interesting and read it thoroughly. What is his argument about that section's topic? What is his evidence? Do you believe him? Make notes and bring them to class.

- Re-read his Intro & Conclusion – does the section you read support his argument? Make notes and bring them to class.

*In-class Workshop:* We'll discuss this article at length. Begin searching for articles or monographs related to your topic.

### **Thurs., 10/5 – Visual Storytelling**

Introduction to the elements of storytelling online. Thinking about historical narratives using primary and secondary sources. Intro to TimelineJS tool.

#### *Class Prep*

- Read: Yoni Appelbaum, "[The Great Illusion of Gettysburg](#)," *The Atlantic*, February 5, 2012.
- Read: [Narrative History](#), Queens College--City University of New York
- Browse: [Using TimelineJS](#), read through steps OR watch the video.

*In-class Workshop:* Find five photos or other textual sources related to your trial. Post and arrange them to tell a story. Publish them to your site and be prepared to discuss what you chose and why. We'll begin to use the TimelineJS tool.

*\*I will share the details of the Timeline Project which will be due by 9am on Thurs., October 19th!*

*Writing Assignment due Friday 10/6 by 5pm:* Your post should be at least 300 words; written in a semi-formal scholarly style (with complete thoughts and correct spelling, grammar, and syntax). Please include citations in [Chicago Style](#) and hyperlink to all websites or digital sources. Partial responses (including responses that fail to meet the minimum word length or clearly fail to answer the prompt) will receive partial credit. Late posts will lose points per the course policy.

Prompt: Please find one solid published secondary source for your trial that is either a scholarly article published in a major journal (as discussed in class) or a monograph. [Sensational trials by their nature are widely covered by scholars, so you should not have trouble finding one of these. If you do, please email me and we will address together.] Please read the article or book using the new reading skills we practiced in class and discuss the following:

- The author's argument – what is it and is it convincing?
- The evidence – what evidence does the author use? What primary sources does he or she rely on? How are they being used?
- How does this piece relate to other information you've found either in primary sources or online? What similarities or differences strike you?
- What new questions do you have about this trial?

**Tues., 10/10 – NO CLASS** – Your Monday classes will meet instead.

## Thurs., 10/12 – TimelineJS

Working with chronological history. Further explorations with TimelineJS.

### Class Prep

- Browse: [Using TimelineJS](#), read through steps OR watch the video.

*In-class Workshop:* We'll build an interactive timeline using Google Spreadsheets and the TimelineJS tool.

*Skills Assignment:* Publish your practice timeline to your site on its own page and link to it from your blogs.

## Tues., 10/17 – Copyright & Ethics in the Digital Age

Exploring copyright issues of the content available online. Understanding “fair use” and how it applies to us. We'll explore the ethics and legality of some history sites. Questions about and troubleshooting problems with [TimelineJS](#).

### Class Prep

- Read: [Copyright: An Overview](#), Cornell University Law School
- Read: Stan Adams, “[Reservoir Clogs: Copyright and the Public Domain](#),” *cdt* (2017).
- Read: George Mason Copyright Office sections on [copyright](#) and [fair use](#).
- Explore: [Creative Commons](#), including the “license deed” for each license.

*In-class Workshop:* We'll explore the legality of the following sites:

- [Dr. Linder's Famous Trials](#)
- [Shorpy Historic Picture Archive](#)
- [Paperless Archives](#)

## Thurs., 10/19 – Asking & Answering Questions About Trials

*\*Timeline projects are due before class\** How historians ask questions about history.

### Class Prep

- Read: Po-Yi Hung & Abigail Popp, “[How to Frame a Researchable Question](#)” on William Cronon's *Learning Historical Research*.

*In-class Workshop:* We'll start asking questions about sensational trials.

## Tues., 10/24 – Researching & Building Projects

Updating your WordPress site to accommodate the final project.

*\*We'll review the assignment for your project proposals, due 9am on Thurs. November 9th.*

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Allan Branstiter's 2016 blog series in *AHA Today* on adapting your research:
  - [“Madness and a Thousand Reconstructions: Learning to Embrace the Messiness of the Past.”](#)
  - [“Adapt and Overcome: What to Do When Your Archival Research Hits a Dead End”](#)
  - [“Scalawags and Scandal-Mongers: Intra-party Rivalry and the Complex World of Reconstruction Politics”](#)

*In-class Workshop:* Working in Wordpress – new themes, menus, pages, etc.

*Skills Assignment:* Update your menus to accommodate your new project and experiment with new themes & colors.

### **Thurs., 10/26 – Big Data for Historians**

What is “big data” and how does it change how we study history? How is data organized for history projects?

### *Class Prep*

- Read: James Grossman, [“Big Data: An Opportunity for Historians?”](#) *Perspectives on History*, March 2012.

*In-class Workshop:* Exploration of digital projects which rely on big data; exploring some data sources for historians.

### **Tues., 10/31 – Data & Its Uses**

Exploring historic sources of data. The challenges of working with “free” data. Cleaning the Chicago Homicide Project's database.

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Robert Kosara, [“Spreadsheet Thinking vs. Database Thinking,”](#) *Eagereyes* (2016)
- Spencer W. Roberts, [“Spreadsheets for Historians”](#) (2014)
- Explore: The [Chicago Homicide Project](#) at Northwestern University.
- I will provide you with a link to download the entire Chicago Homicide Database (in a spreadsheet format) and the corresponding data dictionary (a pdf). Please download and bring these to class.

*In-class Workshop:* Using the actual database and the data dictionary, we'll begin working with the database underlying the Chicago Homicide Project. We'll ponder the types of questions we can ask about homicides in Chicago.

## **Thurs., 11/2 – Finding Patterns in the Data**

We'll ask questions about homicide in Chicago and attempt to answer them using the data we have.

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Frederick W. Gibbs, "[New Forms of History: Critiquing Data and Its Representations](#)," *The American Historian* (2016)

*In-class Workshop:* We'll crunch the data and discuss what it means.

*Skills Assignment:* Publish a link to your working database document. Post any data analysis you completed in class along with notes about what this data tells you or any further questions you have as a result of your analysis.

## **Tues., 11/7 – Doing Digital History with Maps**

Introduction to using maps.

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Edward L. Ayers & Scott Nesbit, "[Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American South](#)," *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol 1 No 1 (2011): 3-24 [pdf]
  - Explore: [Visualizing Emancipation](#)
- Browse: [Urban Experience in Chicago: Hull-House and Its Neighborhoods, 1889-1963](#)

*In-class Workshop:* We'll explore how maps are used in history projects, sources of geographic or spatial data & online mapping tools including:

- [Google's My Maps](#)
- [Openheatmap](#)
- [Storymap](#)

## **Thurs., 11/9 – Making Maps**

Making your own maps using online tools.

*\*Your project proposals are due to me by email before class!\**

*In-class Workshop:* We'll begin to make our own maps using Google's My Maps.

*Skills Assignment:* Post the maps you made in class to your blog.

## **Tues., 11/14 & Thurs., 11/16 – Spatial History**

Continuation of our exploration of maps. How do digital maps change our historical perspectives? What new questions can maps raise?

### *Class Prep:*

- Read: Richard White, "[What is Spatial History?](#)", Stanford University (2010)
- Review: Edward L. Ayers & Scott Nesbit, "[Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American South](#)," *Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol 1 No 1 (2011): 3-24 [pdf]
  - Explore: [Visualizing Emancipation](#)
- Explore: [Animal City](#)
- Explore: [A Cutting Edge Second Look at the Battle of Gettysburg](#), *Smithsonian Magazine*

*In-class Workshop:* Begin to gather relevant geo-spatial information about your trials.

*Writing Assignment due Friday 11/16 by 5pm:* Your post should be at least 300 words; written in a semi-formal scholarly style (with complete thoughts and correct spelling, grammar, and syntax). Please include citations in [Chicago Style](#) and hyperlink to all websites or digital sources. Partial responses (including responses that fail to meet the minimum word length or clearly fail to answer the prompt) will receive partial credit. Late posts will lose points per the course policy.

Prompt: Create a new map with at least 5 points of interest related to your topic. On your blog, please embed and:

- Analyze your map and attempt to make an argument about what it's telling you. What does it tell you about your topic that is new or interesting to you? Why is it revealing? How can you tie this information back to the sources you are using for your projects?
- Would such a visualization help you with your final project? Why or why not?
- \*I want you think critically about your map and attempt to make an argument based on the information contained therein. You must embed your maps. Please link to your sources.

### **Tues., 11/21 – Text Mining & Topic Modeling**

Introduction to text mining and topic modeling. Understanding how these approaches can help make historical arguments.

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Benjamin Schmidt and Mitch Fraas, "[The Language of the State of the Union](#)," *The Atlantic* (2015)
- Explore: [DoHistory's Martha Ballard's Diary Online](#) – spend some time on this site to familiarize yourself with Mrs. Ballard, her job, and her diary.
  - Read: Cameron Blevins, "[Topic Modeling Martha Ballard's Diary](#)"

*In-class Workshop:* We'll mine some large corpora using [Time Magazine Corpus](#), [Google Ngram Viewer](#), [Voyant Tools](#), or [BYU Corpora](#)

### **Thurs., 11/23 – Happy Thanksgiving! No class.**

## **Tues., 11/28 & Thurs., 11/30 – Visualizations and Their Uses**

Introduction to visualizations. Using visualizations to help make historical arguments. *\*We'll go into detail about the final project assignments.*

### *Class Prep*

- Read: John Theibault, "[Visualizations and Historical Arguments](#)" in Kristen Nawrotzki and Jack Dougherty eds, *Writing History in the Digital Age* (2013).
- Explore: [Mike Bostock's Visualizations](#)

*In-class Workshop:* We'll watch a great data visualization and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. We'll also begin to play with other visualizations you can make to support your projects. We'll review good, bad and ugly visualizations and attempt to make some of our own.

- Neil Halloran, [The Fallen of World War II](#) (approx.. 18 min.). You can also view/download the project's [underlying data set](#).
  - [Visualize Free](#)
  - Google Charts
  - [Datawrapper](#)
  - [Infogr.am](#)

## **Tues., 12/5 – Projects!**

Deep dive into the projects – bring your questions! This is your time to get my help.

## **Thurs., 12/7 – Security Issues in the Digital Age & Wrap Up**

Epic hacking and security issues. Wrapping up the class. Project work.

### *Class Prep*

- Read: Mat Honan, "[How Apple and Amazon Security Flaws Led to My Epic Hacking,](#)" *Wired* (2012).
- Read Mat Honan, "[How I Resurrected My Digital Life After an Epic Hacking,](#)" *Wired* (2012)
- Explore: [GMU's Basic Security Practices](#).

**--There is no exam. Your projects are due December 14<sup>th</sup> to me by email @10am**

\*This syllabus has benefited from the other scholars who've taught this course, including [Lincoln Mullen](#), [Sasha Hoffman](#), and [Sharon Leon](#).