



History & New Media
History 386
Fall 2001
Robinson A111
MW 9:00-10:15

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SCHEDULE

Monday,
 August 27
 Housekeeping Details & Introductions

Wednesday,
 August 29
 Discussion: Internet Hunt

Monday,
 September 3
LABOR DAY-NO CLASS

Tuesday,
 September 4, 9:00 PM
Question #1: In Tim Berners-Lee's mind, what were the goals of the Web? In your opinion, to what extent has the Web fulfilled or not his vision?

Wednesday,
 September 5
 Discussion: The Nature of the Web
 Reading: *Weaving the Web*, Tim Berners-Lee
 HIST 386 Syllabus, P. Petrik

Monday,
 September 10
 Discussion: Assignment, Part 1

Tuesday,
 September 11, 9:00 PM
Question #2: What is Scott McLeod's explanation for the connection between word and image? Discuss the Scott McLeod's explanation and its relationship to digital history.

Wednesday,
 September 12
 Discussion: The Relationship Between Word & Image
 Reading: *Understanding Comics*, Scott McLeod

Monday,
 September 17
 Discussion: Assignment, Part 1

Tuesday,
 September 18, 9:00 PM
Question #3: First, select a history web site. Second, using Tufte's criteria for allocation of web page space, evaluate the extent to which the site conforms to Tufte's standards. Third, outline the method you used to take your measurements and carry out your calculations.

Wednesday,
September 19
Reading: *Visual Explanations*, Edward Tufte
Discussion: Information Design

Monday,
September 24
Reading: *The Non-Designers Web Book*, Williams & Tollett
Discussion: Design Exercise

Tuesday,
September 25, 9:00 PM
Question #4: Post the URL of your exhibit and look at least three other exhibits by class time.

Wednesday,
September 26
ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: ONLINE EXHIBIT
Discussion: Peer Review of Online Exhibits

Monday,
October 1
Workshop: Dreamweaver

Wednesday,
October 3
Workshop: Dreamweaver

Monday,
October 8
FALL BREAK-NO CLASS

Wednesday,
October 10
Workshop: Photoshop

Monday,
October 15
Workshop: Photoshop

Tuesday,
October 16, 9:00 PM
Question #5: Post the bibliography for your illustrated essay to the electronic discussion. Be sure that you have followed standard bibliographic format.

Wednesday,
October 17
Reading: *The Mac Is Not a Typewriter or The PC Is Not a Typewriter*
"Inserting Graphics," Microsoft Word Online Help (review & reference)
Discussion: Getting Control of Text

Monday,
October 22
Internet Visits: Reading
"Forum on Hypertext Scholarship," *American Quarterly* (June 1999) Project Muse
<http://oscr.gmu.edu/sql/subdb.php?Arts & Humanities>
Robert Darnton, "The New Age of the Book"
<http://www.nybooks.com/nyrev/WWWarchdisplay.cgi?19990318005F>
Jerome McGann, "The Rationale of Hypertext"
<http://www.village.virginia.edu/public/jjm2f/rationale.html>
Edward L. Ayers, "The Pasts and Futures of Digital History"
<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/PastsFutures.html>
Discussion: Internet Articles

Tuesday,
October 23, 9:00 PM

Question #6: Select one of the essays and one of the exhibit pieces from the Internet groups and comment on them. What is successful? What is not quite so successful?

Wednesday,
October 24

Internet Visits: *Essays*

Constance Areson Clark, "Evolution for John Doe"

<http://www.indiana.edu/~jah/teaching/article.shtml>

Philip J. Ethington, "Los Angeles and the Problem of Urban Historical Knowledge"

<http://cwis.usc.edu/dept/LAS/history/historylab/LAPUHK/index.html>

Thomas Thurston, "Hearsay of the Sun"

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/aq/photos/index.htm>

Discussion: Internet *Essays* Visits

Monday,
October 29

Internet Visit: *Exhibits*

National Museum of American Art: Secrets of the Dark Chamber

<http://nmaa-ryder.si.edu/collections/exhibits/secrets/index.html>

National Gallery of Art: William Harnett

<http://www.nga.gov/feature/artnation/harnett/index.htm>

National Museum of American History: Paint By Number

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/paint/introduction.html>

Discussion: Internet *Exhibits* Visits

Wednesday,
October 31

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: ILLUSTRATED ESSAY (2 hardcopies)

Discussion: Peer Review

Monday,
November 5

Internet Visit: Web Design & Construction

eFuse.com: Plan

<http://www.efuse.com/Plan/index.html>

eFuse.com: Design

<http://www.efuse.com/Design/index.html>

eFuse.com: Publish

<http://www.efuse.com/Publish/index.html>

Wednesday,
November 7

Internet Visit: Text on the Web

Jakob Neilson, How Users Read on the Web

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/9710a.html>

Jakob Neilson, The Difference between Print and Web Design

<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/990124.html>

Discussion: Discussion: Legibility & Readability

Monday,
November 12

Discussion: Tools Evaluation

Wednesday,
November 14

Discussion: Progress Report

Monday,
November 19

Discussion: Tool Exchange

Wednesday,
November 21
ASSIGNMENT #3: WEB ESSAY DRAFT DUE
Discussion: Peer Review of Web Essay

Monday,
November 26
NO CLASS
Individual Meetings with Instructor (See sign-up sheet)

Wednesday,
November 28
NO CLASS
Individual Meetings with Instructor (See sign-up sheet)

Monday,
December 3
Discussion: TBA

Wednesday,
December 5
Discussion: Presentation of Essays
ASSIGNMENT #3: WEB ESSAY DUE
SELF-EVALUATIONS DUE

COURSE

This course is designed as an exploration of the process whereby history moves from “atoms” to “bytes” or from text to a combination of media types. The course also takes a look at a variety of ways in which computers help educators and researchers carry out their tasks and enrich their work as well as the ways in which computers hinder practitioners by wasting their time and mental energy. In other words, the course will provide a practical introduction to the pros and cons of digital history. Among the topics to be considered are: criteria for digital history information and aesthetic design, technology and history discourse, issues in history web page construction, technical constraints and opportunities, and future possibilities for digital history. Principally, students will design and implement three-part project, including a web exhibit, a formal essay, and a web essay. This is an experimental course, so flexibility and a willingness to “go with the flow” are necessary.

BOOKS

The following books are required for the course. Except for the Not a Typewriter texts, they are available in the campus bookstore. (Not knowing how many in the class were Mac or Wintel users makes ordering difficult. The Typewriter texts can be found at most large bookstores or online, but you are responsible for securing the book more appropriate for your situation.) Although there is no text particularly aimed at the historians or doing digital history, you may be interested in exploring other topics—both theoretical and practical—pertaining to digital design and content. You may also find it necessary to photocopy or print of articles pertinent to your individual projects.

Edward Tufte, *Visual Explanations*
Tim Berners-Lee, *Weaving the Web*
Robin Williams, *The Non-Designer's Web Book*
Scott McLeod, *Understanding Comics*
Robin Williams, *The Mac is Not a Typewriter* or *The PC is Not a Typewriter*

ATTENDANCE

By its nature, this is a small class and offers the participants a singular opportunity to learn new skills and new ways of thinking about history. The class also introduces its participants to elements of multimedia production. As such, the class asks that you prepare for class and participate energetically. And you cannot participate without attending class. Attendance is especially critical for the workshops in which you will be introduced to two software applications. Similarly, you cannot fully participate by absenting yourself from the electronic discussion. A quick look at the requirements will show that participation in one form or another accounts for a healthy percentage of the course grade. A word to the wise should be sufficient.

A NOTE ON COMPUTER USE

Computers are a great boon to historians. But, as with any technology, you must take steps to minimize the problems that computers inevitably cause—and, believe me, in a course like this, you *will* have problems. Do not expect to get through the semester without having at least one computer meltdown. Prepare for this well in advance. Back up your work and have “plan Bs” for obtaining computer use or software access, if your primary options fail you. I will not accept computer problems as excuses for missed assignments. (Oh, all right, maybe in this course there will be some latitude but not much.) You must also keep backup copies of submitted assignments—either in electronic form or hard copy. You might wish to invest in a Zip drive for the purposes of archiving your material and transporting your projects.

Most, if not all, of the assignments in the course depend on your having access to a computer and an internet account. Please obtain an internet account at the earliest available moment and become comfortable with the software and protocols. Should you work at home or off campus, learn how to do remote access so that you can be productive no matter your location. Although the university does not require the purchase of a computer, I would encourage you to consider the investment. Because of the nature of the course, you cannot depend on the university's public clusters or the availability of software. Your enrollment in the course indicates your interest in computerish things, and your tool set should reflect that interest.

GRADES

Grades, including +s and -s, will be assigned in the following manner. REMEMBER THEY REPRESENT AN EVALUATION, NOT A REWARD. To rephrase Smith-Barney, the investment folk, we do grades the old-fashioned way—earn them.

A—Outstanding work, complete mastery of the material presented, combined with some originality.

B—A solid command of the material with some gaps or mistakes in a basically sound essay or discussion.

C—Some knowledge of the material; mistakes and confusion are acceptable if mixed with some understanding. Not a reward for attendance or effort.

D—An incomplete and minimal knowledge of the material, major confusions and errors.

F—A failure to present the material in a reasonably accurate and comprehensible manner.

I—There are no “incompletes” given in this course except in cases of bona fide and documented instances in accordance with the regulations of the university.

P—For a “pass” a “C” average is required.

The nature of the course suggests that breaches of academic integrity will be difficult to accomplish. If, however, a class member engages in plagiarism or other forms of cheating, he or she will receive a zero for that assignment and an accompanied trip to the Dean’s Office to discuss further academic action.

If you receive a grade or criticism that seems unfair or if you desire further explanation, come and see me. If you come to argue for a better grade, come prepared to present your case in the most coherent and organized manner possible.

REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for the course are as follows: (1) Electronic Discussion (15%); 2) Class Attendance & Participation (10%); (2) On-line Exhibit (25%); (3) Illustrated Essay (25%); and (4) Web Essay (25%); and 5) a self-evaluation (1 page, typed, single-spaced) assessing your performance in the course (not graded but required.).

ELECTRONIC DISCUSSION

The questions serve two purposes: first, clarification of the goals, content, and process of both the projects and, second, preparation for class discussions. To that end, you should plan to make your contributions to the discussion in a timely manner. In your response, you should answer or comment on one or more of the questions posed on the schedule or provide your part of an assignment. These contributions need not be long but should move the discussion forward. You are, of course, free to make more than one contribution. To get the most from this process, you should plan on finishing the reading and Internet visits by the Tuesday evening and post them by 9:00 PM so that the discussion has time to develop. (I will be reading the folder on Tuesday evening, so a complete discussion should be available to me at that time.)

WRITING

The university has made a commitment to improve students’ writing. Toward that end, instruction in writing will be a part of this course. Effective writing is a major component of effective thinking, and, as such, is the foundation for history. It is impossible to teach the whole of composition in a semester, but it is possible to impart several useful techniques through the course assignments. The class will also focus on the formatting differences between “word processing” and “typing” and the distinction between “text-in-print” and “text-on-the-web.” Remember that the rules of mechanics and grammar and composition apply in both instances.

GRAMMAR & MECHANICS FOR HISTORIANS AND OTHERS

Here are some common grammatical problems that arise in history papers, listed with the correction mark for each and the solution to the problem.

Shift in verb tenses (ST):

“Bernal Diaz presented a positive view of the Spanish because he wants to protect himself from recrimination.” (Put “wants” in the same tense (past): “wanted.”)

Shift in person (SP):

“You really have to appreciate what Christopher Columbus did. I think that he....” (Use the third person singular or plural in writing historical prose: “Readers should appreciate Christopher Columbus’s accomplishments. He....”)

Passive voice (PV):

“The Aztecs were destroyed in droves, and finally defeated.” (Identify the proper subject of this sentence and re-work, as in “The Spanish destroyed the Aztecs and droves, and finally defeated them.”)

Run-on sentence (RO):

“Coffee contains caffeine furthermore, chocolate, tea, and cola also contain significant amounts of caffeine.” (Add a semi-colon after “caffeine” to properly conjoin two independent clauses.)

Comma splice (SPLICE):

“Many industrialists thought workers lazy, as a result they paid their employees poorly.” (Replace comma after “lazy” with a semi-colon to properly conjoin two independent clauses.)

Sentence fragment (FRAG.):

“The little town of Dayton, Tennessee, in the tumultuous 1920s, caught in the international limelight.” (The sentence needs a verb for its subject, Dayton.)

Faulty pronoun reference (REF):

“The Spaniard hated the Aztec because of their religious beliefs.” (The referent for “their” (“Aztec”) is singular; change “their” to “his or her” or change “Aztec” to “Aztecs.”)

Subject-verb agreement (S/V):

“The army required each one of the soldiers to carry their own entrenching tool.” (“Their” is plural, yet refers to the singular “one,” not “soldiers.” “The army required each soldier to carry his own entrenching tool.”)

Faulty predication (PRED):

“The belief in Manifest Destiny cannot conceive of Indians having rights.” (“Conceiving” is a verb that “belief” is incapable of carrying out. Identify proper subject for the verb: “People who believe in Manifest Destiny cannot conceive....”)

Misplaced modifier (DP)

“The slaves burned the farmhouse, furious at their masters.” (The participial phrase “furious at their masters” cannot modify “farmhouse”; it must be placed immediately after “slaves.”)

Dangling modifier (MOD):

“Arriving by boat in the New World, the weather was brutal.” (The weather cannot arrive by boat in the New World; identify the proper subject for the first clause, as in “Arriving by boat in the New World, the Puritans found the weather brutal.”)

Faulty parallel structure (| |ISM):

“Ways of preventing blacks from voting included the Grandfather Clause and holding all-white primaries.” (A noun, “Grandfather Clause,” is listed in series with a verb, “holding.” Re-work so both are the same, as in “... included the Grandfather Clause and the all-white primary.”)

Colloquial (COLL):

“Some critics try to straddle the fence between standard and revisionist interpretations of history.” (Substitute non-colloquial phrase for “straddle the fence,” as in “Some critics endorse elements of both standard and revisions interpretations of history.”)

Word choice (WW):

“One slave tells of how he was able to get a job after the war and earn enough money to travel to North Carolina to find his long separated mother.” (His mother had probably remained in one piece; substitute “lost” for “separated.”)

Spelling (“sp”)

“The army traveled on it’s belly.” (The word it’s is misspelled and must be corrected.)

Quotations (QUOT)

The Virginia patriots were forceful in their protest. “Give me liberty or give me death.” (The Virginia patriots were forceful in their protest. When Patrick Henry said, “Give me liberty or give me death,” his statement bordered on treason; quotation needs to be introduced, punctuated, connected to the material that it illustrates, or formatted correctly.)

Other correction comments you may see:

source? What is your source for saying this? Add a citation telling your readers where this came from.

evidence? What is the evidence that supports this argument? You need to incorporate primary or secondary source evidence.

thesis? What is the thesis for the essay. You need to revise your thesis or frame a different proposition or argument.

trans? Where is the transitional sentence? You need to re-write or include a transitional sentence to move between paragraphs.

[a wavy underline] What is going on here? The prose makes no sense, and the reader cannot understand what you wish to communicate. You need to wholly revise the statement or paragraph.

SELF-EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Oftentimes, a letter grade does not reflect the effort that students put into a course, the amount a student has learned, or the skills that a student has acquired. A self-evaluation is one way of remedying this deficiency by illustrating and documenting your participation in the course from your perspective. This is the time to argue for yourself and put your best foot forward. In fact, it is in your interest to do the best job that you can on this assignment. The self-evaluation should be a one-page, typed single-spaced paper in which you address the following topics:

- I. Evaluation of your participation in the class
 - A. attendance
 - B. class participation
 1. in-class contributions
 2. electronic discussion
 3. peer work
 - C. time devoted to the materials
 1. assigned reading

- 2. on-line exhibit
 - 3. illustrated essay
 - 4. web essay
 - D. the ways in which you think you improved or not
 - E. the problems you encountered in your effort to complete the class assignments to your satisfaction.
 - F. what you would have done differently
 - G. some of the skills or knowledge that you acquired
- II. A general assessment of how you will apply what you have gained (or not) from the class in the future
- III. Other activities of a historical or new media nature that you participated in