



Creating History in New Media
 History 697
 Spring 2005
 Fine Arts B202
 T 7:20-10:00

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- Tuesday,
 January 25 — Housekeeping & Introductions
 Discussion:
 Practicum: Structuring a Document
- Tuesday,
 February 1 — Reading:
 Carrie Brickner, *Web Design on a Shoestring*
 Internet Visits: CSS Tutorials
[Designing with CSS in Macromedia Dreamweaver MX 2004](#)
[QuickDraw MacFly 2004](#)
[CSS Zen Garden](#)
[How People Evaluate a Web Site's Credibility](#)
 Practicum: Standards-Based/CSS Design
- Tuesday,
 February 8 — Reading:
 Robin Williams, *Non-Designers Type Book*
 Internet Visits: Typography
 Erin Kissane, [Typography Matters](#)
 Jenny Lyn Bader, ["Forget Footnotes, Hyperlink"](#)
 Gertrude Himmelfarb, ["Where Have All the Footnotes Gone?"](#)
 Jean Baptiste Piggis, [Macro-Typography: A Style Guide](#)
 Paula Petrik, [Scholarship on the Web: Managing Footnotes](#)
 Practicum: The Problem of the Footnote
CSS PAGE DUE
- Tuesday,
 February 15 — Reading:
 Dan Cederholm, *Web Standards Solutions*
 Internet Visits: More Standards-Based/CSS Design
 Jakob Nielsen, [Differences Between Print Design and Web Design](#)
 CSS-Discuss [Three-Column Layout](#)
 CSS-Discuss [How Do I Size Fonts](#)
 Owen Briggs, [Sane Font Sizes](#)
 Max Design [Listutorial](#)
 Max Design [Floatutorial](#)
 Accessify [List-o-Matic](#)
 Evolt.org, [Ten CSS Tricks You May Not Know](#)
 Tantek Celik, [Ten CSS Tricks—Corrected and Improved](#)
 Practicum: Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

Tuesday, February 22	—	Presentations: Type Assignments TYPE ASSIGNMENT DUE
Tuesday, March 1	—	Reading: Edward Tufte, <i>Visual Explanations</i> Internet Visits: Color Spectacle, Color Schemes Ideabook, Tip Sheet: Color Strategy Luke Wroblewski, Natural Selections: Colors Found in Nature Clagnut, Compendium of Color Tools Sherwin Williams Color Preservation Palette Practicum: Photoshop/Colorizing
Tuesday, March 8	—	Reading: Katrin Eismann, <i>Photoshop Restoration and Retouching</i> FortyMedia, Web Design in 2005 Cameron Moll, That Wicked Worn Look Paula Petrik, Scholarship on the Web: Managing Engravings Practicum: Photoshop/Engravings
Tuesday, March 15	—	NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK
Tuesday, March 22	—	Presentations: Image Assignments IMAGE ASSIGNMENT DUE
Tuesday, March 29	—	Internet Visits: Accessibility Joe Clark, How Do Disabled People Use Computers Human Factors, How a Blind Person Will “See” Your Web Page Disability Rights, Inaccessible Website Demonstration Mark Pilgrim, Dive into Accessibility
Tuesday, April 5	—	Reading: Steve Krug, <i>Don’t Make Me Think</i> Internet Visits: Design Jakob Nielsen, Guidelines for Visualizing Links Ideabook, A Graceful Palette Luke Wroblewski, Visible Narratives: Understanding Visual Organization Carole Guevin, Visual Architecture: The Rule of Three Douglas Bowman, A Design Process Revealed Netdiver.net, Compendium of Design Examples
Tuesday, April 12	—	Reading: Noah Wardrip-Fruin & Pat Harrigan, eds., <i>First Person</i> Internet Visit: The Lost Museum Historic Tale Construction Set Turning the Pages Forum: History & the Web (GMU E-Journal) Practicum: Interactivity

- Tuesday,
April 19 — Presentations: Design Assignments
DESIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE
- Tuesday,
April 26 — Reading & Playing:
Myst IV: Revelation
J.P. Gee, [Learning by Design: Games as Learning Machines](#)
K.D Squire, [Civilization III as a World History Sandbox](#)
Discussion: *Myst IV: Revelation*
- Tuesday,
May 3 — **PRELIMINARY WEBSITE ASSIGNMENT DUE**
Presentations: Preliminary Websites
- Tuesday,
May 10 — **FINAL WEBSITE ASSIGNMENT DUE**
SELF-EVALUATION DUE

COURSE

This course is designed as an intensive exploration of the adaptation of history to a digital environment. Although the central goal of the course is development of an original, digital history project of reasonably professional quality, the course will also examine “best practices” in digital history, the problems and possibilities inherent in digital history, and issues in information, technical, and aesthetic design. In particular, the course will tackle the problems of creating standards-based, accessible web design. Be aware that this class is both a history and media course. In other words, we will begin by thinking (and writing) about good history and then proceed to learn the tools and techniques to bring history into digital form. Be also mindful that any digital work is a collaborative venture, so be prepared to both aid others and ask for help for yourself.

BOOKS

The texts (of one kind or another) serve three purposes: 1) to provide you with the background in several areas that might be relatively unfamiliar to historians; 2) to introduce you to some texts that are intended to promote some “left brain” thinking or provide inspiration; and 3) to furnish you with a modest technical, reference library. We will discuss some of the books briefly, some in depth, and some not at all, but they all should be read either in toto or in small bites. In addition, you are required to obtain a copy of *Myst: Revelation* (which can be obtained at a reasonable cost from an on-line vendor or as a demo download), all the books are available at the campus bookstore. (You might also enjoy one of the old [text games](#) (including a history game, “Jigsaw”) these are free and can be played on line, but you’ll have to telenet.)

Carrie Brickner, *Web Design on a Shoestring*

Katrin Eismann, Steve Simmons, *Photoshop Restoration and Retouching*

Edward Tufte, *Visual Explanations*

Robin Williams, *Non-Designers Type Book*

Jeffrey Zeldman, *Designing with Web Standards*

Dan Cederholm, *Web Standards Solutions*

Steven Heller, *Don't Make Me Think*

Noah Wardrip-Fruin & Pat Harrigan, eds., *First Person*

BLOGS

Blogs have become an important element on the web and something that you’ve already done in Clio Wired. Rather than have a group blog or design a blog from the ground up, you’ll be doing something a bit different. Because you’ll need a blog that has a photo album, I’ll recommend two options. (Actually, there are dozens of options, and you are free to use any of them—within the following constraints: your blogs must have no advertisements and a photo album facility of some sort.)

You can obtain a Plus-level subscription to Typepad, a blog. TypePad is available at: <http://www.typepad.com>. The cost is \$8.95 per month or roughly \$27.00 for the semester (the cost of a modest textbook). The best thing to do is sign up for a free trial; this will furnish you with a month's free service. At the end of the semester, you can cancel your subscription. Or, you may discover that you like blogging so much that you retain your subscription. The advantages of TypePad are ease of use and the option to customize your design.

Or, you can sign up with Blogger at <http://www.blogger.com>. Blogger in combination with Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>) will provide with a blogging application and a photo album. Although Blogger and Flickr are a bit more involved, both are free and, as we all know, free is good. On the downside, the templates are not as easily customized, albeit quite handsome as is.

Alternatively, you can use Movable Type (<http://www.movabletype.org>) software. It is free, but the installation of the software is challenging and you will need to contact your ISP to ensure that the necessary software is in place. Movable Type will install the application for you for a \$40.00 fee, but you will need to arrange to have CGI and MySQL in place. Be aware that most free web page areas do not support CGI or MySQL or charge extra. George Mason does have a site license for Movable Type, but I’m not clear on its installation. I do not recommend this option unless you

have some solid computer skills and access to a sophisticated ISP, but there may some in the class who can avail themselves of this option.

SOFTWARE & INTERNET BROWSERS

Because this course will introduce you to standards-based, accessible design, you will need several browsers to test your web work. This, of course, brings me to the good news and the bad news. Standards-based design is, on the whole, much easier than its predecessor, convoluted table-based design. The XHTML code is much easier to write and cleaner. The bad news is that Internet browsers carry the baggage of the Browser Wars and, as result, interpret CSS, the web presentation language, in a number of different ways. You should download or obtain the several different browsers. Mac people should acquire Safari, Explorer 5.2, and Firefox. Wintel folk should obtain a copy of IE 6.0 and Firefox (<http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>). Opera (<http://www.opera.com/>) is also a good bet and available for free. (The free version of Opera, however, has advertisements.) Mac users face the greatest problem. Mr. Softie discontinued production of IE for the Mac at 5.2 (except for those with MSN accounts); 85% of the world uses some flavor of IE for Windows. For Mac users there is BrowserCam, a friend's PC, or an email to a classmate requesting a site check.

Since we will be working extensively with CSS, you might also find a dedicated CSS editor handy. StyleMaster, a cross-platform product from WestCiv (<http://www.westciv.com/>), is a good best. CSSEdit (<http://www.macrabbit.com/>) for the Mac is also intuitive and easy to use. There are undoubtedly other CSS editors available for Wintel folks.

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 software practica in which you will be introduced to useful techniques and strategies.

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. You might also find a laptop handy if you are accustomed to a particular OS and web editor. 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) CSS Assignment (15%); 2) Type Project (15%); 3) Image Project (15%); (4) Design Project (15%); (5) Web Project (40%); and (6) a self-evaluation (1 page, typed, single-spaced) assessing your performance in the course (not graded but required).

ASSIGNMENTS

There are four preliminary and one major assignment in the course. All of the assignments should be part of a website (a web portfolio) that includes a home page and navigation to the various assignments. At the conclusion of each assignment, the link to the assignment should be forwarded to the instructor for inclusion on the instructor's course page. The specific assignments are:

1) CSS Assignment (preliminary)

Using an example from “McFly” at Project Seven or one of the examples from StyleMaster (if you purchased it), create a web page that includes your content. Once you have finished, make the following changes:

1. replace the header graphic with one of your own as a background image,
2. alter the color scheme,
3. float an image,
4. add a new DIV with its own CSS style
5. validation badges for XHTML and CSS

2) Type Assignment (preliminary)

The goals of this assignment are to demonstrate that you are aware of word processing conventions, CSS, and can use type as both an element in information and aesthetic design. For this assignment, create a web page that includes (or takes into account) the following:

1. title
2. navigation
3. subheads
4. leading

5. line length
6. margins/padding
7. a pull quote
8. a rule
9. an image
10. endnotes
11. a block quotation

Because this assignment is meant to underpin your final web project, it would be a good idea to think about your project's time period or subject and look for fonts that can contribute to the "look and feel" as well as the "legibility and readability" your project. One "page" of the project should be added to your web portfolio.

Font Sources

Adobe

<http://www.adobe.com/type/main.html>

Fonts & Things

<http://www.fontsnthings.com/>

The Font Fairy

<http://www.printerideas.com/fontfairy/>

fonts.com

<http://www.fonts.com/uscan/default.asp>

Web Page Design for Designers

www.wpdfd.com

Atomic Media (very small screen fonts)

www.atomicmedia.net

myfonts.com

<http://myfonts.com/WhatTheFont/>

t26

t26.com

Pixel Fonts

<http://www.wpdfd.com/pixelfonts.htm>

P22

<http://www.p22.com/>

LTR

<http://www.lettererror.com/foundry/fed/index.html>

Walden Fonts

<http://www.waldenfont.com/defaultie.asp>

Scriptorium

<http://www.ragnarokpress.com/scriptorium/>

TexasHero.com (historical script)

<http://www.texashero.com/>

Letterhead Fonts (19th century)

<http://www.letterheadfonts.com/>

3) Image Assignment (preliminary)

The goals of this assignment are to demonstrate your mastery of image editing skills, color, and composition as well as the use of images to tell or illustrate a historical narrative. The narrative should be an account of the steps that you took to achieve the effects. Note that combining techniques in a single image is perfectly acceptable. For this assignment, create a web page that includes the following:

1. cropped & resized image
2. a restored photograph
3. a hand-colored photograph
4. a vignetted photograph
5. a re-matted engraving
6. a tinted image
7. a "before & after"

One “page” of the project should be added to your web portfolio.

Image Sources

HarpWeek (Thomas Nast)

http://oscr.gmu.edu/sql/subdb.php?Arts_&_Humanities

American Memory (pictorial envelopes)

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amhome.html>

National Archives

<http://www.archives.gov/index.html>

New York Public Library Digital Collection

<http://digital.nypl.org/igatedemo/>

Illustrated Envelopes

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives/d9755.htm>

iStockphoto (\$ but very good and very inexpensive)

<http://www.istockphoto.com/>

Corbis (\$)

<http://www.corbis.com/>

Mary Evans Picture Library (\$)

<http://www.mepl.co.uk/>

4) Design Assignment (preliminary)

The goals of this assignment are to demonstrate your understanding of design and its application to the presentation of history on web. To that end, choose a historical period or topic and develop a web page design appropriate to the period. For example, if you elect to do a colonial site, the fonts, layout, illustrations, colors, and layout should reflect the colonial period. In other words, compose a web page that integrates a design theme into its typography, composition, color, and layout so that it enhances the presentation of the historical content and creates a visual identity for a prospective site. The assignment should also implement correct typography and layout strategies. Once you have finished, add the page to your class web portfolio.

Design Sources

CSS ZenGarden

<http://www.csszengarden.com/>

CSS Vault

<http://cssvault.com/>

StyleGala

<http://www.stylegala.com/>

Second Story

<http://www.secondstory.com/>

Terra Incognita

<http://www.terraincognita.com/>

5) Web Site (final)

The overarching goal for the major project is the creation of a modest, reasonably sophisticated history web site. First, the content should be solid and engaging. Second, the site should be clear in its purpose and potential audience. Third, the site should demonstrate standards-based, accessible design (CSS). Fourth, the site's design should also reflect knowledge of typography, layout, color, and graphic design. Finally, there should be some effort made toward interactivity or online community building.

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. peer work
 3. class preparation
 - C. time devoted to the materials
 1. assigned reading
 2. preliminary assignments
 3. web site
 - 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