

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

HIST 396/CSE 496

"The History Harvest"

William G. Thomas
Ian Cottingham

Jake Friefeld, Graduate Teaching Assistant

Syllabus
Spring 2014

T-Th 9:30-10:45 a.m.
638 Oldfather Hall

Course Overview: In this team-taught jointly-offered course, advanced undergraduate computer science and humanities majors will work directly with the professors and community groups to organize, promote, and coordinate a public digitization of family and community history for The History Harvest project, in Lincoln, Ne., as well as to develop software and other applications to enable the project. This project serves as a national partner for the Digital Public Library of America. In this way student projects will have a direct and immediate impact on a real world problem. Students will work with satellite History Harvest classes at the University of Nebraska-Kearney and Chadron State College where similar family and community digitization harvests will take place in Spring 2014. Students will work with the Nebraska State Historical Society archives in training exercises. This course adopts the latest experiential learning pedagogies and is intended to provide a unique opportunity for students to gain real-world experience, contribute to an ongoing national digital history project, develop leadership and career-building skills, and serve communities in the state of Nebraska.

Students in this course will work together in interdisciplinary teams on developing software artifacts and corresponding historical analysis of harvested materials. With guidance and support from the instructors, project teams will develop special projects. Throughout the course we will emphasize the combination of computational thinking--problem decomposition, abstraction and generalization, and pattern recognition--and historical thinking--contingency, causation, evidence analysis, corroboration, contextualization. Brief readings will address the major aspects of computational and historical thinking. The major foundation of this course will be the team project. Grading for this course will be based primarily on the quality of the final team project and secondarily on individual student assignments.

History Harvest web site: <http://historyharvest.unl.edu>
Twitter: @HistoryHarvest

Partners: Nebraska State Historical Society, Chadron State College, Dawes County Historical Society, University of Nebraska-Kearney, Main Street, EdMedia

Instructors:

William G. Thomas
612 Oldfather Hall
office hours: Tuesday and Wednesday 1:00-3:00
work: 472-2414
home: 472-0918
email: wgt@unl.edu

Ian Cottingham
office hours: Wednesday 9:30-10:30 and Thursday 4:00-5:00
work: 472-3835
email: ian@unl.edu

Jake Friefeld
office hours: open by appointment
email: jfriefeld@huskers.unl.edu

Course Objectives:

This is an interdisciplinary class in digital humanities with learning outcomes designed to support specific interdisciplinary skills and habits of mind. Students will investigate through practice how to develop and apply computational tools for history in the digital environment and how to create, participate in, and sustain a broad community of scholars. The objectives for this course are:

- To develop subject matter expertise necessary to undertake a community history project, by understanding the relevant themes and events in the history of the U.S. West and U.S. community and family history
- To gain proficiency in collaborative research and scholarly communication across disciplinary boundaries
- To gain competency in computational thinking and analysis, especially applied to humanities data
- To gain competency in historical thinking and analysis, especially applied to the digital medium

Project:

Students will use the History Harvest database and other data to explore enhancements to the History Harvest data collection process, data visualization, and data manipulation. Examples include intelligent image analysis of historical sources, geo-spatial visualization, rendering and visualizing data, mining and analyzing data, and enhancing the existing platform to support the History Harvest at other institutions (mobile apps, plug ins, exhibits, etc. . .). Project teams in the UNL course will include both CSE and HIST students and will be formed around project concepts developed in the first five weeks of the course. Students will choose their project team. Each team will develop a pitch for their application or data analysis to the students and faculty in the other sites (Chadron and Kearney). Project team proposals will include specifications for the deliverable and a clear rationale for the project. Rationales should include a statement of impact explaining the computational and historical innovation. Project

teams will present their project at a public presentation at the end of the semester.

Project Teams:

- A. Data Curation and Data Analysis Team (Omeka and SQL/PHP)
- B. History Harvest Tools Team (Omeka extensions, mobile apps, etc. . .)
- C. "Guide to the History Harvest" ebook Team (iBooks Author)

Team Collaboration with Chadron State and UNK:

Each team from each institution between Feb. 3 and March 15 will sponsor a Google Hangout (8 or 9 total will therefore be held). That team sets the time and day for the hangout and pitches its idea and prototype. Each student in each of our classes is expected to participate in 2 hangouts (one for each institution not from their home institution). We ask the lead project team hosting the hangout to save the hangout and submit it to their faculty.

Project teams may offer/sponsor Google Hangouts later in the semester to solicit feedback on their project—these are come one come all opportunities.

Grading Scale:

A + = 99-100%; A = 93-98%; A- = 90-92%; B+ = 88-89%; B = 83-87%; B- = 80-82%; C+ = 78-79%;
C = 73-77%; C- = 70-72%; D+ = 68-69%; D = 60-67%; F = 59% and lower

Grading of Assignments:

Final Team Project	60 %
Web Dev. Assignment	10 %
Data Curation Assignment	10 %
Review of Graybill	10 %
Final Reflection Paper	10 %

Readings:

Jaron Lanier, *Who Owns the Future* (selected chapters)
Douglas Rushkuff, *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now* (selected chapters)
Andrew Graybill, *The Red and The White: A Family Saga of the American West*
selected other articles, guides and tutorials online

Academic Policies:

Note: this syllabus is subject to change and adjustment during the semester as necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the course. Substantive changes will be made in consultation with the students and communicated in a timely and clear manner.

Attendance at all lectures and class periods is required. Essays or assignments will not be accepted in

email format or as attachments, only as hard copy handed in at class session. Assignments will not be accepted after the due dates except in cases where students can document an illness, family emergency, or university-related responsibility that prevented them from completing the assignment on time.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Academic freedom of expression is essential to reasoned discourse, learning, and scholarship. Students will be expected at all times to engage in analysis and discussion in an atmosphere of cordiality, respect, honor, and dignity. Students will be expected to consider complex issues and controversial topics with respect for views that may differ from their own. Students should be familiar with and consult the following important resources in the Office of Student Affairs at the University of Nebraska, describing the rights and responsibilities of both students and faculty in the classroom:

1. The Student Code of Conduct-- <http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/>
2. The Student in the Academic Community--Classroom Rights and Responsibilities
<http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/community/two.shtml>

Students in this course are expected to adhere to the [CSE Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments.
(<http://www.unl.edu/writing/>)

Office Hours:

Students are welcome to come by regular office hours to discuss the course, the history major, assignments, or other academic issues. Students are also welcome to schedule a meeting outside of office hours. The best way to reach me is always by email, and I encourage all students to communicate questions directly.

Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to adhere to the University policies regarding academic honesty set forth in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation) will be handled in strict accordance with the guidelines of the University. A violation of academic honesty on any part of the course will result in an F in the course and referral to the Dean of Students.

Schedule of Assignments and Topics

Week One: Introduction

1/14: Orientation

1/16: Blue Sky Ideas

Assignment--review The History Harvest, the Digital Public Library of America, dream big, what app or Omeka extension would you want to develop, what would enable the History Harvest project to be more effective? What tool should The History Harvest have for other institutions to use, extend, and build in the open source environment? Present ideas for History Harvest apps and build on extensions

Instructors introduce team projects for consideration

Read: Jaron Lanier, *Who Owns the Future* (pp. 165-190, 1-59, 295-305, 352-368)

Week Two: Project Team Building

1/21: Discussion of Jaron Lanier, *Who Owns the Future* (selected)

Assignment--environmental scan of comparative projects, review projects related to the History Harvest, identify and compare the project design, methods, core software, historical question or problem it addresses, and core data model. What sets these projects apart? What technologies should be pursued in the History Harvest and why?

Instructors describe project prototyping expectations

1/23: Site Visit Nebraska State Historical Society--operations and procedures for harvest

Choose Project Teams

- A. Data Curation and Data Analysis
- B. History Harvest Tools
- C. History Harvest eBook

Read: Andrew Graybill, *The Red and The White: A Family Saga of the American West*

Week Three: Digital History Overview

1/28: Digital History Methods

Read: [Dan Cohen and Roy Rozenzweig, "Digital History: Becoming Digital" The Omeka Guide](#)

1/30: The Omeka Platform

Guest Presenter: Andrew Jewell, editor of the Willa Cather Digital Archive

Project Teams present prototypes

Week Four: Metadata for Historical Sources--teams on site at NSHS for mini harvest all week

2/4: Metadata and Standards

Read: [Sarah Higgins, "What are metadata standards?"](#)
[Dublin Core User Guide](#)
[Julia Flanders and Trevor Munoz, "An Introduction to Humanities Data Curation"](#)

Begin Google hang-outs with Chadron and Kearney

2/6: Discussion of Andrew Graybill, *The White and The Red* -- review due March 11

2/10 Publicity poster completed, press release copy ready, local word of mouth campaign underway

Week Five: Generating Digital Scholarship

2/11: NSHS objects curated and exhibits presented in Omeka

Read: [Cohen and Rosenzweig, Digital History: Designing for the History Web](#)

each team creates an Omeka exhibit from NSHS mini harvest (and HH content)
data curation of objects will be individually assessed

2/13: Narrative and Interpretation in the Digital Environment

Read and Discuss: Chiel Van Den Akker, "History as Dialogue: On Online Narrativity,"
in *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* Vol. 128 No. 4 (2013)

Jaap Verheul, "Big Data for Global History: The Transformative Promise of Digital Humanities," in *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* Vol. 128 No. 4 (2013)

Project team prototypes proposed, reviewed, and approved

Week Six: Web Development for the Humanities

2/18: Data modeling and Database structures

Review: ["The Digital Gazetteer of the Song Dynasty"](#) (data structure and method)

Google hang-out with Chadron and Kearney

2/20: Data Querying in SQL

Week Seven: Project Design and Architecture

2/25: PHP development
Assignment TBA--graded assignment due March 4

Read: [The Omeka Guide](#)
[Writing Your First Omeka Plugin](#)

2/27: Designing Omeka Extensions

Week Eight: Web Production for the Humanities

3/4: Using an API
PHP Development Assignment Due

Read: Douglas Rushkoff, *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now* (pp. 1-68, 131-196)

3/6: Data Analysis and Presentation

Radio announcement spot for 3/15 NSHS History Harvest scripted and produced (EdMedia), community and AM radio stations contacted

Week Nine: Pre Harvest Outreach

3/11: Pre History Harvest Preparation and Outreach

Review of Graybill *The Red and The White* Due

3/13: Pre History Harvest Preparation and Outreach

Saturday, March 15: The History Harvest at Nebraska State Historical Society

Week Ten: History Harvest Public Event

3/18: Post History Harvest Assessment

Google hang-out with Chadron and Kearney

3/20: Post History Harvest Team Prototype Update

Spring Break March 23-30

Week Eleven:

- 4/1: Project Teams review
- 4/3: Project Team meetings with instructors

Week Twelve:

- 4/8: Project Team in-class updates
- 4/10: Project Team meetings with instructors

Week Thirteen:

- 4/15: Project Team updates
- 4/17: Project Team meetings with instructors

Week Fourteen:

- 4/22: Project Team in-class Beta Demonstrations
- 4/24: In-class Demos
- Final Reflection Due

Week Fifteen: April 29 and May 1 Project Team Final public presentations at Nebraska State Historical Society