**Course Objectives**

Course Focus:
This course provides an introduction to issues of historical causation, argumentation, and evidence and will particularly introduce students to digital methods of historical inquiry. With a special focus on U.S. history in a local and global context, students will create and study existing digital projects to see how history and the digital humanities intersect. Course topics will include: archives, digital storytelling, mapping, working with humanistic data, computational analysis of text, and more. No prior technical skills are necessary.

Along the way, we will think a lot about how to do good history. What makes a good historical question? How can we use digital tools to analyze primary and secondary
sources to help us answer historical questions? How do digital technologies change or help the communication of historical narratives and interpretations?

Skills Objectives:

We will develop skills in reading, writing, and speaking—as well as some level of skill in various digital platforms and data methods. We will also think critically about data and data analysis, ethics, and applications. All this, while also learning to be better historians.

History 100 is a course designed to make students familiar with how history works as a professional practice. As we learn about digital history methods, we will develop skills in five key areas:

- **Textual Analysis and Conceptualization**
  - Using key historical concepts such as cause/effect, unintended consequences, truth v. interpretation, “the past as a foreign country,” and reading against-the-grain.

- **Historiographical Dialogue and Debate**
  - Identifying different historiographical and methodological approaches for thinking about the past and framing historical inquiry (i.e. local, intellectual, political, diplomatic, social, economic, cultural, gender, global)

- **Writing**
  - Crafting short essays that provide a clear thesis, appropriate evidence, and a sense of the larger historical context of their topics.

- **Research**
  - Formulating a viable research question and produce an annotated bibliography that investigates it using appropriate primary and secondary sources.

- **Presentation**
  - Delivering formal oral presentations of historical research with attention to clear argumentation, successful use of supporting evidence, self-positioning in relevant secondary scholarship, and engaging style.
Student Responsibilities:

- To be a good part of the peer community in this course, you must be present and participate. That includes “being present” online—please participate in the daily work flow.
- Connect to the course hub on PioneerWeb to stay on top of readings and assignments. P-web will also feature course announcements and other required material. Each unit has a folder on P-web with details about the daily materials and assignments. Be sure to check the daily work flow each and every week day. The live class meetings will take place in Webex meetings, and you will find links in the daily work-flow folders on P-web.
- Join in all small-group work, online discussion posts, online activities, and (if at all possible) live discussions.
- Communicate with Prof. Purcell frequently.
- Read your email daily, and be sure to respond to any requests (such as requests to fill in surveys) from Prof. Purcell and your peers.
- Turn in your assignments by the deadlines, but if you need extensions or other flexible arrangements, do NOT be afraid to ask for them. Prof. Purcell expects you to ask for help, and she will give it. We do have some collaborative projects, and you’ll need to stay accountable to your partners.
- Consult and follow the rules for Academic Honesty in the Grinnell College Student Handbook and the college catalog. You can see the academic catalog policies on academic honesty here: http://catalog.grinnell.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2537#Honesty_in_Academic_Work
- Follow University of Chicago (17th Edition) style citations in footnotes or endnotes for all assignments in this course, unless the assignment directs you explicitly to do something else. You may consult the Chicago Manual of Style online through the Grinnell College Library catalog here (you will need to log into the Library through its proxy server): https://www-chicagomanualofstyle-org.grinnell.idm.oclc.org/book/ed17/frontmatter/toc.html
- Engage respectfully and vigorously with your classmates. We will certainly disagree many times over the semester as we debate primary and secondary sources (and even current events), but keep in mind our common goal of advancing group knowledge. Be respectful and well prepared.
- Engage with the material, and be ready for controversy and difficult subjects. We are studying a series of events and cultural forms full of racism, violence, and disorder of all kinds. Take care of yourself as you learn to engage with difficult topics from the past that are, nonetheless, vital to understanding the world.

Note: Some of our primary sources may contain extremely offensive language and imagery. To quote literary scholar Dr. Koritha Mitchell, we are scholars, “not re-enactors, so we need not let the text dictate what we give life to in the classroom (korithamitchell.com).” The same goes for our online discussion. We can’t eliminate all racist, sexist, and other offensive language in our sources—but we always need to remember the historical context. Some slurs are too much. I, for one, do not ever say “the N-word” out loud (or typed in a discussion board), and I expect no one to do so in
this class. If you want to read a quotation out loud (or type one) with the word in it, just say “N” or “N-word,” instead. Please be sensitive to other slurs, also, and feel comfortable substituting a similar short-hand substitution in our discussions. We have to grapple with these concepts, but we do not have to give voice to hatred.

Prepare yourself when encountering primary sources—they may all contain upsetting material. Reach out if you need extra support—we can analyze this material and learn how people in the past fought back without letting the material ruin us, and Prof. Purcell can help.

**Student Support:**

- You can expect support from Prof. Purcell for any kind of need (personal or academic) in this class. Feel invited to call, text, or email her at any time. If you have any questions or need help of any kind, you can always start by asking Prof. Purcell, who will meet with you privately via phone, P-web “Collaborate,” or Webex any time—just email her for an appointment.
- Consult with peer mentor Maddie Matsubara and any of the consulting faculty/staff who visit our class--everyone is available to help. See their office hours and availability on P-web.
- You may consult with the Grinnell College Writing Lab on any assignment in this course. Make an appointment [here](#).
- If you experience any tech problems at all, please let Prof. Purcell know, and she will help you contact the relevant Grinnell College office to get help solving your issues. We can also work around any tech issues with class materials.
- For health needs (physical and mental), please consult with Student Health and Wellness [here](#), and scroll down to see options for students residing inside Iowa or students residing outside Iowa.
- Not everyone in this class (including the instructor) will have the same level of expertise with all the digital tools we are experimenting with this semester. What is expected is that we all engage with the tools and try very hard to learn new things. Perfection is not expected. You should try to achieve some level of mastery in some areas that interest you, but that can take many forms. Valiant efforts will be rewarded, and you will have lots of chances to prove yourself by commenting on process as well as demonstrating products.
- You will have the opportunity to meet many staff/faculty members in class who are collaborating with Prof. Purcell and who can help you with projects, platforms, etc. Some of them will have extra office hours to help you with projects. Watch for information in class and on P-Web.

If you require accommodation for any diagnosed disability, please speak with Prof. Purcell during the first few days of class. Grinnell College (and Prof. Purcell) provide reasonable accommodations. Students must also arrange their accommodations with Accessibility and Disability Services; contact Jae Hirschman at 641-269-3710 or email [hirschma](#). Information available [here](#).
Books:

*Articles for this class can be linked to directly from this syllabus and/or found on e-reserve through P-web “Library Resources” or “Documents” tabs.*

**Grading and Deadlines**
Grades will be assigned in the course according to the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document Analysis Paper</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mapping Grinnell Assignment</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equiano Reflection Assignment</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Take-home Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Reflection Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work/peer support</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Story</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Contribution/Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Deadlines:**
- April 9: Document Analysis Paper
- April 16: Mapping Grinnell Assignment
- April 23: Mid-term Exam
- April 30: Equiano Reflection Assignment
- May 14: Annotated Bibliography DRAFT
- May 14: Digital Story DRAFT
- May 21: Final Digital Story
- May 24: Final Annotated Bibliography and Final Reflection Paper

From time to time Prof. Purcell will post items of interest to our class on Twitter. You can follow her at @SarahJPurcell and follow news of the class at our class hashtag #GrinDigitalHistory if you wish. Feel free to use an anonymous, disposable Twitter account, or practice your professional Twitter presence as “yourself.”

**COURSE SCHEDULE**
UNIT ONE: History, Sources, Data, Truth

Thursday, April 1  Truth in History  FIRST LIVE MEETING

Readings:

- Browse: Dan Kaiser “Grinnell Stories” blog http://www.grinnellstories.blogspot.com/
- Jenny L. Presnell, Information-Literate Historian, pp. 1 & 108-112
- Lynn Hunt, History: Why It Matters, Chapters 1 & 2

Friday, April 2  History: Truths, Sources, Arguments  ASYNC CLASS DAY

Readings:

- Jenny L. Presnell, Information-Literate Historian, pp. 1-13
- Lynn Hunt, History: Why It Matters, Chapters 3 & 4

Monday, April 5  What is Digital History?  ASYNC CLASS DAY

Readings:

- Jenny L. Presnell, Information-Literate Historian, pp. 191-192

Fun to explore if you have time or interest:

- Benjamin Schmidt blog “Sapping Attention” http://sappingattention.blogspot.com/
- History as Data Science: http://history-lab.org/

Tuesday, April 6  Archives & Digitization  LIVE CLASS MEETING

Virtual Tour of Grinnell College archives with college archivist Chris Jones, library assistant Allison Haack, and project archivist Laura Michaelson. Walk through digitization process of Digital Grinnell.

Readings:

- Jenny L. Presnell, Information-Literate Historian, pp. 108-117

Listen to:

Wednesday, April 7  Metadata and Digital Grinnell    LIVE CLASS MEETING

Meet with Dr. Liz Rodrigues, Humanities and Digital Scholarship Librarian

Readings:


Thursday, April 8  Structuring and Visualizing Data    LIVE CLASS MEETING

Meet with Dr. Liz Rodrigues

Readings:

- Visualizing Abolition: http://visualizingabolition.org/

Friday, April 9  Document Analysis Paper Due on P-web by 5:00 pm    ASYNC CLASS DAY

https://enslaved.org/

UNIT TWO: HISTORY AND MAPPING

Monday, April 12  Mapping as Visualization: The challenges for history    ASYNC CLASS DAY

Readings (notice links between data journalism and history):

Watch the first 30 minutes of this documentary: *Ken Burns: The Dust Bowl*, Episode I “The Great Plow Up,” dir. Ken Burns, 2012 (1:53)
https://grinnell.kanopy.com/video/ken-burns-dust-bowl


**Tuesday, April 13** Spatial History  LIVE CLASS MEETING

Readings:


**Wednesday, April 14** Geographic Information Systems  LIVE CLASS MEETING

Meet with Tierney Steelberg, Digital Liberal Arts Specialist

Readings:

- Iowa Township Project DASIL blog posts:
  o https://dasil.sites.grinnell.edu/2019/06/close-encounters-with-oral-history-uncovering-womens-history/
- Iowa Township data code book: https://grinco-mv.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/purcelsj_grinnell_edu/EgD2cwDwvoBGovjE0h-aLoBWaU3fbkPioRoC3YVd6ZKMA?email=steelber%40grinnell.edu&e=s2Ejuq

**Thursday, April 15** Mapping Grinnell  LIVE CLASS MEETING

Meet with Tierney Steelberg
Work on mapping exercise

- Explore: “Railroads and the Making of Modern America,” University of Nebraska at Lincoln: [http://railroads.unl.edu/](http://railroads.unl.edu/)

**Friday, April 16**  Mapping Grinnell Assignment due by 5:00 pm on P-web ASYNC CLASS DAY


**UNIT THREE: HISTORY AND TEXT ANALYSIS**

**Monday, April 19**  Text Analysis Tools: Techniques and Visualizations ASYNC CLASS DAY

Readings:

- Ben Blatt, *Nabokov’s Favorite Word is Mauve*, Introduction

**Tuesday, April 20**  Textual Analysis LIVE CLASS MEETING

Scholar’s Lab

Readings: Topic Modeling and History

- Explore: Mining the Dispatch: [http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/pages/home](http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/pages/home)

**Wednesday, April 21**  A Midwife’s Tale ASYNC CLASS DAY

Film Discussion: “A Midwife’s Tale”

Readings:


**Thursday, April 22**  Work on Take-Home Midterm  ASYNC CLASS DAY

**Friday, April 23**  Take-Home Midterm due by 5:00 pm on P-web
ASYNC CLASS DAY

**UNIT FOUR: DIGITAL EQUIANO--GLOBAL**

**Monday, April 26**  Olaudah Equiano  ASYNC CLASS DAY

Readings:


**Tuesday, April 26**  Discussing Equiano’s Narrative  LIVE CLASS MEETING

Readings:


**Wednesday, April 27**  Digital Equiano  LIVE CLASS MEETING

Explore Digital Equiano:

- Runaway Slaves in Britain: Bondage, Freedom, and Race in the Eighteenth Century: https://www.runaways.gla.ac.uk/
- The Abolition Project: http://abolition.e2bn.org/
- The Equiano Project: https://equiano.uk/
- Equiano’s World: http://www.equianosworld.org
Matthew McClellan, The Talking Book:  
http://dighist.fas.harvard.edu/courses/2015/HIST1993/exhibits/show/modeling-equiano/equiano--historical-context

Visualizing Abolition: http://visualizingabolition.org/

**Thursday, April 29**  Digital Equiano experiments  LIVE CLASS MEETING

Readings:

- Explore: http://mappingtexts.org/

**Friday, April 30**  Equiano reflection assignment due by 5:00 pm on P-web  ASYNC CLASS DAY

**UNIT FIVE: DIGITAL STORYTELLING--LOCAL**

**Monday, May 3**  Digital Storytelling as History  ASYNC CLASS DAY

Readings:


**Tuesday, May 4**  Producing Digital Grinnell Stories: Narrative, Storytelling, and History LIVE CLASS MEETING

In class meet with Gina Donovan, Instructional Technologist, to talk about production process

Readings:


SKIM: Storycenter *Digital Storytelling Cookbook; Digital Storytelling: Form and Content* (online book in PDF form)

Optional resources:


**Wednesday, May 5** Defining a topic & Preliminary story research LIVE CLASS MEETING

Breakout groups available with Instructional Technologist Gina Donovan & Librarians

Readings:

- Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, “Owning the Past,” *Digital History*, Center for History and New Media, [http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/](http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/copyright/) (Be sure to read all the sections of this chapter down to “Will You Get Sued?”)

**Thursday, May 6** Researching Digital Stories & Putting them in context LIVE CLASS MEETING

Breakout groups available with Instructional Technologist Gina Donovan & Librarians

**Due on P-web at end of class: Preliminary story topic selection turn in “Digital Story Pre-Assignment Questions sheet”**

Readings:


**Friday, May 7** Work on story research ASYNC CLASS DAY—partner meetings

**Monday, May 10** Producing Digital Grinnell Stories ASYNC CLASS DAY—partner meetings

Drafting scripts 8:00 pm Script Draft Due to Prof. Purcell and your peer group partners via email
Tuesday, May 11  Producing Digital Grinnell Stories  LIVE CLASS MEETING
In class: peer support on scripts, work on projects

Wednesday, May 12  Producing Digital Grinnell Stories  LIVE CLASS MEETING
Class Time: Drop-in project help

Thursday, May 13  Producing Digital Grinnell Stories  LIVE CLASS MEETING
Class Time: Drop-in project help

Friday, May 14  Producing Digital Grinnell Stories  ASYNC CLASS DAY—partner meetings
5:00 pm Individual Draft of Annotated Bibliography due on P-web; Group draft of Digital Story due on OneDrive

Monday, May 17  Producing Digital Grinnell Stories ASYNC CLASS DAY—partner meetings

Tuesday, May 18  Producing Digital Grinnell Stories  LIVE CLASS MEETING
In class: peer support, review of digital story drafts
Work on story revision

Wednesday, May 19  LIVE CLASS MEETING
Class Time: Drop-in project help Work on story revision

Thursday, May 20  LIVE CLASS MEETING
Class Time: Drop-in project help Work on story revision

Friday, May 21  FINAL DIGITAL STORY VIDEO DUE on OneDrive by 5:00 pm
NO CLASS MEETING
FINALS WEEK: Tuesday, May 25 1:00 pm Final Project Showcase (everyone must attend) LIVE CLASS MEETING

- Group presentations of final digital story videos
- Turn in individual reflection paper with final annotated bibliography to Prof. Purcell under “Assignments” tab on P-web by 5:00 pm