University of Western Ontario
Graduate Program in History

HISTORY 9808A
Digital Public History, Fall 2017

Class Meets: Thursdays 9:30 to 11:30 in Lawson Hall 2270C
Professor: Tim Compeau   **Office:** Lawson Hall 2245
Email: tcompea@uwo.ca
Office Hours: Thursday 1:00 - 3:00

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the theory and practice of digital techniques for public history. It explores methods of presenting, communicating, researching, and reconstructing history with digital technology in ways that deepen the public understanding of the past, and foster the inculcation of historical thinking skills. Digital public history can preserve the past and make it more accessible, but its affordances can also challenge authoritative narratives and complicate our experiences with history in surprising ways.

History 9808 complements material in History 9800 and is intended for students in the Public History MA program.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of the course, students will have:

- a familiarity with many of the digital technologies used by public historians, museums, and heritage sites.
- an understanding of how historical communities, identities, and consciousness are formed online.
- experimented with a variety of digital platforms.
- an understanding of the pedagogical, ethical, and practical problems found in digital public history.
- developed skills to research, evaluate, and apply new media for public history.

Assessment:
Blogging: 25%
Participation: 20%
Podcast: 15%
Place-based Digital History Project: 15%
Independent Project: 15%
Reflection Paper: 10%

Blogging: 25%. Blogging and other forms of social media engagement play an important role in this course. This is a vital skill for public historians to become comfortable with and master. Students should blog and tweet about their work, their thoughts on digital and public history, and other aspects of their professional development. Blogs will be discussed in class each week.

Podcast: 15%. Each student is required to lead and upload a podcast. The format – documentary style, essay, or free flowing discussion – is up to the individual student. More details will be provided in class.

Place-Based History: 15%. Using one of the digital platforms explored in class, students must design a functional tour or place-based history lesson, game, or other experience.

Participation: 20%. Students should be prepared to actively participate in class discussions. Weekly challenges will test

Independent Project: 15%. Students explore a digital technology and its current and potential applications for public history. There are a variety of potential assignments students can complete such as digital landscaping, 3D modelling, augmented reality, visualization projects, website creation, game design etc. Details and options will be explored in class. Because students will begin the course with varied levels of experience, evaluation of this final assignment will focus on student willingness to engage with and think about the technology, and not necessarily on technical proficiency and attainment. Students must submit a proposal outlining the project and the digital tools they propose to use and will present their work to the class on Nov. 23.

Reflection Paper: 10%. A 10 to12 page reflection paper (ca. 2500 words) must accompany the final submission of the independent project on Nov. 30. Details to be discussed in class.

Weekly Seminars: Readings and other resource material can be found at:
https://timcompeau.com/teaching/history-9808-digital-public-history-2017/

Below is a tentative schedule of weekly discussion topics. In keeping with the fluid nature of digital humanities weekly topics can change to meet student interests or new developments.

Schedule

Sept. 7: Introduction.

Sept. 14: Engaging Audiences with Digital Media.

Sept. 21: Digital Preservation, Sharing, and Crowdsourcing

Sept. 28: Place-Based Digital History

Oct. 5: Digital History Games and Simulations (Podcast Due).

Oct. 12: Fall Study Break. No class

Oct. 19: Ethics, Dark History Tourism, and Digital Public History.

Oct. 26: Introduction to GIS (Visit to the Map and Data Centre, D.B Weldon Library).

Nov. 2: The Digital Museum (Place-based History Assignment Due)

Nov. 9: Material Culture and Digital Reproduction

Nov. 16: The Future of Digital Public History

Nov. 23: Presentations/fine-tuning independent projects.

Nov. 30: Independent Assignments and Papers Due