EPFL

DH-412 | **History and the digital**

Baudry Jérôme

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Digital Humanities	MA1, MA3	Obl.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	5
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	During the semester
Workload	150h
Weeks	14
Hours	**5 weekly**
Courses	2 weekly
Project	3 weekly
Number of positions	

Summary

The course will present a number of computational approaches and tools that can be used to study history. Drawing on case studies from the history of science and technology, the course will also offer students the opportunity to critically reflect on their own practices as digital humanists.

Content

The development of information technologies and the rise of the digital humanities have opened new, exciting avenues for historical research and for the engagement of historians with the public. History and the digital have intersected in ways that, first, reconfigure historical research through the extensive digitization of sources and the creation of computational tools to process historical data ("digital history"); second, offer a wealth of new objects for historical research ("historicizing the digital"). Accordingly, the course proposes not only to survey the main computational approaches and methods that can be used to study history, but also, drawing on a series of case studies from the history of science and technology, to critically reflect on what it means to think digitally. Students will develop small-group projects in digital history and will document their research in a final paper.

Week 1. General introduction: What is History?
Week 2. Human vs. Natural Sciences
Week 3. Towards Big Data? Digitized and Born-Digital Sources in History
Week 4. History of Information Overload
Week 5. Network Analysis
Week 6. Multiple Component Analysis & Logistic Regression
Week 7. Trust in Numbers: Quantifying the World
Week 8. Data Visualization
Week 9. Picturing Science: Drawings, Graphs, Diagrams
Week 10. Text Analysis
Week 11. Crowdsourcing & Citizen Science
Week 12. Science, the Public, and Invisible Technicians
Week 13. Virtual Museums
Week 14. Project presentations

Learning Prerequisites

Required courses

None

Recommended courses

None

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:
- Identify and formulate important research questions in history
- Explore historical data using a variety of computational approaches
- Analyze the differences and similarities between the natural and the human/social sciences
- Contextualise her/his data science practice through historical examples

Teaching methods

Lectures (2 hours per week)
Student projects + discussion of readings (3 hours per week)

Expected student activities

Students are expected to attend lectures, read the assigned articles, participate actively to class discussions, design and conduct projects in small groups.

Assessment methods

Class discussion (25%)
Project (50%)
Final paper (25%)

Supervision

Office hours   Yes
Assistants   Yes
Forum   Yes

Resources

Bibliography

Lisa Gitelman (ed.), *"Raw Data" is an Oxymoron*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013.
Shawn Graham, Ian Milligan and Scott Weingart, *Exploring Big Historical Data, The Historian's Macroscope*, London: Imperial College Press, 2015.
Jo Guldi and David Armitage, *The History Manifesto*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
Ian Milligan, "Mining the 'Internet Graveyard': Rethinking the Historian's Toolkit," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 23(2), 2015: 21-64.

Ressources en bibliothèque

- "Raw data" is an oxymoron / ed. by Lisa Gitelman
- Exploring big historical data : the historian's macroscope / Shawn Graham (Carleton University, Canada), Ian Milligan (University of Waterloo, Canada), Scott Weingart (Indiana University, USA)
- The history manifesto / Jo Guldi and David Armitage
- â##Mining the â##Internet Graveyardâ##: Rethinking the Historianâ##s Toolkit,â##