Course Overview and Goals:
What does it mean to study early American history in our digital age? How has the Internet shaped the practice of doing history? These are among the many questions we will explore together this semester, as we examine the impact of our digital age on the practice of early American history and the dissemination of knowledge about it to a wide public.

This class will cover the history of North America from the late 1500s through the American Civil War in the 1860s, with an emphasis on the period between 1600 and 1776. As an intermediate writing course, our primary focus will be on the production of high-quality historical writing for both specialized and general, public audiences. To help you become better, more confident writers, we will be working with UM’s Writing and Public Speaking Center. Throughout the semester, students will also have the opportunity to explore digital history approaches, methods, and processes of inquiry.

Learning Outcomes:
By successfully completing this class, you will:
- acquire specific knowledge of the history of North America from the late 1500s through the American Civil War in the 1860s;
- gain an appreciation for the possibilities and perils of studying early American history in our digital age;
- become familiar with various methods and approaches of digital humanities research and public engagement;
- hone your critical thinking, close reading, and communication skills;
- learn how to write analytically, persuasively, and thoughtfully about the past.

Furthermore, as an approved intermediate writing course, this class adopts the specific learning outcomes provided by the UMT Faculty Senate. These are copied verbatim below.

Upon completion of this course, students will have learned how to do the following:
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Formulate and express written opinions and ideas that are developed, logical, and organized
- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions
• Demonstrate appropriate English language usage.¹

UPWA Submission:
As an intermediate writing course, this class requires an electronic submission (via Moodle) of an assignment (for this class: Assignment #3) stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university’s writing program. Your assignment will be stored in a database. A random selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from a selection of the Writing Learning Outcomes. This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university.

Civic, Academic, and Career Competencies Statement:
This course counts toward the History Department’s new Public History Certificate. This certificate and courses like Digital Worlds of Early America will prepare you for a range of civic, academic, and employment opportunities. On a fundamental level, this course will prepare you for what the political theorist Danielle Allen calls “participatory readiness”—that is, your role as a member of our twenty-first-century democratic society.

This course will also prepare you for a range of specific academic and career opportunities, such as a graduate degree in public or digital history (or a related field) or work in schools, museums, archives, non-profits, and governmental agencies.

I encourage all of you to review the following National Association of Colleges and Employers Career Readiness Statement, which includes attention to eight essential competencies of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital technology, leadership, work ethic, career management, and intercultural fluency: https://www.naceweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/. Over the course of the semester, we will reflect on the ways in which this course and its specific assignments align with these competencies.

Finally, I encourage you to learn more about the blossoming field of public history through the National Council on Public History, which you can explore here: https://ncph.org/.

Course Structure, Expectations, and Policies:
Our class meetings will generally take one of three forms: a discussion based on shared readings for the day; a student-led presentation followed by a class conversation about a digital database or tool; or a writing session.

You are required to attend and participate actively and respectfully in all our class meetings and writing sessions. You must also submit all assignments by the deadlines listed on this syllabus.

Please speak with me as soon as you think you might miss a class or be late with an assignment! In some cases—illness or a personal or family emergency, for example—I will be able to excuse your absence or provide you with an extension after the fact, with proper documentation. Some examples of personal, medical, or family emergencies include the following: a Covid-19 diagnosis; mental health crises; time-sensitive medical procedures; or assuming responsibility for

¹ You can find out more here: http://www.umt.edu/facultysenate/committees/writing_committee/guidelines.php
the urgent health care needs of a family member or roommate. Please speak with me as soon as
you confront a challenge that might impact your attendance, participation, or performance in
class so I can help you stay on track and come up with a plan of action.

Required and Recommended Readings:
Most readings for this course will be available on Moodle. You are, however, expected to
purchase or rent copies of the following texts. They are available for purchase or rental through
the UM Bookstore. They are also available on reserve at the Mansfield Library. You may also be
able to find inexpensive copies through various online booksellers.

1. The World Turned Upside Down: Indian Voices from Early America, ed. Colin G.
2. Walter Johnson, Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market (Cambridge, MA:
   Harvard University Press, 1999).

The following texts are not required, but they are highly recommended. They are available for
purchase or rental through the UM Bookstore. They are also on reserve at the Mansfield Library.

5. Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom (New York: W.W. Norton & Company,
   1998).

All other readings will be available via Moodle. Please make sure you have downloaded—and, if
possible, printed—copies of your readings and notes ahead of our class meetings. Particularly on
Zoom, it is useful to have your readings and notes available on a separate medium or screen from
the one you use for your Zoom video.

Assignment & Grading Overview:
1. Class Attendance, Participation in Discussions, and Reading Responses (20%)
   Your attendance in class is required. Simply attending class, however, is not sufficient. Rather,
   active, thoughtful, and engaged participation is the key to your success in this class. When
   thinking about your participation in class, it might be helpful to imagine yourself as a co-
   discussion-facilitator; participation means both constructively contributing to discussion and
   actively engaging with your peers. Your contributions to discussion should be based closely on
   the readings you complete for each class. In preparation for most classes, you will also complete
   a short reading reflection. Instructions for these are either below on the syllabus or on Moodle in
   the folder for the week.

2. In-Class Presentation on Digital Database or Tool (14%)
   This assignment has two components. The first is an in-class presentation on a digital database or
tool that enhances our study of early American history. The second is an accompanying
   “worksheet” or set of questions to accompany your presentation. Your classmates will use your
   worksheet/set of questions to explore your digital site in the second half of class following your
   presentation. For this assignment, you will work either in pairs or individually. The student(s) in
   charge of presenting will meet briefly with Professor Arcenas (via Zoom) at least a few days
ahead of their in-class presentation to go over their plans and discuss any questions. Early in the semester, we will determine the presentation schedule and go over expectations for this assignment in more detail.

3. Presentation Worksheet or Reflection Completions (6%)
For each of your classmates’ presentations, you will complete the worksheet or exploration guide they develop. You will submit these either via email or Moodle to the professor within a week of the presentation.

4. Assignment #1: Argument Blog Post (10%) [2 pages]
Write a blog post introducing a general audience of Internet readers to either Richter’s or Salisbury’s article. In your blog post, you should:
- identify the article’s central arguments
- explain how the historian makes his arguments
- discuss how persuasive you find them and why.

5. Assignment #2: Primary Source Anthology Description (15%) [4 pages/ 2 pages per source]
Imagine you have been asked to contribute to an edited anthology (collection) of primary sources that scholars all over the country will use to teach classes on slavery in early America. Your task is to select two primary source documents that are available digitally that you would like to include in the anthology. For each document you select:
- provide a description and analysis of the document to accompany its reprinting in the anthology
- explain what the document reveals about slavery in early America and why you chose to include it. To explain this well, you should engage with some of the secondary readings you have completed for this class.

6. Assignment #3: Museum of Early America Part I: Exhibit Plan (20%) [7-8 pages]
Your anthology freelancing gig got old, so you have now moved on to museum work. Your boss has put you in charge of directing an exhibit on Worlds of Early American History. The scope, content, and approach of the exhibit are entirely up to you, but you need to produce a written exhibit plan for your boss.

Your exhibit plan should address the following questions:
1. What is the topic or theme of your exhibit? What is your vision for it?
2. What is the chronological scope of your exhibit?
3. Who is the intended audience of your exhibit?
4. What objects/documents/interactive activities/artifacts/visuals/etc. will be in your exhibit?
   - You should mention (and properly cite) at least five specific items that will appear in the exhibit.
5. What will each of these objects/documents/interactive activities/artifacts/visuals/etc. bring to your exhibit? What will they contribute? In short, why are you including them?

7. Assignment #4: Museum of Early America Part II: Fundraising Pitch (15%) [3-4 pages]
Congratulations! Your boss approved your exhibit plan, but you need to come up with the funds to put it together. Your first task, therefore, is to fundraise.

Write a letter to potential donors explaining your vision for the exhibit and its potential payoffs (i.e. why what you are doing is significant). Ultimately, your letter should persuade someone to help finance your exhibit. In your letter, be sure to address the following questions:
1. What is your exhibit aiming to accomplish? In other words, what is the purpose or goal of your exhibit? 2. What does your exhibit reveal about early America that viewers may not have known before? Does your exhibit build on work done by past historians in books or articles you have read for class? Does your exhibit do something entirely new?

Assignment Due Dates (by 9:29am via Moodle, unless otherwise indicated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Submit Draft to Moodle</th>
<th>Writing Session or Instructor Meeting</th>
<th>Due to Instructor</th>
<th>Instructor returns papers to students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1</td>
<td>5pm 1/24</td>
<td>1/28</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #2</td>
<td>11:59pm 2/26</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>3/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3</td>
<td>5pm 3/21</td>
<td>3/25</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>4/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #4</td>
<td>11:59pm 4/16</td>
<td>4/20</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Rubric:
A: 93-100
A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89
B: 83-86
B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79
C: 73-76
C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69
D: 63-66
D-: 60-62
F: 59 and below

Formatting Specifications:
Unless otherwise noted, here are the formatting guidelines you should follow for all written work in this class:

- 12-point, Times New Roman font; Double-spaced; 1-inch margins; *Chicago Manual of Style* citations.

Remote, Online Learning:
For this class, you will need the following:
- a computer (or tablet);
- a reliable internet connection (if you are on campus, please connect via eduroam, not grizzly guest);
• a quiet workspace with enough room to accommodate not only your computer, but also a notebook (even in a remote class, handwritten notes are the best!) and any papers you may have printed;
• a microphone, and, most likely, a set of headphones;
• a webcam (or built-in camera), if possible;
• and an up-to-date version of ZOOM.

You are expected to have your video on during our class meetings and have ready access to your microphone. Accordingly, please don’t join class from the silent section of the library or from your dorm room while your roommate is sleeping!

Synchronous online learning presents unique challenges as well as opportunities. To ensure you get the most out of the class, please put away your cellphone, silence all notifications, and close out of any applications or windows not related to our class. YouTube and e-mail can wait!

Finally, during our first few class sessions, we will go over the nuts and bolts of Zoom, so don’t worry if you’re not familiar with the platform. Please do, however, begin to familiarize yourself with the online platforms we will use, including Zoom, Moodle, and Cyberbear: https://www.umt.edu/umonline/keep_on_learning/tools_keep_on_learning.php.

Recording: Please note, at this point, I am not planning to record any classes. Please do not record our Zoom meetings. Doing so without notice and permission is a violation of University policy.

Communications: All communications for this class will be conducted via UM e-mail accounts and Moodle. Please e-mail the instructor using only your UM e-mail account.

Flexibility and Adaptability: This semester, we will all need to be flexible as we navigate the uncertainties wrought by COVID-19. I will do my best to communicate any changes related to our class as quickly and clearly as I can. And I will also do my best to accommodate any special circumstances that may arise and ask that you do the same.

Academic Honesty: Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with UM’s Student Conduct Code and conducting themselves accordingly. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating, will result in appropriate disciplinary action and likely a failing grade. An easy rule to follow is that all work you produce for this class should be your own. Please ask Professor Arcenas if you have any questions.

Students with Disabilities: As per university policies, appropriate accommodations will be made. To ensure that the proper steps can be taken, please speak with Professor Arcenas as early in the semester as possible. It is your responsibility to speak with me and to provide the proper documentation from Disability Services for Students (DSS). You can visit www.umt.edu/dss for additional details and information.

Provisional Schedule of Classes:
### Unit 1: “The World Turned Upside Down”

#### Unit Background reading:

#### Tuesday, January 12th: Welcome & Introductions

#### Thursday, January 14th: Encounters I + Visit from UM Writing Center

To read for today:

To complete for today:
Reading Response (available on Moodle)

#### Tuesday, January 19th: Algonquians at Jamestown

To read for today:
  (Read the Introduction and browse the rest of the website.)

To investigate for today:
- Virtual Jamestown: [http://www.virtualjamestown.org/page2.html](http://www.virtualjamestown.org/page2.html)

To complete for today:
- DH/Virtual Jamestown worksheet (available on Moodle)

#### Thursday, January 21st: Encounters II

To read for today:
To complete for today:
Reading Response (available on Moodle)

**Assignment #1 DRAFT due via Moodle by Sunday 1/24 at 5pm**

**Tuesday, January 26th: Mapping the “New World” and Understanding Spatial History**

To read for today:

To investigate for today:
https://www.davidrumsey.com/ or https://www.loc.gov/maps/collections/

To complete for today:
- Spatial history and maps worksheet (available on Moodle)

**Thursday, January 28th: Writing Workshop 1**

**Tuesday, February 2nd: Student Presentation (A) on Mapping Empire (http://mapscholar.org/empire/)**

**Assignment #1 Due**

**Unit 2: Slavery Across Time and Space**

**Unit Background Reading:**

**Thursday, February 4th: Studying Slavery in Early America**

To read for today:

To complete for today:
- Reading Response (available on Moodle).

**Tuesday, February 9th: Student Presentation (B) on Transatlantic Slave Voyages**
http://www.slavevoyages.org/
Thursday, February 11th: Slavery and Print Culture

To read for today:
- David Waldstreicher, “Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic.” (Moodle)
- Selection of “Runaway Slave Advertisements” from http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/index.html (Moodle)

To browse for today:
- http://www.mappinghistoricphiladelphia.org/

To complete for today:
- check Moodle for reading response assignment

Tuesday, February 16th: Student Presentation (C) on Slavery and American Universities
https://slavery.princeton.edu/

Thursday, February 18th: Slavery and American Universities

To read for today:
- Selections from Alan Taylor, Thomas Jefferson’s Education (2019) (Moodle)

And familiarize yourself with at least one of the following projects:
- https://slaveryresearchgroup.olemiss.edu/
- http://slavery.georgetown.edu/
- https://www.harvard.edu/slavery

To complete for today:
- Reading response (available on Moodle)

Tuesday, February 23rd: Slavery in Antebellum America

To read for today:
- Walter Johnson, Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market, Introduction, Chapter 4 “Turning People into Products,” Chapter 5 “Reading Bodies, Marking Race,” and one additional chapter of your choosing.

To do for today:
“I learned; I think” reading response: In preparation for our class meeting today, write about a paragraph on what you learned from reading Johnson and about a paragraph on what you think about what you read.

**Thursday, February 25th: Student Presentation (D) on Civil War Sources**  

**Assignment #2 DRAFT due via Moodle by 11:59pm on Friday 2/26**

**Tuesday, March 2nd: Writing Workshop 2**

**Unit 3: America’s Enlightenments:**  
Exploring Gender, Science, and Nature in Early America

**No Formal Unit Background Reading:** If you are interested in exploring additional secondary sources related to topics covered in this unit, please let Professor Arcenas know!

**Thursday, March 4th: NO CLASS – STUDENT BREAK**

**Tuesday, March 9th: Enlightenments I**

To read for today:
- Caroline Winterer, *American Enlightenment* (Yale, 2016), selections (Moodle)

To complete for today:
- Reading Response (available on Moodle)

**Assignment #2 due**

**Thursday, March 11th: Enlightenments II**

To read for today:
- Lee Dugatkin, *Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose: Natural History in Early America*, chapter 2 (Moodle)  
- Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query VI (1787) (Moodle)  
- Comte de Buffon, “Of the Animals Common to both Continents,” from *The natural history of animals, vegetables, and minerals; with the theory of the earth in general* (Moodle)

To complete for today:
- Reading Response (available on Moodle)
Tuesday, March 16th: NO CLASS – STUDENT BREAK

Thursday, March 18th: *A Midwife’s Tale* & and the promise and possibilities of Social History

To read for today:
- Selections from Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812.* (Moodle).

To complete for today:
- check Moodle for reading response assignment

**Assignment 3 Draft due to Moodle by 5pm on Sunday 3/21**

Tuesday, March 23rd: Student Presentation (E) on *A Midwife’s Tale*  
[http://dohistory.org/home.html](http://dohistory.org/home.html)

Thursday, March 25th: Writing Workshop 3

Tuesday, March 30th: Student Presentation (F) on the Worlds of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello [http://home.monticello.org/](http://home.monticello.org/) & Ben Franklin’s social network?

To read for today:
- Thomas Jefferson to William Hamilton, “Gardens for Monticello,” July 1806 (Moodle)

**Assignment 3 due**

Tuesday, April 6th: Before Independence II
To read for today:
(Please also read Kramnick’s introduction.)

To complete for today:
Imagine you were an American colonist in early 1776 and have just received a copy of Paine’s pamphlet. Adopting the persona and perspective of a colonist, in approximately a page, express your ideas about and reactions to what Paine was saying.

**Thursday, April 8th: Declaring Independence**
To read for today:
-Thomas Jefferson, Draft of the Declaration of Independence (1776) (Moodle)
-Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence (1776) (Moodle)

To complete for today:
In preparation for our class meeting today, write a 1-page letter to a friend reflecting on how Allen’s book changed (or did not change) how you read the Declaration of Independence.

**Tuesday, April 13th: Podcasting Revolutionary Politics**

To listen to for today:
- Select one podcast episode covering some aspect of Revolutionary America broadly construed and listen to it. See Moodle for a list of possible podcasts.

Please come to class prepared to pitch your podcast to your classmates.

To complete for today:
- Podcast review available on Moodle.

**Thursday, April 15th: The United States Constitution, Then and Now, part I**

To read for today:
-The U.S. Constitution, Preamble and selections.
-Selections from Jonathan Gienapp, *The Second Creation* (Moodle)
-Selections from “Process: A Blog for American History” (Moodle)
-Selections from the *Federalist Papers* (Moodle)

To complete for today:
-check Moodle for reading response assignment

**Assignment 4 draft due Moodle by 11:59pm on Friday 4/16**

**Tuesday, April 20th: Final Writing Workshop**
Thursday, April 22nd: The United States Constitution, Then and Now, part II
& Course Reflections and Conclusions

To read for today:
- Selections from Library of Congress “Creating the United States” series (Moodle)
- Constitution Day readings (Moodle)

**Assignment 4 Due During Finals Week TBD**

Further Readings in Digital History/Digital Humanities: