

## HIS245 – Reading, Writing and Knowing in Early America and the Digital Age

Spring 2015  
Final Assignment

This course has introduced you to the literature on the evolution of knowledge and communication technologies in early America, as well as new technologies for practicing history today.

This final assignment provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of the historian's craft, by asking you to develop a digital historical "thing" that explores some aspect of early American information/technological history.

While you will be producing a **public-facing, interactive digital object**, you should imagine your project as something that would be appropriate for a traditional history course: i.e. something that would be an original, primary-source based paper of 10-12 pages.

Your project should contain all of these elements:

1. **Primarily public-facing, interactive, digital components.**
2. **Innovative, interesting and descriptive project title** (not just "Final paper")
3. **Topic, historical question, and argument.** What are you going to write about? What specific question do you propose to answer? Why is that question significant to larger concerns or conversations?
4. **Historiography.** What have previous scholars said about this topic? Make sure to review between 3-5 secondary sources. What have been the strengths of their works? What have been their weaknesses? What needs to be explained better or further?
5. **Methodology.** Why does a digital history approach help you to get at different answers/questions than other approaches? How did you go from primary sources to the kinds of data you use? What cautions need to be taken in working with the kinds of sources and methods you use?
6. **Primary sources.** Make sure to use and name specific sources (this should be *particular* archival collections, articles in newspapers, books or letter collections etc.). Make sure to cite, noting where are these sources held, and are they available to researchers? Why are these particular sources relevant? What insights do they give you?
7. **Bibliography.** Your bibliography should include primary and secondary works. Please pay careful attention to the formatting of your references.

**IF YOU ARE A SENIOR:** Your project is due by midnight on May 11<sup>th</sup>.  
**IF YOU ARE NOT A SENIOR:** Your project is due by 5:00 pm on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

**LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

**YOU WILL SUBMIT YOUR FINAL PROJECT BY POSTING A LINK ON THE PUBLIC COURSE BLOG.**