

SPRING 2026

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# LOCAL HISTORY & DIGITAL ARCHIVES

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HIST 8540-001

Dr. Burd



**CLEMSON**  
UNIVERSITY

**Local History & Digital Archives**  
**HIST 8540-001**  
**Spring 2026**

**Instructor:** Dr. Burd

**Class Location:** Hardin Hall 230

**Meeting Times:** Monday, 5:45-8:30pm

**Office Number:** Hardin Hall 014

**Student Hours Policy:** The semester, I will be on campus on Mondays and Wednesdays. Please email me to schedule a time to meet. If you cannot meet on those days, I will work to find a more suitable time/date.

**Email:** [cburd@clemson.edu](mailto:cburd@clemson.edu)

**Email Response Policy:** I will try to answer emails as quickly as possible. That being said, I cannot get to every message right away. Therefore, I will commit to responding to any email within 24 hours on weekdays.

**Course Description:** Exploration of a topic in digital history, such as a particular technique for historical research or one type of project to share history with an audience. Students develop substantial projects of their own.

**Course Overview:** Traditionally, historical archives have a reputation for being daunting, rigid, and largely inaccessible to the larger public. In recent years, digital historians have helped to bridge the divide between physical archives and the public by designing, digitizing, and publishing engaging digital history projects. By focusing on local history, this class will prepare students for considering how digital projects are powerful tools for public engagement. As such, students enrolled in this class will learn how to examine physical archives, establish a plan to translate physical materials into a digital project, and do so in a way that considers public audiences.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Grapple with the basic ideas and debates about the practice of doing local history.
- By understanding the concept of digital local history, you should be able to comprehend and criticize digital history work.
- Conduct original research and contribute to a broader digital history project with your classmates.

**Required Texts:** Many of the readings will be available through Cooper Library and/or Canvas. The following items you will need to acquire on your own:

**Assignments**

***Discussion and Attendance (20%)*** – You will come to class prepared to discuss the readings and digital projects. Each week, one or two people will be tasked to lead discussion. The class is yours, not mine; talk to each other. No personal attacks; be kind, but feel free to disagree, preferably passionately. Take personal responsibility for leading, not dominating, discussion. Listen. Think. Two of you every week will start the discussion, and it will not be someone I designate. Work together; work it out. Teach yourselves; that’s what a humanist education means—that you are capable of teaching yourself new subjects of great

complexity (maybe not brain surgery). You do not really need me here at all; well, maybe a little.

**Review Essays (30%)** – Over the course of the semester you will complete two written reviews. These reviews are a synthesis of the week’s readings and digital projects. Think of it as an argumentative essay where you are grappling with the assigned texts and considering them alongside the selected digital projects for that particular week. The following weeks are available for review: (2/2, 2/9, 2/16, 3/9, 3/30). The reviews are due on the day where we are discussing those readings/projects.

The reviews will demonstrate to me your ability to identify the authors’ arguments, design principles, breakdown the reading and digital project, and critically analyze the overall effectiveness of the text. I do not care whether you like the works; that is beside the point. You need to come to terms with them, while avoiding caricature and simple-minded reductionism. Try starting your analysis from a point of modesty; assume that the scholars are smarter than you are (not necessarily true) and know vastly more about the subject than you do (highly likely). If they make an argument that seems to you wrong, try to imagine their rejoinder to your criticism. Then, and only then, engage in critical analysis. Assume also that you do not know how to write a book or design a digital project as ambitious as the ones assigned; if you ever do, we will all be very proud. More information will be provided regarding the reviews as that section of the course approaches.

**Digital Project (50%)** – Your final project for the semester is to complete a digital project that blends historical research with digital tools. Together, your project will be combined with your peers for final publication on a class-based digital project. This assignment will include multiple components including a proposal, first draft of research, and a final submission to the class digital project. More details about this assignment will be given to you as the semester progresses.

### **Grading**

This course follows the Clemson University Grading scale:

A 4.0	C+ 2.34
A- 3.66	C 2
B+ 3.34	C- 1.66
B 3	D 1
B- 2.66	F 0

You can expect to have graded materials within 10 days of completion.

### **Absence Policy & Late Work**

Due dates for assignments are clearly marked on the syllabus and in Canvas which means there are few reasonable excuses for missing them. That being said, I want you to succeed in this course. If, for whatever reason, you miss an assignment or exam please reach out to me within 24 hours with proper documentation. We will establish time for you to complete the missed activity or exam.

### **Academic Honesty and AI**

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form. Plagiarism, which includes the intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts. Graded works generated by artificial intelligence or ghostwritten (either paid or free) are expressly forbidden. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools are not permitted for any work in this course, even with proper documentation and citation. I am interested in your ideas, interpretations, and voice. Because AI tools are designed with the explicit purpose of undermining the fundamental premise of learning and thinking, the technology is a direct affront to the goals of this class and the pursuit of knowledge.

### **Accessibility**

Clemson University values the diversity of our student body as a strength and a critical component of our dynamic community. Students with disabilities or temporary injuries/conditions may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities. Students who experience a barrier to full access to this class should let the instructor know and are encouraged to request accommodations through SAS (Student Accessibility Services) as soon as possible. To request accommodations through SAS, please see this link: [www.clemson.edu/academics/student-accessibility-services/how-to-register/requesting-accommodations](http://www.clemson.edu/academics/student-accessibility-services/how-to-register/requesting-accommodations).

You can also reach out to SAS with questions by calling 864-656-6848, email [CUSAS@clemson.edu](mailto:CUSAS@clemson.edu) or visiting SAS at the ASC Suite 239. Contact the office for the most updated drop-in schedule if you would prefer not to schedule an appointment.

### **The Clemson University Title IX Statement Regarding Non-Discrimination**

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy or related conditions (including pregnancy, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, lactation, recovery from the foregoing, or medical conditions related to the foregoing), national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sex discrimination (including sex-based harassment and sexual violence) as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This Title IX policy is located on the Access Compliance and Education website. Ms. Alesia Smith is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator, and the Assistant Vice President of Equity Compliance. Her office is located at 223 Brackett Hall, 864-656-3181 and her email address is [alesias@clemson.edu](mailto:alesias@clemson.edu). Remember, email is not a fully secured method of communication and should not be used to discuss Title IX issues. Clemson University aspires to create a diverse community that welcomes people of different races, cultures, ages, genders, sexual orientation, religions, socioeconomic levels, political perspectives, abilities, opinions, values and experiences.

### **Emergency Preparation**

Emergency procedures have been posted in all buildings and on all elevators. All students and employees should be familiar with guidelines from Clemson University Public Safety. Clemson University is committed to providing a safe campus environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. As members of the community, we encourage you to take the following actions to be better prepared in case of an emergency:

1. Familiarize yourself with all possible exits, safer locations, and other key information on the emergency evacuation maps in this building, and those that you visit regularly.
2. Make a plan for how you would Run, Hide, and Fight in case of an active threat in this building, and those that you visit regularly. For example:
  - a. Run – what are all the possible exits in this building, and the routes to them?
  - b. Hide – what are the potential hiding locations in this room and building that are out of sight of doors and windows, how do you lock the door(s), how would you barricade the door(s) and windows, where do you turn off the lights?
  - c. Fight – What tools are available in this room and building, should you have to fight?
3. Ensure you are signed up for emergency alerts. Alerts are only sent when there is a potential threat to safety, a major disruption to campus services, and once-monthly tests.
4. Download the Rave Guardian app to your phone.  
(<https://www.clemson.edu/cusafety/cupd/rave-guardian/>)
5. Learn what you can do to prepare yourself for the hazards that affect our locations.  
(<http://www.clemson.edu/cusafety/EmergencyManagement/>)

## Course Schedule

### January 12 – Introductions & Beginning to Think Locally, Digitally

**Read:** David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Altamira Press, 2010), 1-43.

**Read:** Jill Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography,” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 129-144.

**Read:** *Handbook of Digital Public History*, eds. Serge Noiret, Mark Tebeau, and Gerban Zaagsma (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 7-15.

### January 19 – NO CLASS

### January 26 – WINTER MEETS SOUTH CAROLINA INFRASTRUCTURE

#### February 2 – The World of Southern Textile Mills

**Read:** Jacqueline Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

**Read:** Thomas Cauvin, *Public History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 174-187.

**DH Review:** *Like a Family* (Digital Project) <https://www.ibiblio.org/sohp/laf/>

#### February 9 – Mills & Labor

**Read:** Goldfield, Michael. “The Failure of Operation Dixie: A Critical Turning Point in American Political Development?” In *Race, Class, and Community in Southern Labor History*, edited by Gary M. Fink and Merl R. Reed, 166-189. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994.

**Read:** Flemming, Douglas. “Christian Radicalism, McCarthyism, and the Dilemma of Organized Labor in Dixies.” In *Race, Class, and Community in Southern Labor History*, edited by Gary M. Fink and Merl R. Reed, 190-211. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994.

**Read:** Linda Frankel, “‘Jesus Leads Us, Cooper Needs Us, the Union Feeds Us’: The 1958 Harriet-Henderson Textile Strike,” in *Hanging by a Thread: Social Change in Southern Textiles*, eds. Jeffery Leiter, Michael D. Schulman, and Rhonda Zingraff (Ithaca: ILR Press, 1991), 101-120.

**DH Review:** *Remembering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire*, <https://trianglefire.ilr.cornell.edu/>

**DH Review:** *Mapping Historical New York*, <https://tinyurl.com/4mbapman>

## February 16 – Mills, Gender, and Race

**Read:** Gary R. Freeze, “Poor Girls Who Might Otherwise Be Wretched: The Origins of Paternalism in North Carolina’s Mills, 1836-1880,” in *Hanging by a Thread: Social Change in Southern Textiles*, eds. Jeffery Leiter, Michael D. Schulman, and Rhonda Zingraff (Ithaca: ILR Press, 1991), 3-20.

**Read:** Patrick Huber, “Mill Mother’s Lament: Ella May Wiggins and the Gastonia Textile Strike of 1929,” *Southern Cultures* 15, no. 3 (2009): 81-110.

**Read:** MacLean, Nancy. “Redesigning Dixie with Affirmative Action: Race, Gender and the Desegregation of the Southern Textile Mille World.” In *Gender and the Southern Body Politic*, edited by Nancy Bercaw, 161-198. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2000.

**Read:** “‘Color Means Something:’ Black Pioneers, White Resistance, and Interracial Unionism in the Southern Textile Industry, 1957-1980,” *Labor History* 39, no. 2 (1998): 109-133.

**DH Review:** *Black Sewanee*, <https://blacksewanee.org/>

**DH Review:** *Jane Addams Digital Edition*, <https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/>

## February 23 – Archive Trip

## March 2 – NO CLASS, GRADUATE PROGRAM EVENT

## March 9 – Decline, Heritage, and Memory in Mill Communities

**Read:** Moore, Toby. “Dismantling the South’s Cotton Mille Village System.” In *The Second Wave: Southern Industrialization from the 1940s to the 1970s*, edited by Philip Scranton, 114-145. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2001.

**Read:** Gaventa, John and Barbara Ellen Smith. “The Deindustrialization of the Textile South: A Case Study.” In *Hanging by a Thread: Social Change in Southern Textiles*, edited by Jeffrey Leiter, Michael D. Schulman, and Rhonda Zingraff, 181-196. Ithaca: ILR Press, 1991.

**Read:** Timothy Minchin, “‘It Knocked this City to it’s Knees,’ The Closure of the Pillowtex Mills in Kannapolis, North Carolina and the Decline of the US Textile Industry,” *Labor History* 50, no. 3 (2009): 287-311.

**Read:** Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1-41.

**Read:** Natalie Chanin and Olivia Ware Terenzio, “History, Community, and Power: The Future of Textile Mills,” *Southern Cultures* 30, no. 4 (2024): 2-7.

**Read:** Elijah Gaddis, “The Textile Mill in the Digital South,” *The Southern Quarterly* 58, no. 1&2 (2020/2021): 101-106.

**DH Review:** <https://communityhistories.org/chw-initiatives/rocky-mount-mills-full.html>

**DH Review:** <https://uscupstate.libguides.com/fabric-past-oral-history/listen>

## March 16 – SPRING BREAK

## March 23 – Archive Trip II & Omeka

**Read:** Gerben Zaagsma, “Content Management,” in *Handbook of Digital Public History*, eds. Serge Noiret, Mark Tebeau, and Gerben Zaagsma (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 431-437.

**Read:** Joanne Bernardi and Nora Dimmock, “Creative Curating: The Digital Archive as Argument,” in *Making Things and Drawing Boundaries: Experiment in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Jentry Sayers (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017),

<https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/untitled-aa1769f2-6c55-485a-81af-ea82cce86966/section/d25ff116-befe-484c-8460-c372bf25998c#ch21>

**Read:** Dominique Santana, “Historians as Digital Storytellers: The Digital Shift in Narrative Practices for Public Historians,” in *Handbook of Digital Public History*, eds. Serge Noiret, Mark Tebeau, and Gerban Zaagsma (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), 485-494.

**DH Review:** *Re-Envisioning Japan*, <https://rej.lib.rochester.edu/>

**Watch:** Omeka Overview <https://omeka.org/classic/docs/>

**Watch:** Omeka & Items, <https://vimeo.com/102040466?fl=pl&fe=sh>

**Watch:** Omeka & Collections, <https://vimeo.com/194553469?fl=pl&fe=sh>

**Watch:** Omeka & Exhibits, <https://vimeo.com/102835560?fl=pl&fe=sh>

### March 30 – Mills & Popular Culture

**Read:** Mary Heaton Vorse, *Strike!* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1930)

**Read:** Sylvia Cook, “Gastonia: The Literary Reverberations of a Strike,” *The Southern Literary Journal* 7, no. 1 (1974): 49-66.

**Read:** Robert Toplin, “Norma Rae: Unionism in an Age of Feminism,” *Labor History* 36, no. 2 (1995): 282-298.

**Watch:** *Norma Rae* (1979)

**DH Review:** *Authorial London*, <https://authorial.stanford.edu/>

**DH Review:** Kinolab, <https://kinolab.org/>

**DH Review:** Black Film Archive, <https://blackfilmarchive.com/>

**Due:** Proposal & Set of Identified Materials

### April 6 – Research & Build

### April 13 – Peer Review & Discuss Digital Archive

**Due:** First Draft & Digital Outline

### April 20 – Research & Build

### April 27 – Final Project Due, Publish & Pizza Party