

## Creating a Historical Timeline using TimelineJS

Dr. Pam Lach, Digital Humanities Librarian // LA 61N // [plach@sdsu.edu](mailto:plach@sdsu.edu)

<https://tinyurl.com/hist503-sp18-timelines>

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**What it does:** TimelineJS (<http://timeline.knightlab.com/>) allows you to create a media-rich, interactive timeline that is hosted online, or can be embedded in another website.

**How it works:** Provides you with a Google Spreadsheet template that you copy to your Drive and fill out (I've created a template for each group already). The template provides examples of how to format your data, but sometimes throws errors with image URLs, even if there is no problem. To get started, delete the pre-existing content (once you're sure how to fill in each cell). Make sure you don't delete any of the columns! Once you've published it to the Web, you can continue to make changes, which will update "on the fly."

### Limitations:

- Cannot handle a huge amount of data (e.g. points on the timeline); chokes after about 25-30 rows of data. Workaround: "chunk out" your data thematically, chronologically, or in some other way, which requires careful choices about what to include/exclude.
- Difficult to convey uncertainty about time periods / periodization

### Examples:

- Pam's messy/boring [example](#) from summer 2016 (this is hosted in Timeline JS)
- A series of timelines chunked out thematically for a public history project in Gastonia, NC: <http://projects.dhpress.org/loraydigital/timelines/>

### What you need to get started:

- ☐ Google account (but not for this class; the templates we've setup do not require Google sign-in! All of the templates are here: <https://tinyurl.com/hist503-sp18-timelines>)
- ☐ Images need to be web-accessible, either in Dropbox, Google Drive, or already on the web. If loading images yourself, make sure they are set to "anyone with link can view" (or fully public, if you're comfortable with that)
  - ☐ If pulling images from elsewhere on the Internet, you'll need the direct image URL (see [this guide](#) if you're not sure how to do this)
  - ☐ Don't forget to [cite](#) where the image comes from!

### Questions to get you thinking for your final assignment:

- What are the most salient points to share in a timeline? What are the significant moments of your story?
- How does each point in the timeline help tell a larger narrative?
- How does each point relate to other points?
- How do the points in your timeline buy into a periodization model?
- What are some keywords that characterize your timeline entry? (ex: gender; politics; economic; military; entertainment; imperialism; religion)

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### In-class Exercise (February 1)

**What you'll be doing:** Each group will practice entering 1 sample event into our shared template: "20180201\_In-classTestTimeline\_Template." Start @ Row 9

- Today's shared google spreadsheet is located here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/hist503-sp18-timelines>. You do not need to be signed into Google
- You can view the final timeline [here](#). Note that this is not a real timeline.

### How do I enter BCE dates? (<http://timeline.knightlab.com/#help>)

To enter dates before the common era, just use a negative value for the year. Of course, you can also enter month and date if you need them.

### Additional Information for your Group Assignment (due February 15)

#### Keywords

For each event you enter, you will also include a **keyword** in the group column (Column Q). The keyword you select should speak to the overall characterization of the event. For example:

- Gender/women
- Politics
- Economic
- Military
- Entertainment
- Imperialism/wars
- Religion
- Environment/ecological
- Infrastructure/urbanization

There may be another keyword that is more salient for your event; you are not limited to this list.

### HTML Tips for your Text Field

Given the length of the entry you'll be writing, I strongly recommend that you ***write your long text entry elsewhere*** (such as a Word or Google Doc). This will make it easier to edit and spell check. When your description is completed, you can enter it into the description field (Column K) -- but make sure to test the HTML first (see below for details)

HTML formatting elements include a start tag <> and an end tag </>. Want to format something not included in this list? Check out the helpful W3Schools [HTML tutorials](#).

Formatting	HTML tag	HTML code / example
Italics	<i> </i>	<i>Ab Urbe Condita</i>
Bold	<b> </b>	<b>Week Three (1/30 and 2/1) Overview of Roman History</b>

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Hyperlink	<code>&lt;a href=&gt;</code> <code>&lt;/a&gt;</code>	<code>&lt;a href="https://www.w3schools.com/html/"&gt;Visit our</code> <code>HTML tutorial&lt;/a&gt;</code>
Paragraph Breaks	<code>&lt;p&gt;</code> <code>&lt;/p&gt;</code>	<code>&lt;p&gt;This is my first paragraph.&lt;/p&gt;</code> <code>&lt;p&gt;This is my second</code> <code>paragraph.&lt;/p&gt;</code> <code>&lt;p&gt;This is my third paragraph.&lt;/p&gt;</code>

HTML elements may be combined in a nested fashion, meaning that the end tags should appear in inverse order to the start tags:

```
<p>This is my <b>first</b> paragraph.</p> <p>This is my <i>second</i> paragraph.</p>
<p>This is my <a href="https://library.sdsu.edu/digital-humanities-center">third
paragraph</a>.</p>
```

\*\*For the purposes of our timeline spreadsheet, do not include any hard returns in your entry (i.e. don't hit "Enter"). Instead, use `<p>` paragraph breaks `</p>` to create separate paragraphs. In other words, your entire entry should be a single block of text.

Example:

HTML as 1 uninterrupted block of text:

```
<p>Lorem ipsum dolor amet kogi <i>thundercats</i> tbh yuccie venmo keytar fashion
axe. Wayfarers chambray butcher, <b>90's craft beer</b> palo santo thundercats air
plant hoodie salvia.</p> <p> Everyday carry four dollar toast chartreuse, godard neutra
8-bit messenger bag synth master cleanse live-edge before they sold out man braid.
Affogato portland polaroid paleo chartreuse, lomo hashtag gastropub unicorn kogi
aesthetic.</p>
```

Displays as 2 separate paragraphs:

Lorem ipsum dolor amet kogi *thundercats* tbh yuccie venmo keytar fashion axe.  
Wayfarers chambray butcher, **90's craft beer** palo santo thundercats air plant hoodie  
salvia.

Everyday carry four dollar toast chartreuse, godard neutra 8-bit messenger bag synth  
master cleanse live-edge before they sold out man braid. Affogato portland polaroid  
paleo chartreuse, lomo hashtag gastropub unicorn kogi aesthetic.

**Test your code** before you paste it into the template spreadsheet:

W3Schools provides great [HTML tutorials](#), as well as a "Try it Yourself" editor where you can test your HTML code to make sure it works. Just delete everything on the left side, paste in your code, and hit the green "Run" button (see the screenshots below):

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## 1. When you open the editor, there will already be some HTML displayed:

The screenshot shows the TimelineJS editor interface. On the left, there is a code editor with the following HTML code:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<body>

<p>This is a paragraph.</p>
<p>This is a paragraph.</p>
<p>This is a paragraph.</p>

</body>
</html>
```

On the right, the rendered output is displayed, showing three paragraphs of text: "This is a paragraph." The top right corner of the interface indicates "Result Size: 1061 x 1104".

## 2. Delete all the text in the left pane and paste in your HTML code:

The screenshot shows the TimelineJS editor interface with a large block of Lorem Ipsum text in the code editor. The text is as follows:

```
<p>Lorem ipsum dolor amet kogi <i>thundercats</i> tbb yuccie venmo keytar fashion axe. Wayfarers chambray butcher, <b>90's craft beer</b> palo santo thundercats air plant hoodie salvia. Everyday carry four dollar toast chartreuse, godard neutra 8-bit messenger bag synth master cleanse live-edge before they sold out man braid. Affogato portland polaroid paleo chartreuse, lomo hashtag gastropub unicorn kogi aesthetic. Jianbing hot chicken shaman craft beer, palo santo affogato locavore deep v austin unicorn dreamcatcher PBR&B. Migas echo park jean shorts subway tile master cleanse.</p><p><b>Fashion axe fingerstache tousled seitan echo park gentrify 90's church-key tbb twee narwhal. Everyday carry mumblecore seitan asymmetrical bespoke raw denim fransen vexillologist. Heirloom asymmetrical kale chips succulents, actually chartreuse cloud bread green juice vape adaptogen tattooed. Ia croix green juice vape vinyl, truffaut deep v mumblecore. Etsy post-ironic organic, fashion axe wolf trust fund DIY live-edge craft beer literally.</p><p><b>Celiac venmo williamsburg asymmetrical. Shabby chic shaman cold-pressed tumeric PBR&B tumblr synth, glossier bespoke. Letterpress raw denim scenester PBR&B ennui occupy. Ramps ugh chia pitchfork gentrify paleo. Synth lyft chambray, affogato actually 90's freemason meditation marfa retro mumblecore. Synth tumeric poke yr street art flexitarian taiyaki scenester sartorial iPhone. KONG man bun whatever, sartorial bespoke vaporwave yr air plant wolf norcore.</p><p><b>Taxidermy meh occupy selfies lumbersexual, +1 kickstarter put a bird on it truffaut poutine ennui fingerstache cronut. iPhone enamel pin heirloom kinfolk adaptogen ethical man braid kickstarter jean shorts. Migas ethical tofu, VHS post-ironic godard poke thundercats hot chicken health goth waistcoat authentic small batch pork belly art party. Lumbersexual fanny pack vaporwave church-key ethical direct trade poutine iPhone. Jean shorts disrupt shaman sustainable migas snachevore etsy direct trade single-origin coffee fingerstache raclette tofu seitan tousled polaroid.</p><p><b>Poke sriracha small batch, cardigan church-key hellu twee street art YOLO salvia. Salvia art party retro, activated charcoal bitters locavore iceland put a bird on it green juice prism brooklyn keffiyeh slow-carb. Tousled leggings readymade hell of. Enui paleo subway tile jianbing woke, keffiyeh typewriter sartorial artisan. Banjo cred +1, cronut shaman tousled 90's VHS. Seitan four loko prism godard disrupt small batch tacos etsy cred polaroid.</p><p><b>Oh. You need a little dummy text for your mockup? How quince.</p><p><b>? bet you're still using Bootstrap too.</p><p><b>Text generated from <a href="https://lorem.co/">Hipster Ipsum</a>. This represents about 400 words.</p>
```

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## 3. Hit the green run button to view your HTML code in action in the right pane:

Run ▶

<p>lorem ipsum dolor amet kogi <b>thundercats</b> thb yuccie venmo keytar fashion axe. Wayfarers chambray butcher, <b>90's craft beer</b> palo santo thundercats air plant hoodie salvia. Everyday carry four dollar toast chartreuse, godard neutra 8-bit messenger bag synth master cleanse live-edge before they sold out man braid. Affogato portland polaroid paleo chartreuse, lomo hashtag gastropub unicorn kogi aesthetic. Jianbing hot chicken shaman craft beer, palo santo affogato locavore deep v austin unicorn dreamcatcher PBR&B. Migas echo park jean shorts subway tile master cleanse.</p><p>Fashion axe fingerstache tousled seitan echo park gentrify 90's church-key thb twee narwhal. Everyday carry mumblecore seitan asymmetrical bespoke raw denim fransen vexillologist. Hairloom asymmetrical kale chips succulents, actually chartreuse cloud bread green juice vape adaptogen tattooed. La croix green juice vape vinyl, truffaut deep v mumblecore. Itay post-ironic organic, fashion axe wolf trust fund DIY live-edge craft beer literally.</p><p>Celiac venmo williamsburg asymmetrical. Shabby chic shaman cold-pressed tumeric PBR&B tumblr synth, glossier bespoke. Letterpress raw denim scenester PBR&B ennui occupy. Ramps ugh chia pitchfork gentrify paleo. Synth lyft chambray, affogato actually 90's freegan meditation marfa retro mumblecore. Synth tumeric poke yr street art flexitarian taiyaki scenester sartorial iPhone. XOXO man bun whatever, sartorial bespoke vaporware yr air plant wolf normcore.</p><p>Taxidermy meh occupy selfies lumbersexual, +1 kickstarter put a bird on it truffaut poutine ennui fingerstache cronut. iPhone enamel pin heirloom kinfolk adaptogen ethical man braid kickstarter jean shorts. Migas ethical tofu, VHS post-ironic godard poke thundercats hot chicken health goth waistcoat authentic small batch pork belly art party. Lumbersexual fanny pack vaporware church-key ethical direct trade poutine iPhone. Jean shorts disrupt shaman sustainable migas snackwave etsy direct trade single-origin coffee fingerstache raclette tofu seitan tousled polaroid.</p><p>Poke sriracha small batch, cardigan church-key hella twee street art YOLO salvia. Salvia art party retro, activated charcoal bitters locavore iceland put a bird on it green juice prism brooklyn keffiyeh slow-carb. Tousled leggings readymade hell of. Ennui paleo subway tile jianbing woke, keffiyeh typewriter sartorial artisan. Banjo cred +1, cronut shaman tousled 90's VHS. Seitan four loko prism godard disrupt small batch tacos etsy cred polaroid.</p><p>Oh. You need a little dummy text for your mockup? How quaint.</p><p>I bet you're still using Bootstrap too...</p><p>Text generated from <a href="https://hipsum.co/">Hipster Ipsum</a>. This represents about 400 words.</p>

Result Size: 1061 x 1104

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