Florida International University

# FIU Digital Commons

1-31-2020

# The Histagram Manual

The Humanities Edge

# The Histagram Manual
### Running Instagram | Grading Student Submissions | Embedding Photos into an LMS



My #installationart project here demonstrates how #commoditychains effect human lives. For those who don't know, #neoliberalism, or a deregulated "free market," is what keeps these commodity chains running. Today, denim is one of the largest commodities in retail. In the U.S. alone, it is an industry worth over $13.7 BILLION, and in countries like Bangladesh and China, workers are paid as low as $0.45 per pair of denim jeans in sometimes harsh and inhumane conditions.

This project has taught me a thing or two about fast-fashion in the retail industry. So as a result of feeling the convictions from buying into this industry, moving forward, I publically pledge to not buy denim products from existing retailers who support low wages and inhumane working conditions.

9 likes

DECEMBER 11, 2017

**Micah Oelze, PhD**
**Visiting Asst Professor,**
**Franklin & Marshall College**
**moelze@fandm.edu**

## What is Histagram?

A Histagram is a student-taken photo that illustrates a course concept at work in the student's everyday environment. The term is a portmanteau of "History" and "Instagram," the social-media platform that allows for live-stream photo documentation of everyday life. The goal of the project is to get students to think about course material beyond the walls of the classroom.

Before the assignment begins, teachers are encouraged to begin assigning hashtags (#) to course concepts, vocabulary terms, and central themes. In a sociology course, a hashtag might be #intersectionalidentity; in a philosophy course, #pharmakon might be such a case. Adding the simple "#" may seem pointless, but it is powerful: students of the millenial generation have been trained to interpret #hashtagged words as searchable and conceptual. The application of the tag helps students distinguish view practical examples without losing track of the theoretical concept. In your class, students should take note of these hashtag concepts and use time during in-class discussions or group work to think of multiple case studies or examples of these concepts at work.

It is here that the Histagram comes into play. Students, after they leave your class, begin to search for original examples of those concepts at work in their communities. Once they find

such a case, they snap a picture of it. They upload the picture to their course Learning Management System (LMS), such as Canvas, Blackboard, or Moodle). Alongside the photo, students must write 4-5 sentences that explain the situation, apply the #hashtag, and then defend why it is an example of the given course concept (or compare the example with others discussed in class).

As a professor, you will then grade the assignments and upload the model examples to a course Instagram account. This account, in turn, can be embedded into the LMS or a designated-course website, enabling even those students who do not "follow" the class Instagram profile to still engage with the work of their peers.

There are multiple key values of the project. First, it allows you as the professor to assess how well students understand course concepts. Moreover, the project tests whether the students have sufficient competency with the concepts to identify them at work in their own communities. Then, the project challenges students to develop a critical eye by inviting them to revisit their ordinary experiences with the eyes of a social scientist.

## How do I set up an Instagram account?

Instagram accounts are free and simple to setup. You will simply need a valid email address. Make sure to click out of "email notifications" so that your inbox is not flooded with updates and alerts.

Visit www.instagram.com and type in your email. Then create a username and password. The username should be the title that you want for your class account. One of my courses is called realushistory, but you might call your course:

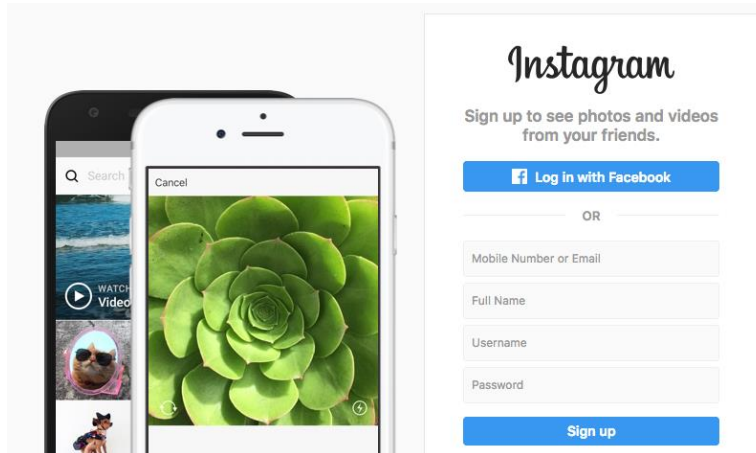ohiostatephilosophy
drjohnsonsbiologycourse
introductiontoarthistory



*Figure 1. Instagram Home Page*

Once you create the account, I encourate you to click on the 👤 icon (Fig 2, this will take you to your own home-base). Then click on the Edit Profile button, which will allow you to do two things. First, write a sentence or two explaining the main purpose of the account (Figure 3).
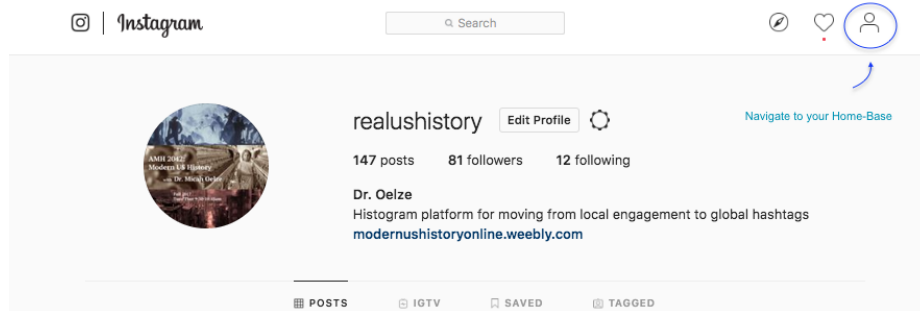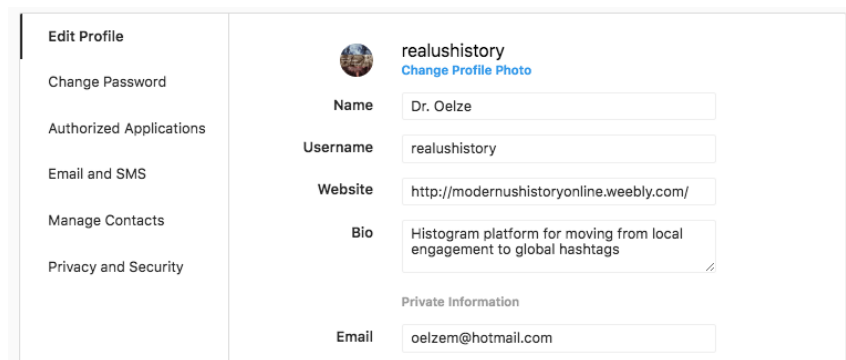
*Fig 2. Navigate to your Home Page.*


*Figure 3. Edit Profile Page, allowing you to write a "Bio."*

Second, you will be able to click on the "Email and SMS" button (Fig. 4), which will allow you to un-check notification boxes. This ensures you do not receive emails everytime that a student likes your posts.
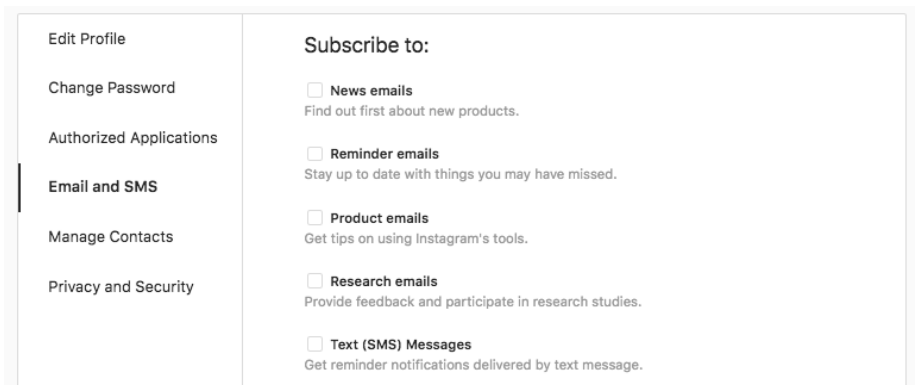

*Figure 4. Edit Profile Page, "Email and SMS": unsubscribe from notifications.*

There is one final step you will want to undertake before bringing this Histagram project to your classroom: create a sample Histagram.

To do this, choose one of the hashtags that you will use in your course. Find an example of that hashtag concept at work in your own life and environment. Take a picture of it with your phone, and then upload it to your Instagram account by clicking on the plus sign (Fig 5). Complete the

upload with a caption that explains the picture, defines the concept, and uses the #hashtag. Then click submit. Congratulations, you have uploaded your first Histagram.

**Note:** if you are uploading via your computer (instead of your phone), scroll down to the "Upload via Computer" section further below in this document.
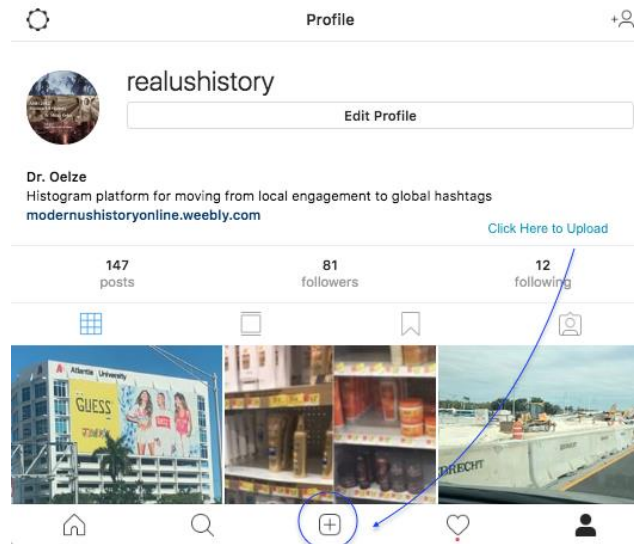

*Fig 5. Upload a Sample Histagram.*

At this point you will be ready to bring the Histagram project to your classroom.

## How do I explain the Histagram in my course syllabus?

Here are two examples of Syllabus writeups (for my history course and then for a social work course, respectively). Feel free to borrow or adapt these.

### *AMH2042: Modern American Civilization*

**Histagram**     **(3 total, @ 33 Points Each, Total of 100 points)**

Three times during the semester, you will post a picture that illustrates one of the themes discussed in class, such as #systemicviolence or #manufacturingconsent. Look for examples of the theme in your community and throughout Miami, then snap a picture of it.

For your assignment, you will then write four scholarly sentences that explain the picture and how it helps further your understanding of the course theme. Then include the hashtags of the theme from the unit, such as #civilrights or #neoliberalism.

At that point, you will upload the picture to the "Histagram" Canvas Uploads Folder and leave your corresponding comment there. (or put both picture and text on a Microsoft Word document and upload that).

That is all you have to do for points. However, if you have Instagram and feel like using it for class, you have the option to also post the photo and tag me @realushistory.

*SWK 303: Social Welfare Policy*

**Instagram Project:**
This course utilizes Instagram posts as a method for applying concepts discussed in class to everyday life. Students are given #hashtagconcepts that apply to specific concepts discussed in the course. Students then look for moments in day-to-day life that remind them of the #hashtagconcept, take a picture to capture the moment, and upload that picture to D2L. Students write a caption that includes the #hashtagconcept and briefly describes its application to the picture.

Although the social work profession constantly requires engaging with policy practice, students have historically had difficulty recognizing the simple ways in which policies govern almost every aspect of society. The Instagram assignment is designed to help students make this connection.

By the end of the semester, each student should be able to identify how policy practice applies to social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Additionally, students should be able to identify the multiple factors involved in analyzing social welfare policy.

Some of the #hashtagconcepts we will discuss in the first unit of the class include:

#policyallaround      #policyscience      #theartofpolicy   #policypolitics

## How do I create the Histagram assignment on my course LMS?

This will depend on which LMS your institution is using. First, as the professor, you will need to create a new course assignment (Fig 6), and title it "Histagram #1" or something similar. When you create the assignment, make sure you enable uploads of photo files, word docs, and PDFs. Also allow students to enter text. This ensures that they have multiple options for submission.
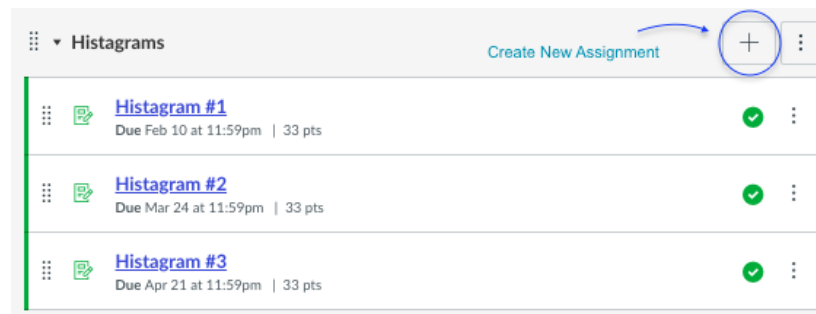


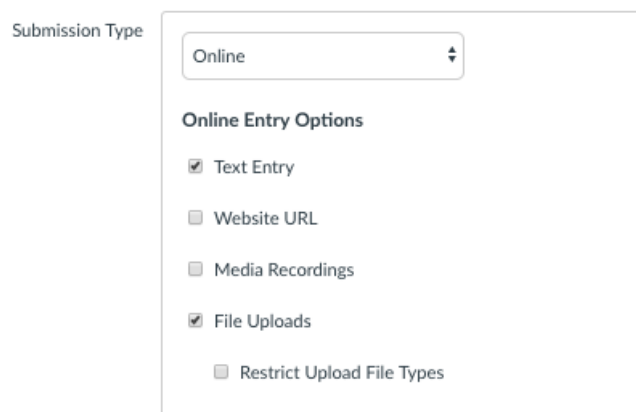*Fig 6: Create a New Assignment, and title it "Histagram #1"*



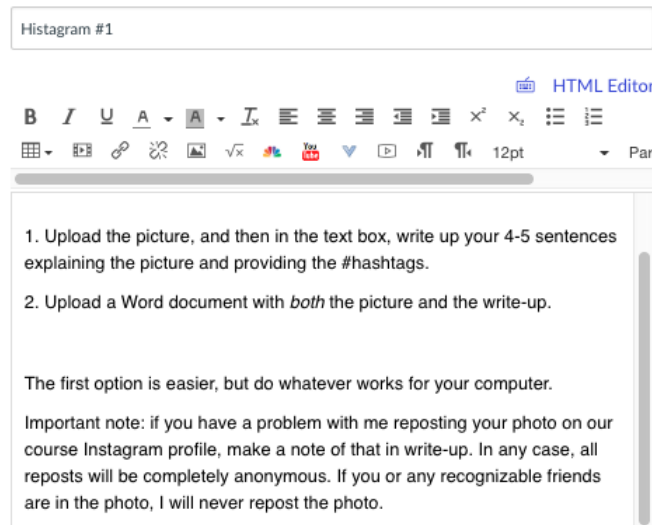*Fig 7. Allow text entry and file uploads for the Assignment Submission*

*Fig 8. Provide General Instructions for Students*

**How do students submit their Histagrams?**

Once students have taken their photo and reflected on the caption they want to write, they will simply navigate to the "Assignments" folder, and click "Upload" to upload their photo and write their text. They will then click "submit." That should guarantee that there Histagram is safely submitted.

Some students will submit a photo directly from their phone and then manually enter in the caption. Others may choose to use their computer, creating a word document that combines the photo and the text, and then submit this.

If students have trouble with the submission, you can invite them to email the picture and text to you via your LMS messaging system.

I require students to submit via our LMS system, but I also extend to them the option of additionally uploading the photo to their own instagram account if they want to give their friends and colleagues a chance to see the work they are doing in class. But I do not follow my students personal accounts, nor do I allow them to follow my personal account. Students are very welcome, however, to follow or "friend" our course account. This allows them to see their colleague's top posts from the comfort of their own phone. I usually see around 30% of the class follow me during the semester, and usually 10% of the class choose to keep following me after the semester so they can see the work of future students taking the same course.

**How many Histagrams should students do in a given semester?**

The students in my survey course on American History do one Histagram assignment for each unit, making for a total of either three or four Histagrams (depending on the semester). This may not seem like a lot. But I have found that 3-4 allow students to develop competence in the project without feeling too overwhelmed.

For some students, the project is more rigorous than it initially seems. At first, students think the project will be easy: after all, many are in the habit of uploading an Instagram photo every day: they upload a picture of their breakfast, their outfit, or their dog in the morning, and then snap a picture hanging out with friends in the evening. This is quick and easy, and the

hashtags come as secondnature, in these cases perhaps #healthyish, #sweatpants, and #snugglesthecutepuppy. But identifying course concept at work around them is not something students are accustomed to doing. It often takes them two or three weeks to identify their first course #hashtag, and it might take them the whole semester to get into the habit of recognizing sociological or biological mechanisms at work in their own environments. So give the students at least two weeks to prepare their first Histagram, and consider alotting time in class so that students can brainstorm examples in small groups or as a cohort.

**How do I grade the Histagrams?**

Grading Histagrams can be the easiest and most enjoyable grading of an entire semester. Seriously. Simply go into the grading portion of your course LMS, and scroll through the assignments. Check out the picture, read the caption, and determine if the scenario is a strong example of the #hashtag used in the caption.

We are mainly assessing two elements: first, the student's mastery of the course concept and, second, the validity of the example. If they get both of these, the student earns full credit. Feel free to visit [instagram.com/realushistory](instagram.com/realushistory) for examples of strong Histagam submissions.

*Note*: students that have chosen to not take the assignment seriously (or to procrastinate excessively) are prone to run a Google image search for a given course concept, and then submit one of the photos that turns up. In my opinion, this ruins the whole purpose of the project. As a result, I only give partial credit to Histagrams that are of internet pictures or screenshots of twitter posts.

*My Style of Grading*. I have noticed that student errors often occur in patterns. Usually, a string of students will misunderstand a certain hashtag concept. For example, I teach a unit on labor organization and strikes in the late 19th century. In that unit I use the hashtag #alienation to discuss cases in which corporate executives ran so many business (Railroad lines, coal mines, banks, and oil wells), that they had never met their employees. This meant that coal workers could not speak to the CEO about dangerous working conditions. It also meant that the executives had little sympathy for strikers (the executives had no relationships with the workers, and had not witnessed their financial struggles).

Maybe #alienation is too general a hashtag, but students will sometimes confuse this will a distinct form of social alienation—say a student without friends; or an individual that lives with headphones on in order to tune out their broader environment.

Given that such mistakes occur in patterns, I find that I can save time if I make a copy of the comment I make to the student. I keep this (and all such comments) in a word document. Once I get five or so such comments, I usually have enough to address 90% of the remaining Histagrams. This means that after the first ten minutes of grading, I can copy and paste comments on the rest of the Histagrams, allowing me to grade each assignment in less than a minute. Here is an example of such comments:

> Good writeup, but keep in mind that there are multiple types of alienation. You are talking about social alienation (a serious problem in our society today); but in class we were talking about labor alienation—the growing distance between workers and employers which makes negotiation difficult.

Remember that #doubleconsciousness was originally connected to RACE, specifically the experience of seeing yourself as a member of the human community but being constantly reminded that others see you for your skin color. How does that then connect with this situation?

Fantastic example. Wonderful writeup. Thank you so much.

Neat writeup here. but remember that full points are reserved for students who take a picture of something in the real environment around them, and then turn it into a Histagram. Go for that next time.

Okay, so I do not see a Histagram for you. Work hard on this next unit to find and submit one so that you have the "Histagram Experience" and also work towards the maximum possible number of points for the class.

## How do I repost exemplar Histagrams to our course Instagram account?
### (aka: **How to upload via computer**)

I take the top 5-10 Histagrams from each Unit and upload them to our course account. This allows students to see the work of their peers. It then reinforces the course concept by helping the broader class cohort see the variety of ways that the course concepts are at work around them. Imagine thinking a biology term is totally irrelevant, but then seeing it at work in ten different aspects of your daily life. The diversity of cases means reinforced mental connections, creating the reinforced synapse connections that contribute to what neuroscientists call "long-term potentiation" or lasting memory (cf the accessible explanation in *Spark*, by John Ratey).

But how do we upload these to our course Instagram account? First we need to download the photos from our LMS and save them to a folder (I call mine: Spring 2019, H1). Make sure the photos are saved as JPEGs (this guarantees that Instagram will accept the file). Then open up a web browser – I recommend Google Chrome for this.

There is one small hurdle we have to jump here. Instagram designers had the phone in mind, so computer-based web browsers don't have the option to upload photos on Instagram. Luckily, there is a simple work around. It is called a "User-Agent Switcher" and is very easy (and safe) to install and use.

This "switcher" tells the Instagram website that you are not a computer but rather that you are a phone. This allows you to then upload your photos.

To install the "switcher," go to the Google Chrome extension store (run a search for "chrome extension store" and it will pop up, or just go to: https://chrome.google.com/webstore. When you arrive at this page, type in "User-Agent Switcher" in the page's search bar (Fig. 9).
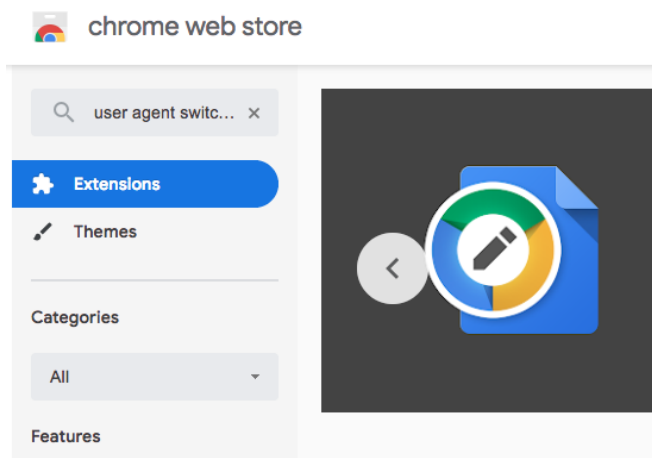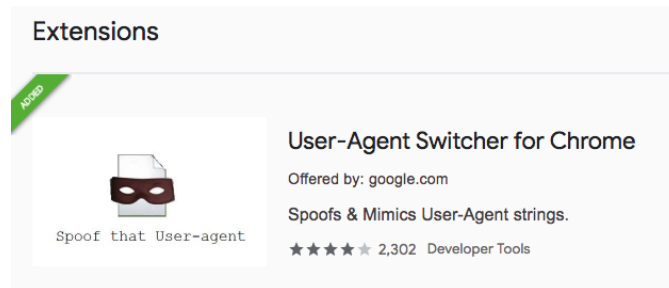
*Fig 9. Google Chrome Extension Store.*



*Fig 10. "User-Agent Switcher." Click Install. (It's Free)*

Once you have installed the User-Agent Switcher, it will appear as a simple icon (⬛) on the top right-hand corner of your web browser. Click on this, and then click "IOS" and "Iphone" (Fig 11 & 12) Suddenly websites will reload as if you were a phone.
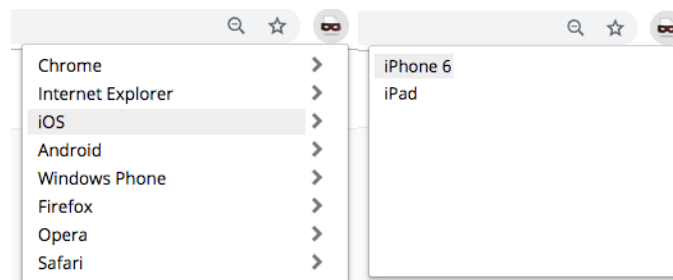


*Fig 11 and 12. Select "IOS" and then "Iphone 6"*

At this point, return to your instagram page (instagram.com/thenameofyouraccount). Or if you are not already logged in, go to instagram.com and enter your username and password. With the User-Agent Switcher Activated, you will now be able to upload your student's pictures that you have saved on the computer. Upload the pictures, and then copy and paste the student captions into the text box. Click submit. Congratulations, you are done.

Once you are done with this, you will want to turn off the "User Agent Switcher." To do so, click again on the ⬛ icon, and click on "Chrome -> Default." That's it.

Also, if you want to simultaneously navigate between a regular web browser and this one, go ahead and open a different web browser (I run Mac's Safari web browser simultaneously with Google Chrome).

**Is it possible to make the photos live-stream to our course LMS?**

Yes. You can make all of the photos from your Histagram stream into your course LMS by using a kind of technology called "embedding." Put simply, embedding creates a little portal on your web page, through which you can see the photos and captions from your Instagram account.

To do this, you must use a third party that provides this technology to you for free. It takes about 10 minutes to set this up. There are two companies that do this: Juicer (juicer.io) and Curator (curator.io). I use Juicer and it works very well for me. Here are the steps:

First, go to Juicer.io and use an email address to sign up for a free acount (create a username and password). See this in Fig 13.
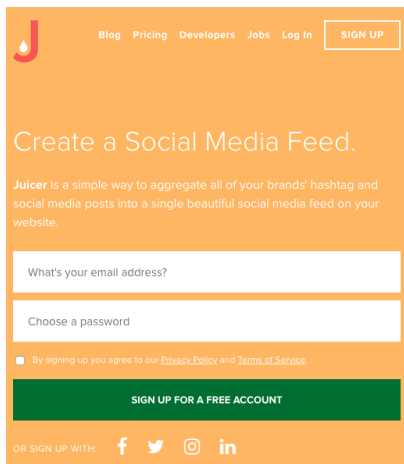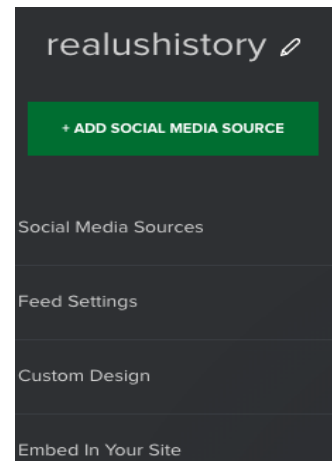


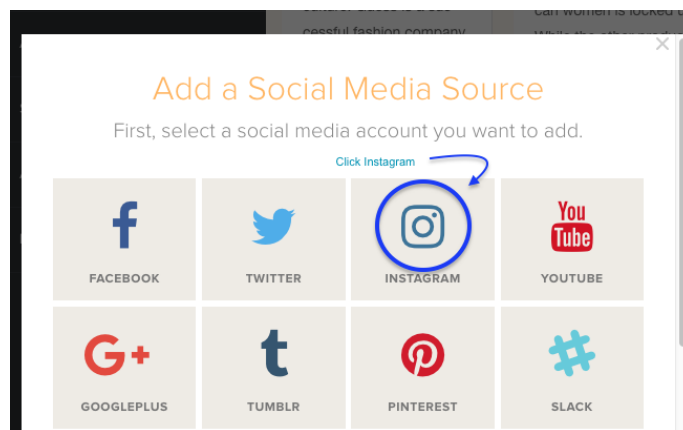*Fig 13. Create a Juicer Account*

*Fig 14. Add Social Media Source*



*Fig 15. Select Instagram*

Once you have created the account, select "Add Social Media Source" (Fig 14) and select "Instagram" (Fig 15). Then enter the name of your instagram account. You will then enter in your password, to verify that you indeed are the owner of the account. Once this is done, photos from your Instagram account may show up on your Juicer site. If they do not, don't be alarmed. For free users (us), it can take up to 24 hours for the feed to get started and for new photos to be added.

At this point, you are able to embed the Instagram photos into your course LMS. On the Juicer home page, click "Embed in Your Site."
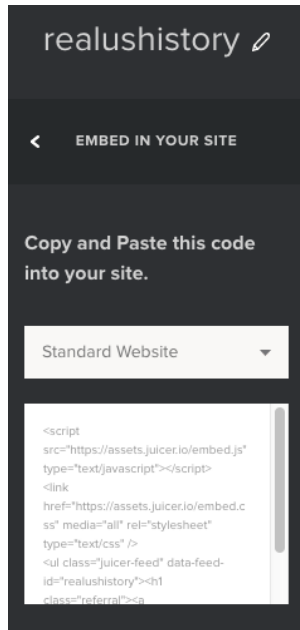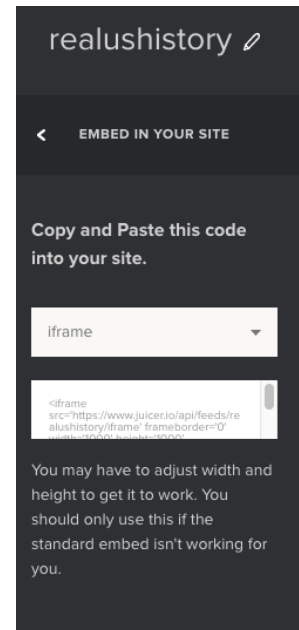


*Fig 16. Click "Embed in your Site."*

Note that some LMS require "Standard Website" HTML, others require iframe.

Choose one and follow the instructions to see if it works; if not, come back and try the other.

Copy the HTML text onto your clipboard, then open a new window in your web browser and log-in to your course LMS. Navigate to your Home Page (or wherever you want to embed the Histagrams), and click "Edit." (Fig 17). Then find the button that says "HTML Editor" (Fig 18).
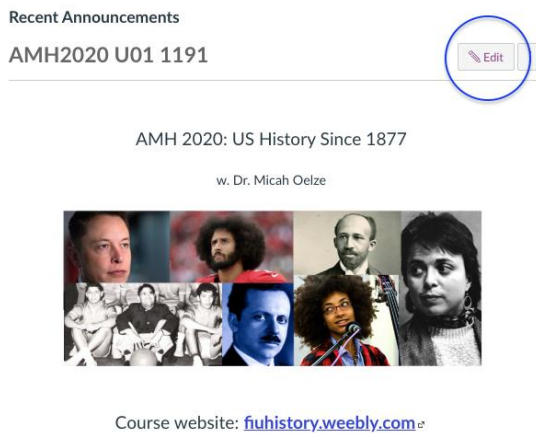


*Figures 17 and 18: "Edit" and "HTML Editor" on Course LMS.*

At this point, paste the HTML code from the Juicr website into the textbox (Fig 19). It is best to paste this text in between paragraph breaks (paste it after anything that says "</p>" ). Once you do this and click "save," the page should refresh, allowing you to see the course Histagram photos.
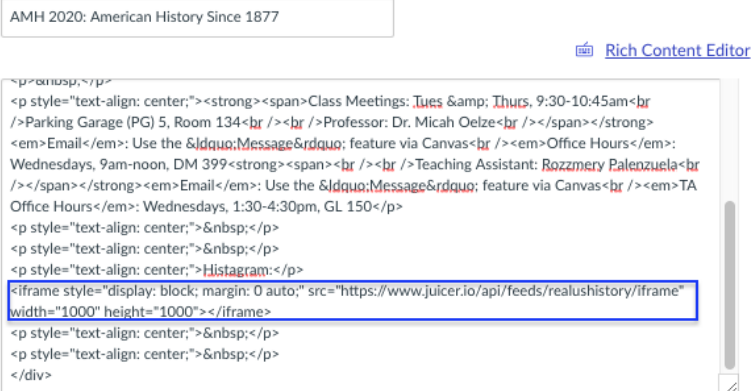
Fig 19. Paste the HTML code

If this does not work, do not worry. Just go back to Juicer. This time, instead of copying and pasting the "Standard Website" code, try copying and pasting the "Iframe" code. Each LMS is different, and Canvas (what I use) requires the "Iframe" code.

**Conclusions and Feedback:**

If you have any questions, reach out to me at moelze@fandm.edu. In addition, if you use the Histagram in your class, it would mean a great deal to me if you could reach out at the end of the semester with feedback. Tell me what worked, what didn't, and what was the most rewarding aspect of the assignment. This will help me carry the #researchmedia projects forward and share them with a wider audience.