

Final Project

Purpose: Maps are arguments. As a mapmaker, you will make choices about what information you choose to display, how to display it, and with what purpose. For this final project, you and your classmates will create a collaborative map that reveals the historical development of Omaha over time. Over the course of the semester, you and your team will develop the skills necessary to formulate a map design/strategy, find/create and organize the data necessary to answer it, and present that question and your mode of analysis to the class. Your final project will be evaluated by myself and the other teams using the map criticism skills developed in weekly blog posts. How effective is your map in presenting and answering that question? What types of choices did you make when creating the map and were they justified? What alternatives did you reject? This is the capstone of the course and should highlight the development of your skills as a map consumer and mapmaker.

Teams: You will be divided up into teams of 3-4 people at the beginning of the semester. As a group, you will be responsible for dividing up responsibility for the final mapping product. As a team, you will need to 1. Formulate a concept/plan for your final map and vet that idea with your instructor 2. Gather primary source information/data for map “layers” and descriptive information 3. design a map template 4. Present that map

Evaluation: The total project is worth 400 points and is divided into six stages. These stages build toward your project presentation and subsequent peer criticism at the end of the semester. You will be given a rubric for the presentation in the last third of the class. Your final mapping product can be a static map or an interactive web map on the subject of your choosing, but must showcase at least 4 skills learned during the course. (Bonus points for more)

Stages:

Stage 1. Research Question – (25 pts) The first stage of the project is to choose a suitable historical question about the legacy of redlining in Omaha. You and your group will develop your question from one of the following themes: **demographic change; racial violence in Omaha; streetcars and suburbanization; automobiles and highways; lead pollution in Omaha; flooding, insurance, and disasters; crime and policing; home loans and housing policy; schools & education.**

Good historical questions are important because they ground good histories AND good maps. Your map needs to have a goal — a question that requires an answer. One delegate of the group will submit a jointly-written short two-paragraph response to the course blog that lays out the research question and a brief historical context. Ex. How has North Omaha's demographic makeup changed over time? Do redlining boundaries inform lead hazards? Which regions of Omaha have

greatest/least access to home loans and how has that changed over time? All questions must be historical and spatial.

Stage 2. Project Proposal – (50 pts) At this stage you will make decisions about how to present your historical question in mapped form. This one page proposal lays out 1. The scope of the project (how wide and area and how much time will your map/mapping product consider?) Make sure to keep the scope of the project manageable. 2. What are some of the possible sources (i.e. digital maps, online data, historical data, secondary sources) that will be employed in your digital mapping product? 3. What type of final project will you create/present? Will it be a static map? A series of maps? An interactive web map? Why is this the best way to present your question/data/answer? 4. A clear explanation of the value of this project as a piece of scholarship.

Stage 3. Data Collection – (50 pts) Teams must submit an “annotated” list of 10 potential sources of data (digital or physical) as well as 10 scholarly secondary sources that inform the historical meaning of the project. Historical questions require background research, both to gather historical data (primary sources, online or digital data) as well as sources to ground your map in historical context (secondary readings on your chosen material)

Stage 4. "Rough Draft" (100 pts) - Each group will bring a working copy of their digital map. The maps need not be 100% complete, but students should also be prepared to explain how they plan to improve/enrich the map before the end of the semester. The more complete the map, the better feedback they will be able to receive.

Stage 5. Presentation – (150 pts) teams will present their work in class. 150 points will be allotted primarily on the substance of your maps, but also care and thoughtfulness of the presentation itself. You may use Powerpoint, Prezi, or a web mapping application (i.e. ArcGIS online’s web-based presentation format) if needed. If you have build a storymap or interactive website, you may use that instead. The presentation should last approximately 20-30 minutes and cover the historical context of the project, its question, use of data, mapmaking choices, potential alternatives for mapping, and conclusions.

Stage 6. Criticism - (25 pts) All members of the course will conduct peer reviews of their classmates final mapping projects using skills and knowledge developed during the course. This is the final graded assignment of the course and should demonstrate their mastery of course material and original, critical thinking regarding their peers’ maps. Student will post their criticisms online via the course blog. The critiques should be no longer than **400 words**. You should 1. briefly provide a synopsis of the map and its argument 2. Describe the strengths of the map/maps/mapping product. What did it do well? 3. Describe the weaknesses of the project. What could have been more effectively described? Did it make claims it didn’t support? What might you have done differently?