

HIS 317: Mapping History

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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 will create a mapping product that poses and, ideally, answers historical and spatial questions. Over the course of the semester, you 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(s) and your mode of analysis to the class. Your final project will be evaluated by myself and your peers 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.

Tasks:

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. Produce a map

Evaluation:

The total project is worth 400 points and is divided into five stages. These stages build toward your project presentation and subsequent peer criticism at the end of the semester. Your final mapping product can be a static map or an interactive web map on the subject of your choosing.

Stages:

Stage 1. Research Question – (25 pts)

The first stage of the project is to choose a suitable historical/spatial question

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. Your task is to write a two-paragraph questions to the course blog that lays out the research question and brief historical context. Ex. How has (insert city) demographic makeup changed over time, and how did those changes influence its suburban development? Which neighborhoods in (insert city) were most affected by the Great Influenza pandemic? How did the changing price of (insert crop) affect agriculture and rural society? 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? An interactive web map? A story 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)

Students 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 person will submit a working copy of their digital map to the blog. 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. Final Map project - (150pts)

Each person will submit the final version of their digital map to the blog. It is due by the end of the semester.

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.