

Digital Project #4:
Collaborative Countermapping
CODE 121

Assignment Summary
You will work with a partner to do a counter-mapping project about some aspect of the St. Louis region. You get to decide with your partner what you would like to explore. Topics in previous classes have included mapping the Black Lives Matter Movement in St. Louis's Tower Grove neighborhood, representations of the river in African American history and culture, or the region's centrality for migratory bird patterns.

What is Counter-mapping?
We construct the meaning of places in ways that define who lives where, how resources are distributed, and how we interact with other people, animals, and plants within them. A counter-map shifts our attention away from political boundaries and things you find on Google Maps like shopping centers or gas stations. Instead counter-maps center the lived experiences and knowledge of groups who have been marginalized or it centers ecological perspectives on a place. We can challenge dominant narratives about a place through counter-mapping.

Systemic oppression can mark a place culturally and economically as other or outside, Counter-maps are tools for reparative justice; they tell stories from new perspectives, uncover a history of systemic violence or racism, or amplify the voices of people whose contributions to a place have received minimal attention.

Our Technology
We will be using Leaflet StoryMaps to create your counter-maps. Leaflet is a platform that allows you to mark points and construct narratives on a map. See for example Mapping the Upper Missouri and We Need to Talk About the Border.

Go to Leaflet Tutorial

The Content of Your Maps
Each pair's map should have:

- ➔ A title slide with an image and a co-written description (500 words) of your argument.
- ➔ Four slides per partner that elaborate upon your argument (label each slide with the partner's name). Each slide includes:
  - ◆ A geographic point of reference significant to the argument
  - ◆ A piece of media that is credited and captioned. You can pull image, video, and audio into your slides. Pull together everything you've learned about how to take

good pictures, shoot quality footage, and make meaning with multimedia. Also, make sure any other media you include is within the Public Domain.
- 250-350 words of text explaining what is significant about the geographic reference and how it fits into your argument.
- At least one citation that explains where the information comes from. This might include a book, a newspaper article, or a credible website.

Constructing an Argument

Your counter map should take one community or set of communities in the St. Louis region as its focus. Your team will research the historical and cultural dimensions of your assigned topic to find content for your counter map. Remember that mapping and curation are arguments; you will be constructing one here! Work together to have an overarching argument about your topic. Think about how you want your story to progress. Is your argument chronological? Is it spatial? How will you organize your points to add to that argument?

Conducting Research

To collect research for your map, use credible websites, newspaper articles, academic books, or other sources. A representative from Lovejoy Library's Research Commons will speak with us about how to conduct research.

You might also want to include historical media. Remember to check permissions! Make sure you cite your media sources as well as your text sources! Resources include:

- ➔ Missouri Historical Society Library's digital collections, https://mohistory.org/collections
- ➔ State Historical Society of Missouri's digital collections, https://shsmo.org/collections/digital
- ➔ St. Louis Public Library's digital collections, https://cdm17210.contentdm.oclc.org
- ➔ Digital Public Library of America, https://dp.la
- ➔ Illinois Digital Archive, https://idaillinois.org/
- ➔ St. Louis Mercantile Library's digital collections (especially the Hermann T. Pott National Inland Waterways Library and the John W. Barringer III National Railroad Library), https://www.umsl.edu/mercantile/collections/digital-collections/index.html

Completion Checkpoints

1. **Project Charter [date]**

   You and your partner you will develop a team charter where you elaborate:

- ➔ Your preferred method for communication
- ➔ How you will share your work with one another (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.)
- ➔ Communication responsibilities
- ➔ A one paragraph explanation of your intended argument
- ➔ Significant deadlines (not just those in the syllabus, but also those you set)
- ➔ Team Member Roles and Responsibilities
- ➔ Ground rules to make sure work happens and you have methods for resolving conflict (Discuss how each of you acts in a team and what goals you have for collaboration)

2. **Site Visit [date]**

   On this day, we will not have class so that you can visit your site together. Before you go, make yourself a list of questions you want to ask about how the place relates to your topic. When you arrive ask those questions, but also try to orient yourself in the place. Take

notes and collect images of the site. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? Look for remnants of a past that might exist there to help clarify its previous uses. How has the site been restructured over time for human needs and activities? How might that process have changed the landscape or altered the biodiversity of the area? Try to reorient your perspective; there may be forms of storytelling on the site that frame its cultural meaning. Despite that framing, what stories might remain untold?

3. **Rough Introduction, Outline and Bibliography [date]**
   Turn in a one-paragraph explanation of your project's countermapping argument. Outline each point you will include on your map along with the source you plan to use for each.

4. **Presentations [dates]**
   Each student will summarize and share their portion of the map. Do not read from the slides but create your own summation that you share from notes. Presentations should run for **five to six minutes** with each student speaking for half of the time. Make sure you also have an introduction and conclusion. Work to address your audience, use eye contact, and practice in advance!

Rubric

Criteria	A Proficient Project Will…	A Developing Project Will…	A Project In Need of Work Will…
Argument	Have a clear argument with an appropriate level of detail for understanding something new and specific.; argument is explained well in the introduction, carried through all slides, and aligns with goals of counter-mapping	Have an identifiable argument but lack detail, be narrow in scope, or lack a specific idea or concept; argument might be explained in introduction or the slides but not throughout, or could be more aligned with counter-mapping	Not have an identifiable argument in the introduction or the slides, and does not demonstrate key principles of counter-mapping
Organization	Organize points to tell a story and contribute to argument; have clear introduction to explain argument and prepare users	Have points with an organizational method and an introduction that gives some insight into the experience, purpose, and goals for users	Have minimal organization in points and an introduction that does not introduce key concepts, or explain map's argument
Writing Style/ Grammar	Have clear, compelling content appropriate for audience, with few grammatical errors	Be relatively free of grammatical errors and have a style aligned with the content	Have many grammatical errors, is unclear, and does not consider audience

Map Points	Have well chosen points and illustrative media; locations are effectively described and tied to argument	Have some issues tying points to argument; the student has added multimedia	Have missing points or the purpose of the points is unclear, may be missing multimedia, or does not have the level of content required
Research	Consult appropriate resources for points, including books, websites, and interviews; all slides have citations	Fully-cite research for each point, but would benefit from more credible or appropriate sources	Lack evidence of research; sources are not cited
Collaboration	Have a team who has equally contributed to vision and work of completing the map, while resolving conflict	Have a team who has mostly contributed to vision and subdivided the work fairly	Have a team with poor communication, late work, and limited commitment to work during class
Presentation Content	Have a presentation that effectively summarizes map and provides evidence for argument	Have a presentation that summarizes map and provides some evidence for argument	Have a presentation that does not provide evidence for argument
Presentation Performance	Use a compelling presentation style, speak clearly, look at audience, and not read from notes or site	Speak clearly and connect with audience	Not speak clearly, not connect with audience, has trouble modulating tone; or read from notes or site