

Digital Project #3: Collaborative Counter-mapping

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 countermaps. 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. Each slide includes (label each slide with the partner's name):
 - ◆ 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 the 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 [Week 10, Day 2]

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 [Week 11, Day 1]

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 [Week 12, Day 1]

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 point.

4. Presentations on 11/18 and 11/20

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. Presentation 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	Needs Work	Developing	Proficient
Argument	The map's argument is not identifiable in either the introduction or the slides. Argument does not demonstrate key principles of counter-mapping.	There is an identifiable argument but it may lack detail, be too narrow a scope, or lacks a specific idea or concept. The argument might be elaborated in the introduction or the slides but not throughout. Argument could align more with counter-mapping.	The map's argument has a clear "what" and "so what" with an appropriate level of detail for understanding something new and specific about topic. The argument is explained well in introduction and carried out through all slides. Argument aligns with counter-mapping.

Organization	Points have little to no organizational method. The introduction does not introduce key concepts, or fully elaborate on the map's argument	Points have some organizational method. The introduction gives some insight into the experience, purpose, and goals of the map	Points organization tells a story and contributes to argument; clear introduction to explain argument and prepare users for experience and purpose of map
Writing Style/ Grammar	Content has many grammatical errors, is unclear, and does not consider audience	Map content is relatively free of grammatical errors and the style fits the content well	Map content is clear, compelling, and appropriate for audience, with minimal grammatical errors
Map Points	The purpose of the points is unclear, may be missing multimedia, or does not have the level of content and detail required	The topic of the points may not be best for the argument or the student may have done more to tie the points to the argument. The student has added multimedia	The student's points are well-chosen; they include illustrative media, and the location is effectively described and tied into the argument
Research	Points do not contain evidence of research; sources are not cited	There is fully-cited research for each point, but would benefit from more credible or appropriate sources	Consulted appropriate resources for their points, including books, websites, and interviews. All slides have citations
Collaboration	Poor communication, completed work late, showed limited commitment to work during class, or did not complete their portion	Effectively completed their portion of the project and contributed work that fit into the team's larger vision	Effectively collaborated with and contributed to vision and the work of completing the map, while helping to resolve conflict
Presentation Content	Content contribution was limited or did not contribute to the argument	Provided a clear summary of points and made some connections to argument	Effectively summarized contributions to map to provide evidence for argument
Presentation Performance	Did not speak clearly, made few connections to audience, had trouble modulating tone; read from notes or site	Spoke clearly and connected with audience	Used compelling presentation style. Spoke clearly, looked at audience, and did not read from notes or site.