Map Place Essay Assignment Description

Draft for Workshop Tuesday, November 10th

Essay links & scripts posted to Canvas Thursday, November 12th

Purpose

"Writers have long been writing about the paths they encounter, whether these are found on the other side of the world or in the backyard. It's easy to make the assumption that place writing is synonymous with nature writing. Not so. A NASCAR track, the Apollo Theater, and the riverbank are all places, worthy of the same degree of absorption" (Bradway and Hesse 23). We have been looking at electronic work that needs (or doesn't) the medium, that is, as Hayles says "digital born." The medium we are going to use as a tool of expression for writing about **place is Google My Maps or Knight lab's StoryMap.** This essay will give you the opportunity to explore a place that is significant to you while integrating your writing of memory or research or both with points on an electronic map.

Method

For this essay, you will explore and investigate your place—delve into its history, get to know it, recall visiting it, contemplate your connection to it, and communicate its significance to your reader. Place can be multiple geographical points such as a road trip you took or seemingly unconnected points that are connected by something significant (remember "Mr. Plimpton's Revenge"?). If you are writing about a trip, remember that "**Creative travel writing** has a strong narrative voice and a writer deeply and directly involved in the events of the place. The narrator is usually going somewhere new; a sense of adventuring into the unknown is nearly always the dominant tone, often inflected by physical and/or emotional risk" (24).

You can write about geographical locations like Durham, New Hampshire or locale-based points like a restaurant or coffee shop, a park or cathedral or hospital or home in your hometown or somewhere you visited. You are welcome to add research to your narrative or compose a creative research-based map, just be sure to acknowledge your sources (this goes for images or videos too!). Remember, in-text citations are not needed in creative nonfiction, but you still want to credit your sources (use the full name and title of your source in-text or footnotes).

Once you've decided on your place(s), you will begin with some exploratory writing and move to developing sections (linear or non-linear) of your essay along with the points on your map that you will include. Try to not get too "report-y" here, come back to that beautiful descriptive writing from earlier in the semester and create some scenes rich with detail and dialogue. Although the final essay will be in electronic form, all writing should be composed in a document, to keep all your writing in one place and make it easier to catch typos and other errors (and for grading). You may add images or videos (preferably your own but you can also use Google images & YouTube videos if you cite them in your script). We will work on these in class some and I will be available for any technology questions.

You can use Google My Maps: https://www.google.com/maps/about/mymaps/

Or Knight Lab's StoryMap: https://storymap.knightlab.com/

Audience

Your instructor and your classmates. Drafts of this essay will be discussed in conference and workshop. Someone you want to share your interest in this place or travel experience and its significance with.

Length & Format

Minimum 5 + pages (1300-1500 words). As you may know, it is difficult to count pages when composing or evaluating electronic work. Your essay should be substantial, whether you use many geographic points or just a few. It should be about 5 pages in Word but it can certainly be longer (however also consider text-heavy maps like Mr. Plimpton's ☺). This assignment is worth **15%** of your final grade.

Works Cited

Bradway, Becky and Doug Hess. *Creating Nonfiction, a Guide and Anthology*. Boston:

Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.