

Project 3: Place Based Research

We saw in *Voices of Rondo* how a community held so much meaning for many people. The Rondo neighborhood was a place where people worked, played, lived, and started families. All of that history and those experiences that occurred within the boundaries of that neighborhood which is what made it so difficult for residents to leave. I-94 gutted much of the lasting evidence of those experiences, and the surrounding buildings that survived no longer carry the same meaning.

The objective of this group-based, 4,000-word project is to interpret the meaning of a place. Try to pick small places that are identifiable. So, "Peavey Plaza" works better than "downtown Minneapolis". Much like with the narratives in *Voices of Rondo*, the people who recounted their stories discussed specific places in the neighborhood and cities rather than bringing up Rondo as a place on its own. And with that in mind, you should also consider the fact that different groups of people will ascribe a different type of meaning to the same place. Also, because you will be observing people with a connection to this place, make sure that it's a place that is public or where you won't stand out just sitting around observing and taking notes. This project requires three components. These are not sections or phases. Rather, they should be integrated together in the final product. You will have to determine where each piece of information should go in the structure of what you produce and convince the reader that it belongs there.

Component One:

Textual analysis of news articles published about the place. While you should get some information about the place you have chosen to study from the article, what I predominantly want you to do is to examine the language that is used to describe the place. What adjectives are deployed here? What metaphors? What does this language do to the reader? What is the intention of the writer by deploying this language? What groups of people would this language resonate with? How are different writers describing the same place in different terms? These are a few of the questions that you should ask yourself when reading articles.

I would suggest you start here and begin formulating your loose ideas based on this research.

Component Two:

Visual Analysis of maps, images, or illustrations of this place. Using our two resources for reading images: http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/158521.html and <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Photography-Critique>. You can apply these to an analysis of a map, which we will also cover in class. Use this visual analysis to complicate your analysis. How does reading these visual artifacts slightly complicate the original thoughts you had about a place's meaning? Are certain people excluded? Who would respond best to the visual artifact that you are analyzing? Where was it originally published and what does that tell you about audience? These are a few of the questions that you should ask yourself when reading images and maps.

Component Three:

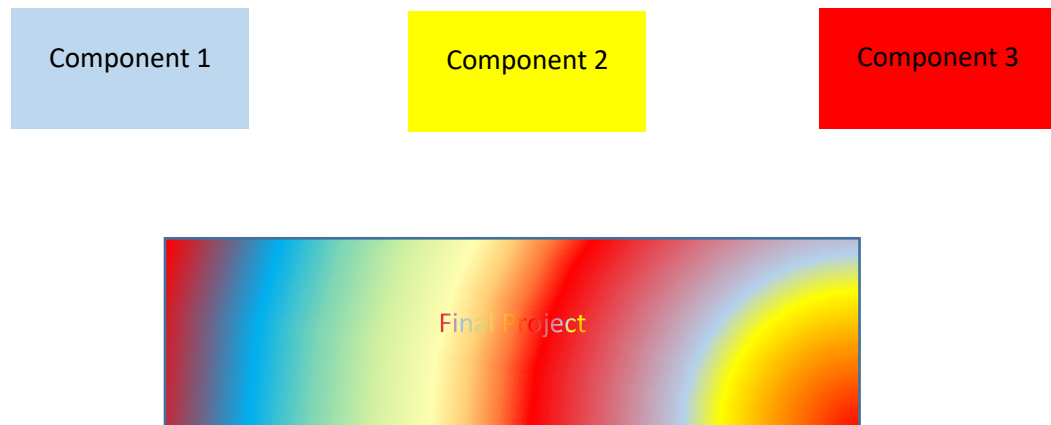
Observation of the place. We will discuss how to conduct an observation protocol and take notes on who uses this space, how people use this space, what types of conversations you hear. You must be able to observe this place between Wed 4/25 and Sunday 4/29. If you need to go sooner, you must let me know and read the reading on Canvas by Sunstein and Strater regarding observation protocols before you observe.

Goals:

You will analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view by considering how articles are written and how visuals are deployed.

You will express yourself in writing skillfully by learning to craft an argument that is specific. Furthermore you will continue to practice talking to your audience, letting the reader know what you are doing in your writing and why you are doing it. This means spending more than one sentence elaborating on what you think is important and why the information you present matters and why it is being presented in that way.

Remember that these components need to be integrated together for most projects. This means that you are not segregating each component in your paper, but rather tracing different themes or patterns that you find to be important and using all the evidence you have from all 3 components to illustrate those patterns.



Also remember that you are not making a proposal for what to do with the place or passing any judgement on how the space could be used. Your goal is to document and analyze so that you can come up with an interpretation that will help me understand what a place means to people—in all of its messiness.

Lastly, cite in APA style and discuss any images that you include.

Note: To get credit, you must include the following documents with your **final** draft

- your drawing of the space you observed
- Reflective and Descriptive Notes
- links to the articles you analyzed
- copy of the map/image you are analyzing

Rubric

C Paper. All components are present. The writing is very mechanical in that information might be presented without much of an analysis or interpretation of what the data means. Or, the interpretation of the data might be superficial or too quick so that the writer does not explain him or herself adequately in the interpretation. Images are presented but may not be adequately explained or elaborated on. APA may be present but inconsistent. Also, the style, syntax, punctuation, and usage may also suffer in places, sounding too informal.

B Paper. All components are present. Each component is elaborated on equally. The writer elaborates well on his or her evidence to make a convincing argument about how a place has meaning for certain groups of people and what that meaning is. The paper could score higher if the writer would complicate the message a little more to bring in other voices but alone, the project is solid. The project uses APA effectively. The style, syntax, punctuation, and usage work well here with only a few distractions.

A Paper. All components are present. The writer engages with the reader about this interesting project—however first person is avoided except where absolutely necessary and the style is very formal and professional. Along with style, the syntax, usage, and punctuation are carefully managed. The writer does a good job in forecasting where s/he is headed and how s/he is interpreting the evidence she has and why s/he is interpreting that particular way. Nothing is “just a given”. Rather evidence is explained in an elaborate way to help the reader understand precisely why the writer is interpreting the evidence as it is presented. The writer also complicates the project by discussing the complexity of the multiple meanings ascribed to the space.

D Paper: some of the components are lacking. An attempt is made to produce a paper in time and while it meets some of the basic requirements, it does not necessarily line up with many of them.

F Paper: The paper is deficient in meeting the goals of the assignment.