

Module Assignment 1: Digital Storytelling

This project advances your understanding of digital storytelling through hands-on experience with a digital platform of your choice.

For this project you will work in groups of three (or four). Each group chooses a subject and develops three storytelling projects around the subject: a timeline project (using [Timeline JS](#)), a map tour project (using [ArcGIS Online Story Map Tour Builder](#)), and a gigapixel story map project (using [Story Map JS Gigapixel](#)). Each person in the group takes charge of one project.

The Subject: You may choose any subject which interests you, provided that it reflects humanities concerns and methods of inquiry. It may be a subject from any of the academic disciplines traditionally considered “humanities,” including but not limited to history, literature, philosophy, ancient and modern languages, archeology, musicology, visual and performing arts, architecture, and anthropology. For example, you may choose as your subject a historical event (e.g., the Whiskey Rebellion), a historical figure (e.g., Leonardo da Vinci or George Washington), or else. You must choose a subject, for which there are sufficient (and sufficiently accurate) temporal, geographical, and visual records to make your projects feasible, rich, and exciting.

The Projects: All projects from each group must “tell a story” of the same subject. For example, if your group chooses “Adolf Hitler” as the subject, you must produce a timeline and a map tour of Hitler’s life. The image you use for the gigapixel story map must also have a close relationship to him, such as one of his paintings (yes, besides being a Nazi leader, Hitler was also a painter), a photograph of him, or a piece of propaganda art or pop art featuring him.

Thinking Through Your Project: The level of detail in a storytelling project may vary significantly. For example, a timeline project of Adolf Hitler may either replicate his life trajectory month by month (or even day by day) or focus on only three or four most important moments of his life. Neither is what I expect in your project. Instead, think of your project as a digital alternative to a short essay, *a multimedia way of expressing your understanding of the chosen subject*. Like when you are writing a short essay, consider the following questions carefully before you start on the project:

- 1) What argument do you want make? (Your argument is your understanding of the subject which you want to share with others.) As in an essay, you may include an introduction and conclusion at the beginning and end of your project.
- 2) What evidence (text, image, video, etc.) do you want to use to support your argument? It is no necessary to include every detail of a person or event in your project. Be selective: include those details in your project which help advance your argument. For example, if you are working on a timeline or map tour of Mao Zedong and you consider him a revolutionary leader who owed his successes and failures to his belief in the power of mass mobilization, you may choose to focus on the formative moments of his revolutionary doctrines and the political

campaigns he launched on the basis of these doctrines, while ignoring his personal life.

For this reason, you are at an advantage by choosing a subject you have the best knowledge of.

Evaluation of the Project: Your project will be graded on the basis of the following criteria:

- a) Argument: Have you made a convincing argument in your project?
- b) Evidence: Does the textual descriptions you write and the evidence (texts, images, videos, and maps) you provide for the project contribute meaningfully to the construction of your argument?
- c) Rhetoric: Have you made effective use of the digital platform to provide a media-rich narrative of the subject beyond what you can do with traditional essays?

Submission of the Project: All projects are due by **noon, Thursday September 17**. The project must be submitted to the online drop box before due. No late work is accepted. Those who work on timelines and map tours must submit the URL along with a copy of the data file (in Google Spreadsheet, MS Excel, or csv format). Those who work on gigapixel story maps need only submit the URL. In class on Thursday you will share your project with a 3-minute lightning presentation followed by a 1-minute Q&A.