

Green Spaces at UML: a collaborative essay assignment

“The charming map above...illustrates the campus amenities, including the area known as ‘The Knoll’ to the right of Coburn Hall...The tall evergreens framed panoramic views of the river, and it became such a favorite spot for students that they named the yearbook after it. Tying the name of both the place and the yearbook together, the 1938 staff wrote: ‘Through this daily living runs a gleam of silver moonlight, us the sparkle of snow on the pines, the fresh scent of a grassy hillside--the campus so dear to our hearts held close in memory with two words: The Knoll.’” (Frank 54)

Your assignment: Our recent discussions of the Common Text addressed the representation of “campus amenities” and their integration into campus life, their meaning to students’ memories of their time in college, and the relationship of such spaces to the Lowell surroundings. The map on p. 54 illustrates all of these qualities regarding a now-lost green space called “The Knoll,” and photographs on p. 54 and 59 show us how that space was used to improve student life. Marie Frank’s captions explain the purpose of this space and its relevance in campus culture and history.

In this paper, you will work with your classmates to identify, photograph and map, and describe as many green spaces as possible across all parts of the university campus. You will then put together a collection of student photographs, maps, and captions as the basis for a critical analysis essay that discusses the role and relevance of green spaces to UML students in 2013. Do contemporary students have spaces on campus that they would also describe as “dear to our hearts” and “held close in memory,” or are changed sentiments at work? Your observations of campus green spaces, combined with your analysis of the graphics and captions collected by your classmates, will form the basis of your argument on this topic.

Objectives: Throughout this unit, you and your classmates will: collaboratively assemble a collection of images; create visual maps that include text labels and other signs (following the map on p. 54 as a model); observe your selected green space in use by the UML community; write captions that vividly and accurately describe a space and its significance; present your findings to the class and share them on the class wiki; correctly cite these student sources in your own paper; draft an analytical argument that synthesizes your responses to these student sources; revise the draft with the input of your writing group; and edit your paper into a polished, finished argument for submission as part of a unit portfolio.

Due dates and assignment steps:

- 1) Weds Oct 9: Each student will be placed in a collaborative work group, which is assigned to parts of North, South, or East campus for observations. Brainstorm with your work group what places are available to you in your assigned area; select which place on that list will be assigned to each student; and create a list of tasks and goals for your photos, maps, and captions using the illustrations on p. 54 and 59 as models.
- 2) Mon Oct. 14: Each student should bring 3-4 photos, a map sketch, and caption drafts to share with your writing group. You’ll workshop these materials and agree on revisions needed so that materials are ready for the assembly of your group presentation in the next class.
- 3) Weds Oct. 16: Final versions of your individual photo contribution, labeled sketches, and captions are due in class; use class period to assemble PowerPoint or Keynote presentations with your writing group.
- 4) Mon Oct. 21: PowerPoint/Keynote presentations. You will take notes on all the campus spaces covered in today’s presentations, then use the remaining class time in class to start prewriting for your analytical argument. Bring any questions you have about the assignment! Presentations and citations must be uploaded to the wiki by midnight tonight.
- 5) Weds Oct. 23: Bring two copies of a typed, edited, 350-400 word essay proposals for workshoping and professor feedback in class. Usual workshop rules apply.

- 6) Mon Oct. 28: Bring a paper copy of your complete essay draft for peer-review workshop. Drafts should be a minimum of two typed pages of text, not including the illustrations you'll download from the wiki. Usual workshop rules apply.
- 7) Weds. Oct. 30: Paper consultations with professor - sign up for appointment time on wiki.
- 8) Fri Nov. 1: Final version of essay due to turnitin by 7:00pm.

Formatting reminders: The final version of the paper should be a minimum of 4 pages long and should follow all the formatting rules set out on the syllabus. Every paper must reference 3-4 student generated images in its analysis, and at least 2 of those must come from writing groups other than your own. You should use MLA-style captions and citations for all images, which should be included within the body of your paper (we'll review in class how to insert and label images correctly).

Assessment:

Collaborative effort (on 10/9, 10/14, and 10/16): 20% of assignment grade
Presentation and wiki upload (on 10/21): 20% of assignment grade
Essay proposal (on 10/23): 10% of assignment grade
Peer-review workshop (on 10/28): 10% of assignment grade
Essay (due 11/1): 40% of assignment grade

See rubrics in syllabus for reminders of how these components are assessed. No overdue or make-up work is permitted for collaborative effort, presentation/wiki upload, essay proposal, or peer-review workshop. Late essays are permitted but the grade is penalized according to the schedule listed on your syllabus.