Teaching Artifacts: Google Earth and Google Earth "Tour Builder"

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Instructor Commentary

The course "Women Writing Worldwide" pairs transnational feminist theory with contemporary fiction by women writers from around the world, and covers topics such as construction of the female body, women and work, relationships and family, exile and immigration, and women and war. The course serves general education requirements in global studies and literature. It also serves as an elective course for the English major and minor, and Women's and Gender Studies. Given its interdisciplinary nature, the course draws a variety of students from across campus from different fields of studies and at different points in their academic career.

In order to engage students from a diversity of academic backgrounds and experience, I have found Google Earth and its applications an effective tool in enhancing student learning while emphasizing the course's global focus. Google Earth is a free, web-based application that serves as a virtual globe and map. In the classroom, this can be used to create interactive lectures and assignments, either as an exploratory tool, or by faculty/students creating their own "maps" as they pertain to coursework. Specifically, I have been using Google Earth "Tour Builder" to deliver interactive online lectures, and as a class, students are using Google Earth to collectively "map" their research of contemporary issues affecting women worldwide.

"Tour Builder" is a web-based storytelling tool that allows individuals to tell and share stories (or "tours") through the Google Earth plug-in. At the start of the semester, I use Tour Builder to help students familiarize themselves with the course and tools we will be using by having them each create a tour that introduces themselves to each other, incorporating photos, map points, and information about their majors, minors, and goals for the course. I also use Tour Builder as a lecture delivery tool, creating tours for some of the authors, stories, and topics we are focusing on each week. In addition to visually moving students around the globe, Google Earth allows students to "explore" the landscape of the different areas we are reading about and discussing. Tour Builder also allows for the integration of web links, photos, and videos, as well as provides space for

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me to ask questions and begin guiding students toward discussion. Here is an example of one of my tours, which is designed to introduce students to the short story "The Rich People's School," by Motswana author Lauri Kubuitsile:
http://tourbuilder.withgoogle.com/builder#play/ahJzfmd3ZWItdG91cmJ1aWxkZXJyEQs SBFRvdXIYgICAiLONswsM.

Students also use Google Earth to create a collaborative project that maps contemporary global issues relating to women. Each student is assigned a country to research and, from his/her research, select a topic to "pin" on our map. Each pin identifies a contemporary issue, individual, organization, or newsworthy event related to women writers and/or global women's studies. Accompanying each pin is a description of the map point, a discussion relating the pin to our course and readings, a photograph, and links to additional resources about the topic. Since students have to research a topic outside of what has been covered in class, the assignment helps them make connections to what we have been learning through the development of their skills with other information literacies. The response to Google Earth and the assignment have been overwhelmingly positive, with students enjoying the visual nature of the map, its ability to make diverse topics more "real," and to demonstrate the interconnectedness of people and information through globalization.

ENG/GBS/WGS 3298: Women Writing Worldwide
Google Earth "Tour Builder" Assignment

Learning Outcome:
Understand and employ a variety of writing process strategies, and become familiar and proficient in technologies that facilitate them.

Assignment:
This summer we will be using Google Earth in our course to enhance our understanding of globalization and the lives of women globally. Specifically, I will be using Google Earth "Tour Builder" to deliver interactive online lectures, and as a class we will use Google Earth to collectively "map" contemporary issues affecting women worldwide.

As noted on the syllabus, one of our topics for this week is "introductions" – both to the course and each other. To facilitate this process and to familiarize yourself with Google Earth, this week you will create a Google Earth Tour Builder "tour" to introduce yourself to the class.

Getting Started with Google Earth and Tour Builder:
1. Google Earth is a free, web-based application that serves as a virtual globe and map. Go to (http://www.google.com/earth/) to download Google Earth. In our lecture materials this week, there are supplemental video tutorials on navigating Google Earth.

2. Once Google Earth and its appropriate plug-ins have been downloaded, you can begin working with Tour Builder. Tour Builder is currently in beta testing for Google Earth and allows individuals to tell and share tours/stories through the Google Earth plug-in. Tour Builder can be accessed at https://tourbuilder.withgoogle.com/. Once on the page, you have the option to view and create tours. Tutorials are available directly on the Tour Builder page. Review the tours and tutorial.

Your Introductory Tour:
Although our class is being conducted online, it will be held in a discussion/seminar format. This requires active participation on your part, and as a women's and gender studies course, we all take equal responsibility for the success of the learning environment. In order to create a space of active educational engagement, you will create a "tour" to introduce yourself to your classmates.

Here is a link to my "tour," introducing myself to you all:
https://tourbuilder.withgoogle.com/builder#play/ahJzfmd3ZWItdG91cmJ1aWxkZXJyEQsSBFRvdXIYgICA8IqJnwkM

In creating your tours, please make sure to include the following:
  o At least 3 tour "locations"
  o Who are you? What is your major? Interests? Hobbies?
  o Why did you take this course? What are you hoping to gain from "Women Writing Worldwide? What do you think will be the most interesting aspect(s) of the course for you and why? What do you think will be the most challenging aspect(s) for you and why? What are 2 or 3 things you will do to help yourself meet these challenges?

When you finish your tour, please copy the web address and paste it in the Discussion Forum labeled "Google Tour Class Introductions."

ENG/GBS/WGS 3298: Women Writing Worldwide
Women Worldwide: Global Focus Mapping Project

Learning Outcome:
Become aware of current cultural and political concerns affecting women's lives globally.

Assignment:
As a class we will use Google Earth to collectively "map" contemporary issues affecting women worldwide. Students will be assigned a country and will research it in the context of contemporary global women's issues, making connections to our course readings and discussion. Students will identify a contemporary issue/organization/news worthy event

relate to women writers and/or global women's studies and locate it with a "pin" on our class Google Earth map. Each pin should be accompanied by the following: a description of your map point; at least one web link; an image, video, or audio file; and a quotation from one of our readings that relates to the map point.

After being assigned their country, students will do the following:
1. Make sure you have downloaded the free "Google Earth" software to your computer (http://www.google.com/earth/).
2. Begin research on your country, paying particular attention to recent newsworthy events related to women, activist groups dedicated to women's issues, and/or contemporary women writers.
3. After selecting your "topic" for mapping, gathering the following:
   a. The latitude and longitude coordinates of your map point (known as a "pin").
   b. An image for your pin.
   c. At least one web link for additional information on your topic.
   d. A 100- to 200-word description of your "pin" topic.
   e. A quotation from one of our readings that relates to your "pin."
   f. Although not required, you may also link to an additional web link, video, audio file, or image.

Example:
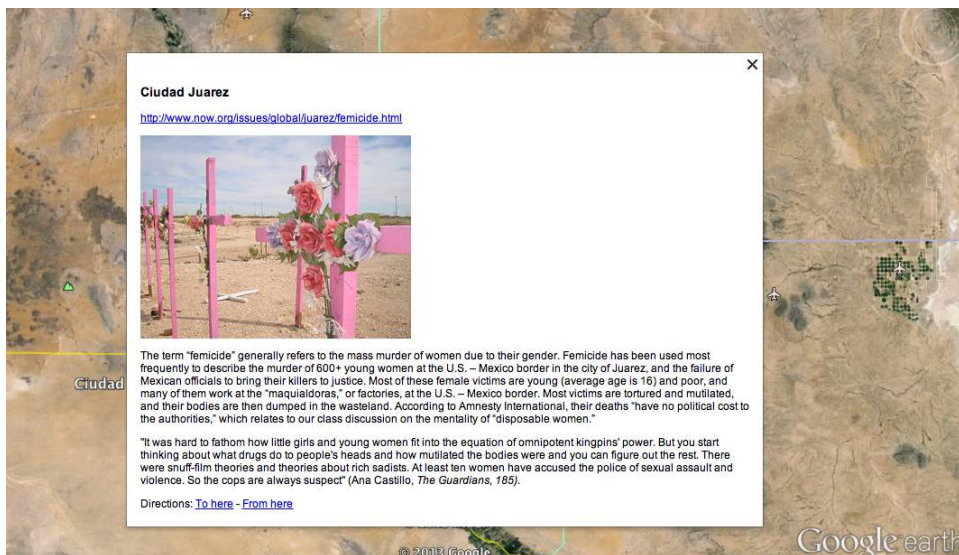
4. Once you have compiled this information submit it as a Word or Pages document under "Assignments."
5. Additionally, you must also upload all the information to our class Google spreadsheet. [2]

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[2] The "Google Earth Outreach" tutorial "Spreadsheet Mapper" can be found at http://www.google.com/earth/outreach/tutorials/spreadsheet3.html.

a. Spreadsheet link:
   https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AqgqOMIErsrrdFFUbDlK
   ZkVOb3dXdlJKTUkxd21uYnc&usp=sharing
b. Find the row with your name.
c. Fill in the latitude, longitude, and address of your "pin" location.
d. Under the column "Title," give the name of your location.
e. Under the column "Subtitle," provide a heading for your "pin."
f. Under the column "Photo URL" provide the Image URL address for your pin (when using images from the web, make sure to "Copy Image Address" or "Copy Image Location").
g. Under the column "Paragraph1 Text" provide your 100- to 200-word description of your "pin" topic.
h. Under the column "Paragraph2 Text" provide a quotation from one of our assigned readings that relates to your "pin."
i. Under the column "Link1 URL" provide a URL address for a web link that provides additional information that relates to your topic.
j. If you would like to provide an additional link to a video, photo, or further information, provide the URL under the column "Link2 URL." Provide a description of the additional information under the column "Link2 Text."

Here is an example of the opening "pin" I have created for our map:
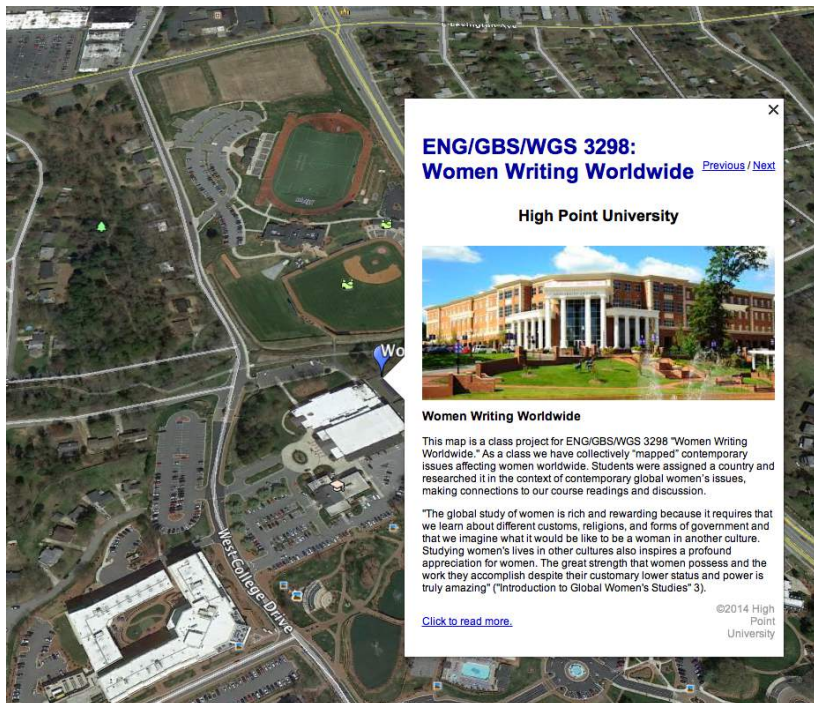
Once everyone's pin has been created, I will provide a "Google Earth Link" on our Blackboard navigation menu:

Clicking on the link will provide you the map file and with instructions on completing the assignment. You will need to post in the forum thread "Google Earth Discussion" during our last week of class, commenting on your why you selected your pin, responding to at least two of your classmates' pins, and relating the map as a whole to your understanding of global women's studies and women writing worldwide.

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rJa31ZUhXgrcD86klIBCXGhpNKIH0&s=L_On3uVh7iBrI1Pj_pB-
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=AwIF-g&c=Oo8bPJf7k7r_cPTz1JF7vEiFxvFRfQtp-
j14fFwh71U&r=hwR7Jvq_2gI6BCi2xTUrMxTrLfdm6GbeC8KHi-
JUK1I&m=i6_Ll6s6yd_-B-
rJa31ZUhXgrcD86klIBCXGhpNKIH0&s=hr_KeGiBm17ykbenMcBhbrCOPD7K
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d=AwIF-g&c=Oo8bPJf7k7r_cPTz1JF7vEiFxvFRfQtp-
j14fFwh71U&r=hwR7Jvq_2gI6BCi2xTUrMxTrLfdm6GbeC8KHi-
JUK1I&m=i6_Ll6s6yd_-B-
rJa31ZUhXgrcD86klIBCXGhpNKIH0&s=a8leSqWakTHM3UHw2H35INmiWB
aEoWQFX4O8QObeoE8&e=

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j14fFwh71U&r=hwR7Jvq_2gI6BCi2xTUrMxTrLfdm6GbeC8KHi-
JUK1I&m=i6_Ll6s6yd_-B-
rJa31ZUhXgrcD86klIBCXGhpNKIH0&s=1X8a0ia0Op8YTFubkc-
bNYh_5PkF8eeEWjghepuNkSw&e=

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JUK1I&m=i6_Ll6s6yd_-B-
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j14fFwh71U&r=hwR7Jvq_2gI6BCi2xTUrMxTrLfdm6GbeC8KHi-JUK1I&m=i6_Ll6s6yd_-B-rJa31ZUhXgrcD86klIBCXGhpNKIH0&s=g4M-i-6roHechGYkp5-t4ZOwIycS3JJ3He9xvuoOEFM&e=