

Urban Art and Literature in Ciudad Juárez, México

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A proposal submitted for consideration under the auspices of the Five Colleges' Mellon-funded Digital Scholarship initiative.

Project Description

1. Description of the nature of the project and potential for curricular integration

Digital Map of the Poetics of Hispanic American Literature: An Interactive and Hermeneutical Exegesis

The Digital Map of the Poetics of Hispanic American Literature project will create the digital cartography of a Hispanic American anthology literary work, and urban art, which will form an essential part of the curriculum in two of my Latin American Novel courses: SPAN 360: Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Mexican Literature and Popular Cultures, and SPAN 364: The Latin American Novel Within Its Revolutions, Cultures and Social Changes. Furthermore, since the digital map will eventually be housed on a website, researchers, faculty members and students from all over the world will be able to access it as a pedagogical and investigative tool. The book that will be the focus of the project is the anthology *Sangre mía / Blood of Mine: Poetry of Border Violence, Gender and Identity in Ciudad Juárez* that I co-edited with Professor Jennifer Rathbun from Ashland University, a book that I have been using in the aforementioned courses in order to teach on the US/Mexico border literature. This collection of poetry bring together the voices of fifty-three authors, and artists, that best represent the poetic response to violence and femicide in the US/Mexico border region which has marked, since the 1990s, an emergence of a literary, socially and politically compromised cultural work that has formed part of a socio-political, emotional as well as intellectual debate about the construction of feminine "Juarensé" identity.

The pedagogical objective is to create, along with the students in the class, two research assistant students (Jocelyne Muñoz and Miranda Dean), and Makenna Huff, a post-baccalaureate technical consultant, a digital map from an interactive and hermeneutical point of view, in other words, a literary text interpretation. The students and I, and with the

support of the instructional technologist/s, will digitally format the literary analysis, including the collection of data extracted from the poems in *Sangre mía / Blood of Mine*, as well as digital images and videos of a current Urban Art Movement going on in Ciudad Juárez which includes poetry and graffiti, into a broad and elaborate interactive map which will detail events, historical characters, as well as places and other relevant historical information and news. By creating a digital map of *Sangre mía / Blood of Mine*, and urban art my goal is to engage my students with the course material using another elaborated approach. The pedagogical objective is to enhance student-learning outcomes related to their comprehension, proficiency and analysis of the Spanish language and Hispanic American cultures and literatures. Both the creation and the completion of the project provides rich new digital content for curriculum in the Modern Foreign Language Department at Ohio Wesleyan, and the larger academic community.

The creation of a digital cartography will provide students with opportunities to augment their knowledge from languages, literatures, the arts and global cultural studies by exploring a variety of digital skillsets. In addition to reading and analyzing the selected literary works, students will be asked to collect and curate digital media and to assimilate media into a digital environment for presentation to their academic peers and, eventually, the larger scholarly community. In other words, students will be complementing their literary analysis with a range of digital literacies.

My previous classroom experience with digital projects has been a very rewarding one for the students and for me. In fall 2014 my students enjoyed working with digital projects, and I'm sure that they benefit from the team experience, as it was an innovative approach to the learning of Hispanic American literature and culture. In Fall 2014 the first digital project that I developed in my literature class consisted of adapting the novel *Pedro Páramo* by Mexican author Juan Rulfo into a comic book. This project was accomplished by using www.pixton.com, a commercial digital program for creating programs widely used in many elementary and secondary schools. It had very positive results, as my upper level students felt motivated to read the novel, which can be challenging, and were responsible for the creation and presentation of the comic on a determined section of the novel.

When students presented their comic strip projects to the entire class in Spanish, the discussions were highly engaging. Indeed, the students gained and demonstrated a broader and deeper breadth of understanding of the challenging literary work thanks to the comic maker program. In addition to the creation of the comic strip, students completed a second group project where each group read a different novel. After reading the novel they produced a movie trailer for the book, which included characterization, filming, editing and a literary analysis of each work. Once again the results were very positive. Students were academically engaged and, in addition to reading the course material, they were able to interact among themselves, discuss and analyze the work at much higher levels. The course objectives were reached in a highly educational, motivational, and even entertaining manner. I'm including the YouTube site on one of the trailers that students worked on produced for this course:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nztjrjEZuFk>

2. Timeline for implementation

- Before ILiADS, < 7/24/15
 - Create Omeka/Neatline instance for project use
 - Engage Makenna Huff, the post-baccalaureate technical consultant, in site development
 - Identify map(s) to use on the site: google map
 - Begin identifying metadata, site interface characteristics (i.e. menus, forms, categories, timelines, etc.) and domain name
- During ILiADS, 7/27 - 7/31/15
 - Continue site development, working through issues, consulting with Makenna offsite and colleagues onsite
 - Revise technical and/or pedagogical plan as needed based on experience at the institute
 - Engage experts at the institute in working through any difficulties identified
- After ILiADS, before start of fall semester, 8/3 - 8/21/15
 - Complete user interface of website, with sample content
 - Publish site on hosting platform with permanent URL
 - Complete backend processes of site functionality
 - Test pedagogical processes of using site in classes
 - Finalize SPAN 360 syllabus
- Fall semester, 8/24 - 12/4/15
 - Use site in teaching of SPAN 360, engaging students in digital mapping, uploading & entering literature, sound, pictures and video onto site
- Near end of fall semester, 12/7 - 12/11/15
 - Survey students for feedback and evaluation of integration of the site into their coursework
 - Present site to the campus community with students presenting their work
- Between fall & spring semesters, 12/18/15 - 1/8/16
 - Review lessons learned from fall course experiences
 - Revise site and pedagogical plan for spring '16 course
 - Finalize SPAN 364 syllabus
- Spring semester, 1/11 - 4/28/16
 - Use site in teaching of SPAN 364, engaging students...
 - Present project at the Ohio Latin American Conference in February 2016: At least two students should attend the conference and participate in the presentation.
- Near end of spring semester, 4/25 - 4/28/16
 - Survey students...
 - Present site and student work
- After spring semester, < 5/9/16
 - Review lessons learned over academic year

- Plan and prepare for fall '16

3. Sources of financial support other than the Mellon DC grant,

I will make use of \$700.00 my OWU (2015-2016) yearly professional research funds in order to present the work in the Ohio Latin American Conference in February 2016, and will request support from the Latin American Studies Program and include a couple of students. I will prepare a group presentation of the digital mapping for the conference rather than just the reading of a paper.

4. Description of the role of the libraries/librarian(s) and/or Digital Scholar

David Soliday, Instructional Technologist at Ohio Wesleyan University's Information Services, will offer the technological knowledge and experience during the creation of the digital map. His mastery in identifying and applying technologies to enhance the student learning experience will be valuable in the digital project. Mr. Soliday will offer consultation and coaching sessions on handling the learning management system, and will be in communication with Makenna Huff, the technical consultant in charge of digital support. David will also assist her and me in the design of the web page. We'll be using Neatline and Omeka, and most likely Reclaim Hosting as the digital engines for this project.

Jennifer Rathbun, US/México Border Literature and Culture Specialist and Spanish Professor at Ashland University will collaborate in this project with the Spanish to English translation, revision and editing of the site. Rathbun will also provide border area academic research consultation and will be in communication with Juan Armando Rojas.

Jacob Heil, Mellon Digital Scholar for the Five Colleges will provide top-level consultation on the project's development. While he will not be available to manage day-to-day aspects of the project, he will be able to coordinate some outreach for questions both technical and organizational. Jacob will also be a hub for consortial communications about the project, should opportunities for local collaboration arise. In addition, as an organizing member of the Institute for Liberal Arts Digital Scholarship (ILiADS) he will guide the project toward the 27 JUL workshop, during which the courses' curricula will be mapped out.

Makenna Huff, post-baccalaureate technical consultant, will support me with the creation of the site, and will go through the revisions with David Soliday, who will be giving her support in order to ramp-up the project. Makenna will be building the website, most likely by creating a copy of her previous experience with Dr. David Eastman. Makenna will also be helping me during the map's definition, as well as defining the meta-data, and she will be setting up the info/data on the website. Having Makenna Huff in the project is crucial as she will be instrumental in the creation of the site.

5. Venues for dissemination to a wider audience (conferences, publications, websites)

As mentioned earlier, the objective is to create the digital cartography of a Hispanic American anthology literary work, and urban art, which will form an essential part of the curriculum in two of my Latin American Novel courses: **SPAN 360: Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Mexican Literature and Popular Cultures**, and **SPAN 364: The Latin American Novel Within Its Revolutions, Cultures and Social Changes**. Furthermore, since the digital map will eventually be housed on a website, researchers, faculty members and students from all over the world will be able to access it as a pedagogical and investigative tool.

6. Budget:

Student wages (breakdown): 2 students for fall semester to work as research assistants (10 hrs/wk): Jocelyne Muñoz and Miranda Dean (both students have showed interest). 14 weeks x 10 hrs = 140 hrs x 2 students = 280 hrs x \$8.10 (minimum wage)	\$2,268.00
Makenna Huff (technical consulting) (100 hrs at \$15)	\$1,500.00
Presentation materials and digital supplies	\$ 500.00
Hosting with Reclaim Hosting for three years (@ \$45)	\$ 135.00
Professional Development (Rojas)	\$1,500.00
• TOTAL	\$5,903.00

7. Plan to assess the effectiveness of the course development or renovation

Assessment will take several different forms. In terms of student research development, each work will go through a peer editing process and will receive a final assessment and grade from the instructor. From the students' side, course evaluations will be modified to specifically solicit feedback on the online mapping and knowledge creation. This will provide valuable information on their experience of this process. These will aid in any future modifications of the project and its implementation. In terms of the assessment of the site, we can use metrics to determine how much the site is being used and by whom: Google Analytics, for example, can be easily embedded into any platform. Additionally, qualitative feedback will also be sought from other instructors who are using the site in their courses at other institutions, either by way of direct contact or web-forms embedded in the site's interface.

8. Discussion of the project's sustainability that considers, for example, its imagined lifespan

The site will be hosted on Reclaim hosting for the first three years, after which point the platform will be evaluated and either continued using PI or departmental funds. The technical backbone of the project -- the installations of Omeka and Wordpress.

The outcome of using digital tools in the class is becoming more and more essential in education, which is why sustainability is crucial. I do expect, and it's my intention, for the Digital Map of the Poetics of Hispanic American Literature project to enhance students' learning and faculty collaborations across the curriculum in a liberal arts institution, and the larger academic community.

As an essential step in the development of the project **Urban Art and Literature in Ciudad Juárez**, David Soliday and Juan Armando Rojas were accepted to ILiADS (Institute for Liberal Arts Digital Scholarship), a digital immersion institute where they will participate in teams composed of researchers, librarians, technologists, and students, in order to continue the site <<<http://www.ciudadjuarezartandpoetry.org>>> development, working through issues, consulting with Makenna Hoff offsite and colleagues onsite. Soliday and Rojas will also revise the technical and/or pedagogical plan as needed based on experience at the institute, and engage experts at the institute in working through any difficulties identified, and will engage in conversations geared to create digital humanities pedagogy and scholarship networks.

I plan to continue using and further developing the digital map for both of the aforementioned courses that I teach at **OWU, SPAN 360**, and **SPAN 364**. An essential element of the sustainability is precisely the updating of the literary and cultural elements. Updating and sustainability of the digital map will be feasible as it concentrates on contemporary literary and urban art movements occurring in Ciudad Juárez, and for both courses my students have to read and find material in order to present it in class for discussion. The sustainability is essential for my courses, as it will create more solid analysis questions and class discussion, in other words, more participation.

Gratefully yours,

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