

Fall 2021

## The Google Tour Project

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## **Inclusion Initiative - Fall 2021**

### **Signature Assignment Information**

Faculty Name: Colton Saylor  
Department: English and Comparative Literature  
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Semester taught assignment: Fall 2021 (Spring 2022 as well)  
Course Title: English 1B: Argument and Analysis  
Assignment Title: The Google Tour Project  
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Context: This assignment helps culminate our class theme, “Reading and Writing the City,” in which we explore representations of urban life from a variety of perspectives and academic disciplines. Our final unit takes on the issue of gentrification; more specifically, we explore how the issue revolves around stories of either progress or subjugation (depending on who is telling the story). After scaffolding some background on the issue and what it means, students form into groups and create these digital tours that serve as visual essays. In creating their own arguments either for or against gentrification, they take on their own stories of this issue and how it affects their immediate community. At the same time, they are able to utilize our lessons on essay structure, close analysis, and argumentation in order to express their own opinions on an issue that impacts all of them.

The two texts we’ve read before this assignment, Jamaica Kincaid’s *A Small Place* and Tommy Orange’s *There There*, help model the ways in which personal expression can highlight issues in one’s home city or country. We especially focus on Kincaid’s subversion of the tour guide structure in order to conduct her own visual analysis of St. John’s, Antigua and its lingering traces of colonialism post-independence.

Aside from the opportunity for students to put their analytical and argumentative skills to work on concrete space, this project seeks to empower students to mine their own experience as part of their intellectual archive. In doing so, our course posits that to understand the city is to read it as a diverse and constantly shifting space, one that requires embracing renegotiation and understanding.

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**Prompt: Create a tour using Google Earth Projects that takes visitors through different sites in Silicon Valley while persuading them that gentrification has either harmed or helped the community.**

This project is a two-part assignment that revolves around a digital tour designed and written by your group that both informs visitors and argues either for or against supporting gentrification. Your group is completing the same project as Kincaid in *A Small Place*: using the Tour genre in order to make a critical argument about your city. In addition, like Tommy Orange, you’re composing an argument about the city that relies on personal experience.

Your audience for your tour is an outside visitor who has never been to Silicon Valley. You are all their tour guides to help them understand your interpretation of the city.

## **I. STEPS FOR COMPLETING ASSIGNMENT**

Step 1: With your group, decide what the thesis of your tour will be. Based on your experience of Silicon Valley, do you think gentrification has had a positive or negative impact on the community?

Step 2: Find a series of sites in San Jose/Bay Area that you think correspond to your topic. Choose places that you have been to before (it will make discussing it easier). Assign each group member a site of your tour to research, analyze, and present on.

Step 3: Decide on the order of your tour. You will be asked to explain why you chose the order you did for your walking tour during your presentation. Remember: you are telling a story as well as supporting a position.

Step 4: Using Google Earth Projects, construct your tour. You'll present using Google Earth during our Zoom session.

Step 5: As a group, present your tour to the rest of the class. You must be logged onto Zoom on the day of the presentation to earn credit for this section.

## **II. WHAT TO TURN IN FOR CREDIT**

**INDIVIDUAL TOUR STOP ANALYSIS (5%, 20 Points possible, 5 points per each requirement), 500 words minimum.**

WHAT THIS IS: Your individual analysis of your assigned tour stop. It should include:

1. Summary of the stop's basic visual elements (what it looks like).
2. Any significant information or historic background about object or area that you think is important
3. Analysis of at least three features of object that have been impacted by gentrification (these features can be visual, historical, cultural--essentially any three ways that you think deserve discussion to justify why this stop is on a gentrification tour).
4. Summarize why this stop supports your group's thesis.

Can be in numbered or bullet form, but must be at least 500 words. Include words cited for any research. MLA Header required.

### **GROUP PRESENTATION (2.5%)**

#### **Group Presentations must include the following FOUR Components**

1. Completed Google Earth Project Tour (completed means the thesis is in the opening description, you have all locals added to the map, and you have a line drawn that shows the order of your tour)
2. Thesis statement
3. One tour stop per individual group member. For each stop, each group member will cover their individual analysis steps (Summary of visual elements; background; analysis of three different features; how it relates to your group's thesis).
4. Conclusion section that explains logic of tour order and explanation of why this issue is important to better understanding gentrification and Silicon Valley. (This doesn't have to be a unique stop—it can just be a verbal section by one group member that closes the presentation).

## **Learning Outcomes (from our course syllabus)**

- Use a critical lens to read a variety of literary, rhetorical, and professional works of the human intellect and imagination.
- Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject. (from ENGL dept C2 course learning goals)
- Explain how a text both frames and is framed by a variety of critical lenses: cultural, historical, socio-economic, political, and personal.
- Demonstrate how humanistic methods of reasoning and arguing can prepare students to meet the global challenges facing scientists and engineers.