

Essay #1: Space and Cecilia

Due: 1/28/2015 (Wednesday)

Hard copy due in class and electronic copy through Blackboard before class begins
Length: 500 word (c. 2 pages) minimum, 750 word (c. 3 pages) maximum

What am I supposed to Do?

As you read through Bennett's text, pay attention to the different aspects of spatial awareness and usage that Cecilia (or someone like her) would have experienced during the course of their day-to-day life in a medieval town. Think about the ways that the spatial factors you identify might influence the way that Cecilia would have experienced and thought about her world.

In a brief, 2-3 page essay identify at least two aspects of space and/or movement that you see in Cecilia's life, and discuss the ways that you see those elements connecting and interacting with each other. Develop a thesis, and support your argument with evidence from the text.

Why? What's the point?

This assignment is intended to act as both an introduction to everyday medieval life, and as a prompt to get us thinking about how medieval people might have seen and constructed the world around them. This will also be our first attempt at using evidence that we find in a text and using it in support of a considered argument.

How do I do this again?

- As with all papers for this class, you should use the Turabian citation style.
- Your paper should be double spaced, and in Time New Roman 12 pt. font
- Your paper must be at least 900 words long, not including your Works Cited page. You may exceed this limit if you wish, but you do not need to do so.
- You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with me to discuss your paper prior to the deadline if you have concerns about your progress, or you would like a second opinion about your work before you turn it in for a grade.

How am I getting graded?

This paper will be ungraded. You get full marks for turning it in (on time).

Your paper will be evaluated for the following elements:

- A clear and convincing argument
- Thoughtful consideration of the connections and intersections between the spatial elements that you chose
- Appropriate use of textual evidence in support of your argument
- Conformity to basic standards of written academic prose, including:
 - Correct spelling and grammar
 - General coherence and logical progression of your argument
 - Proper citation

Essay #2: Pilgrimage: Then and Now

Due: 2/11/2014 (Wednesday)

Hard copy due in class and electronic copy via Blackboard before class begins

Length: 750 word (c. 3 pages) minimum

What am I supposed to Do?

These past several weeks we have been learning about medieval pilgrimage, and thinking about some of the ways that people in Europe during the Middle Ages might have understood their local spaces as being connected to a more global geography. We have also been thinking about modern practices of pilgrimage and movement. For this essay, I would like you to connect these two ideas.

Pick a modern pilgrimage – civic, religious, or cultural – and find an autobiographical account by a pilgrim (this can be in the form of a book, a blog, a video diary, etc.). Consider this source against one of the medieval pilgrim accounts from the Whalen book (the letters of Etheria, or the itinerary of Richard of Verdun, for example). Do you notice similarities between the motivations or experiences that your two subjects expressed? Were their journeys alike or different? Based on your two sources, make an original argument for or against for the connections or disconnections that you see between the medieval and the modern pilgrimage.

Why? What's the point?

This assignment is meant to help us continue to learn about the dynamic movement of people in the Middle Ages, and to think about the ways that that medieval ideas about space and travel inform our own notions and habits. The essay offers the chance for you to practice reading original sources for important content, and to work on comparing primary documents in order to establish a defensible thesis.

How do I do this again?

- As with all papers for this class, you should use the Turabian citation style.
- Your paper should be double spaced, and in Time New Roman 12 pt. font
- Your paper must be at least 750 words long, not including your Works Cited page. You may exceed this limit if you wish, but you do not need to do so.
- You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with me to discuss your paper prior to the deadline if you have concerns about your progress, or you would like a second opinion about your work before you turn it in for a grade.

How am I getting graded?

Your paper will be evaluated for the following elements:

- A clear and convincing argument
- Thoughtful consideration of the connections and intersections between your two main pilgrimage accounts
- Appropriate use of textual evidence in support of your argument
- Conformity to basic standards of written academic prose, including:
 - Correct spelling and grammar
 - General coherence and logical progression of your argument
 - Proper citation

Essay #3: William Wey and the Turner Paradigm

Proposal Due: 2/20 – 150 words

Draft Due: 3/4

Conference with professor: By 3/6

Final Paper Due: 3/13/2015 (Friday)

Hard copy due in class and electronic copy via Blackboard before class begins

Length: 1250-1500 words (c. 5-6 pages)

What am I supposed to Do?

We have recently taken some time to think about pilgrimage as a social institution, looking at it through the lenses of *communitas* and *liminality* that the Turners provided for us. We have also done some work thinking about medieval pilgrimage using the framework of the Turner Paradigm. For this essay, however, I would like you to approach the issue from the other side: I want you to investigate the Turner's theory using our primary documents.

Consider the Turner's theories using the *Itineraries* of William Wey, focusing on the sections that we have read about Wey's pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Do the Turners' ideas adequately describe the medieval pilgrimage that Wey experienced? How liminal was his journey? Did he experience a sense of community with his fellow travelers? Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the theory as you see it reflected in Wey's writing. Consider both *liminality* and *communitas* in your response, and support your arguments with textual evidence.

Why? What's the point?

Theory, such as the Turner Paradigm, forms a fantastic tool with which historians can examine and contextualize past events. However, we must not take theory uncritically. Sometimes ideas (even ones that make good sense conceptually) don't play out well in the face of the evidence – a fact not confined solely to the field of history! This essay offers you the opportunity to continue to improve your ability to read texts for important evidence, and to use that evidence to help think about the applicability of modern theory.

How do I do this again?

- As with all papers for this class, you should use the Turabian citation style.
- Your paper should be double spaced, and in Time New Roman 12 pt. font
- Your paper must be at least 1250 words long, not including your Works Cited page. You may exceed this limit if you wish, but you do not need to do so.
- You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with me to discuss your paper prior to the deadline if you have concerns about your progress, or you would like a second opinion about your work before you turn it in for a grade.

How am I getting graded?

Your paper will be evaluated for the following elements:

- A clear and convincing argument
- Consideration of both halves of the Turner's theory (*communitas* and *liminality*)
- Participation in all stages of the process: Proposal, Draft, Conference and Final
- Appropriate use of textual evidence from Wey in support of your argument

- Conformity to basic standards of written academic prose, including:
 - Correct spelling and grammar
 - General coherence and logical progression of your argument
 - Proper citation

Essay #4: Marco Polo and John Mandeville

Proposal Due in class: 3/23 (Monday) – 150 words

Draft Due in class: 4/6 (Monday (after Spring Break)

Final Paper Due: 4/10/2015 (Friday)

Hard copy due in class and electronic copy by email before class begins

Turn in your peer-edited proposals and drafts as well.

Length: 1250-1500 words (c. 5-6 pages)

What am I supposed to Do?

We have recently read both John Mandeville and Marco Polo – two medieval travel writers whose works strongly influenced the ways that medieval Europeans saw themselves in relation to the world around them. In this essay I would like you to compare and contrast the two books, with an eye towards the role of space, place, and physical points of emphasis within the texts. What were the two authors interested in spatially? Are there areas of overlap between the texts? Areas of divergence? You might want to think about the ways that Polo and Mandeville represented the world and its people.

Based on your observations, make an original argument for **why** these connections or differences are important? Draw supporting evidence primarily from Polo and from Mandeville in support of your case, but don't feel constrained to only use those texts. If you need additional evidence to support or contextualize your claims, you should feel free to draw from other sources, including from texts that we have read earlier in the semester.

Why? What's the point?

With this essay we are going to be taking some of the skills we have been working on – most notably those that deal with making strong arguments from textual evidence – to compare two separate texts against each other. The goal is for you to be able to make substantiated and evidenced claims from both documents in support of a syncretic thesis that uses the authors' works to look for significance beyond the texts.

How do I do this again?

- As with all papers for this class, you should use the Turabian citation style.
- Your paper should be double spaced, and in Time New Roman 12 pt. font
- Your paper must be at least 1250 words long, not including your Works Cited page. You may exceed this limit if you wish, but you do not need to do so.
- You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with me to discuss your paper prior to the deadline if you have concerns about your progress, or you would like a second opinion about your work before you turn it in for a grade.

How am I getting graded?

Your paper will be evaluated for the following elements:

- A clear and convincing argument
- Participation in all stages of the process: Draft, Peer Review, and Final
- Appropriate use of textual evidence from both Polo and Mandeville in support of your argument
- Conformity to basic standards of written academic prose, including:

- Correct spelling and grammar
- General coherence and logical progression of your argument
- Proper citation

Essay #5: Annotated Bibliography for Essay #6

Due: 4/24/2015, 10:10 am

Electronic copy via Blackboard
Length: 7 sources, external to class readings

What am I supposed to Do?

For this assignment you will need to find 7 that are external to the texts we've used in class, and that you plan to use as evidence and sources for your Essay #6. Your sources can be about mapping generally, medieval maps, or about your particular map. You may draw from books, from journal articles, and from appropriate websites (if you have questions about the appropriateness of a site, I am happy to help you make an assessment). For each source you will need to write a paragraph briefly summarizing the sources' details (author, date, location, etc.), the basic elements of the source (what the source is about, important arguments, etc.), and lastly the detailing the basic elements of the source that you believe will be useful to you as you write your paper.

Why? What's the point?

This assignment serves to help make sure that you are working towards Essay 6 in a productive way, and to give you a vehicle for researching beyond the texts that we have been working with.

How do I do this again?

- As with all papers for this class, you should use the Turabian citation style.
- Your paper should be double spaced, and in Time New Roman 12 pt. font
- Your paper must have at least 1 paragraph noting the important features for each of 7 sources. You may exceed this limit if you wish, but you do not need to do so.
- You are encouraged to schedule additional appointments with me to discuss your paper prior to the deadline if you have concerns about your progress, or you would like a second opinion about your work before you turn it in for a grade.

How am I getting graded?

Your paper will be evaluated for the following elements:

- Complete number of sources
- Quality of sources (no Wikipedia!)
- Compliance with basic elements of standard written English.
- Turning the assignment in on time.

Essay #6: Maps and Space

Meeting with instructor: by 4/17 to discuss proposal

Essay #5 (Annotated Bibliography for Essay 6) due: 4/24 via Blackboard

Draft Due in class: 5/1 (Friday.) for peer review (bring 2 hard copies)

Final Paper Due: 5/15/2014 - midnight

Electronic copy via Blackboard

Length: 2000-2500 words (8-10 pages)

What am I supposed to Do?

For this last paper, you need to pick a medieval map – one of the ones we have been looking at, or a different one if you prefer – and consider it in the broader context of the material that we have read this semester. Do the ideas about space and geography that we have looked at get represented and reproduced on the map? Or is the mapmaker doing working with very different ideas about the world? How are spaces being created and imagined?

Make an original argument about the ways that space is produced in the medieval period, working from your map, and from the texts we have read. You will almost certainly need to rely on external information to help fill in the gaps in your knowledge about the map you'll be working with. You have a wide latitude in how you want to pursue your thesis, but make sure that you are synthesizing an original idea, rather than simply offering a compare/contrast review of the materials.

Why? What's the point?

Over the course of the semester we have examined a wide range of documents and ideas that informed the ways that medieval people thought about spaces. We've looked at local spaces with Cecilia, regional spaces with some of our pilgrims, and global spaces with our world travelers and our cartographers. This essay offers you the opportunity to harmonize what we've learned, and apply it in a longer essay. Additionally, for this essay you will need to do some research beyond what we've read in order to understand that map that you've chosen.

How do I do this again?

- As with all papers for this class, you should use the Turabian citation style.
- Your paper should be double spaced, and in Time New Roman 12 pt. font
- Your paper must be at least 2000 words long, not including your Works Cited page. You may exceed this limit if you wish, but you do not need to do so.
- You are encouraged to schedule additional appointments with me to discuss your paper prior to the deadline if you have concerns about your progress, or you would like a second opinion about your work before you turn it in for a grade.

How am I getting graded?

Your paper will be evaluated for the following elements:

- A clear and convincing argument
- Participation in all stages of the process: Meeting with instructor, Peer Review, and Final

- Appropriate use of textual evidence from both Polo and Mandeville in support of your argument
- Conformity to basic standards of written academic prose, including:
 - Correct spelling and grammar
 - General coherence and logical progression of your argument
 - Proper citation

Informal Paper #1: My Trip to Cornell

Due: 2/2/2015 (Monday)

Hard copy due in class and electronic copy via Blackboard before class begins
Length: Roughly 250 word (c. 1 page)

What am I supposed to Do?

In the next little bit we will be reading about peoples' experiences traveling. To get us going, I want you to write a bit about your own experience. In roughly a page, write about your recent journey from home to Cornell for the beginning of the spring semester. You can come at the story from any direction you chose, and you have complete freedom to tell the story as you wish.

Except...

You need to write the entire paper in the passive voice.

Why? What's the point?

Passive voice is one of the accursed enemies of historical writers. As practicing historians, we usually want to eliminate the passive voice from our writing; as much as possible it is to be avoided. To do so, you need to be aware of what the passive voice actually is, become adept at recognizing it in writing, and establish strategies for working around it.

On the 8th we will examine each others' papers in peer editing groups, to work through some of the issues that the passive voice presents.

How am I getting graded?

You will be graded on participation in the assignment, which will include both turning the paper in, and working with your classmates in the following peer editing sessions.

Be sure to bring a hard copy of your paper to class, and be prepared to share your work with us.

Informal Paper #2: John Mandeville Wrote a What?

Due: 2/25 (Wednesday)

Post to Blackboard Message Board Thread

Length: 250-500 word (c. 1-2 pages)

What am I supposed to Do?

To this point in the semester we have read a number of pilgrim accounts, and thought about the ways that religious travelers expanded and defined medieval conceptions of geography. Most recently we have been looking at John Mandeville's *Travels*, which, while it begins very much like a pilgrimage travelogue, also seems to offer the reader more. In this brief essay, I would like you to make an argument for what type of text you believe Mandeville was trying to write, given what we have read to this point. Is the book to this point primarily a pilgrim itinerary? Is it a political gazetteer? Or are the political and physical geographies merely an excuse to tell fabulous stories? As always, make an argument for your reading of the text, and support it using evidence from the book.

Why? What's the point?

Different kinds of texts influenced the ways that medieval people thought about the world. This assignment is meant to help you think critically about the genres of the documents that you have before you. The first half of *The Travels* also offers us a great vantage point to compare to the work we've already done this semester, given the text's similarity to the itineraries we've studied so far.

How do I do this again?

- As with all papers for this class, you should use the Turabian citation style.
- Your paper should be double spaced, and in Time New Roman 12 pt. font
- Your paper must be at least 250 words long, not including your Works Cited page. You may exceed this limit if you wish, but you do not need to do so.
- You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with me to discuss your paper prior to the deadline if you have concerns about your progress, or you would like a second opinion about your work before you turn it in for a grade.

How am I getting graded?

Your paper will be evaluated for the following elements:

- A clear and convincing argument
- Appropriate use of textual evidence from Mandeville in support of your argument
- Conformity to basic standards of written academic prose, including:
 - Correct spelling and grammar
 - General coherence and logical progression of your argument
 - Proper citation

Informal Paper #3: A Cornell Itinerary

Due: 4/15 (Wed.): Hard copy in class

4/17 (Friday): Revised version on blackboard

Length: 250 word minimum (roughly 1 page)

What am I supposed to do?

You have been given (by Fate) a location on campus to visit. Go to your assigned spot and experience it in whatever manner you deem appropriate. Write a brief (1 page or so) account of your trip. You may write in whatever style you deem appropriate, and focus on whichever aspects of the location or the trip that you wish. There are no real boundaries on this assignment...write about the things that struck you as interesting.

Why? What is the point?

We've read a number of pilgrim itineraries, and also some pilgrim guide books. I thought it might be enjoyable for us to put together something of a guidebook for Cornell. After we revise these papers in class on Wed., I will ask you to submit them via blackboard, and I will put all of our experiences together into a guidebook of sorts for Cornell. This will give you practice in writing and peer editing, as well as in giving us all a broader sense for some of the hidden opportunities and curiosities that our campus offers us.

How am I being graded?

As with our other informal writing assignments, your work here is graded on participation...do the work and get full credit. Missing steps will result in diminished credit.

Be sure to bring a hard copy to class on Wednesday, 4/15!

