

Mapping Race in Seattle
History 150 / American Ethnic Studies 150
Seattle Central College
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Explanation

The goal of this assignment is to have students consider change over time (one of the aims of historical thinking) through the analysis of social space, in this case Seattle's neighborhoods. In the process they will create a digital representation of historical change in regards to race-ethnicity in Seattle.

Pedagogically, spatial understandings of inequality and inequity present a challenge in the USA and beyond.¹ Our country has a great deal of geographic unawareness, in part because of the lack of geography education in K-16 educational systems.² This assessment aids in the processes of aiding students locate, literally and figuratively, how power is enacted geographically in Seattle. The nexus of capital and race in this American city, since the late 1800s and the de facto expulsion of almost all Native people, has brought together anti-Asian and anti-Black spatial ideologies of de jure and de facto residential segregation.

When I've used this approach in the past, most students have responded with surprise (and this includes students whose grandparents were racially segregated in Seattle) at how segregated the city has been. An interesting example comes from the proximity of African American and Asian American neighborhoods. Often students have not considered why the International District (which contains Chinatown and other Asian American neighborhoods) is adjacent to the Central District (the once mostly African American neighborhood of the city). Many of my students have thought it was just coincidence that the two neighborhoods are proximate to one another. When they see their mapping in conjunction to reading the secondary sources, their comprehension is deepened, something that I evaluate by I having simple pre-activity and post-activity quizzes so that I can assess their learning.

Faculty in different settings, of course, will have to adjust this assignment to make it more geographically appropriate. Other metropolitan and rural areas will have to adjust to how capital and race operate locally and historically. With the loss of rural lands to suburbanization and exurbanization, the pauperization of some suburbs, and urban gentrification, faculty can use the changing social spaces within which their students live as examples of the links between culture and the economy.

¹ See Laura A. Hammersley, Rebecca H. Bilous, Sarah W. James, Adam M. Trau, and Sandie Suchet-Pearson. 2014. "Challenging ideals of reciprocity in undergraduate teaching: the unexpected benefits of unpredictable cross-cultural fieldwork." *Journal Of Geography In Higher Education* 38, no. 2: 208-218.

² For a current assessment of geographical understanding, or lack thereof, by young Americans, see "What College-Aged Students Know About the World: A Survey on Global Literacy." *CFR.org*. Council on Foreign Relations, 13 Sept. 2016.

Introduction

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Outcomes

After completing the assignment, each student will be able to:

- Delineate the historic-geographic location of African Americans and Asian Americans in Seattle
- Utilize basic digital map marking processes
- Construct a simple blog with images in order to explain historical change of social spaces, such as neighborhoods

Instructions

1. Find information about where Seattle African Americans and Asian Americans have lived since 1950. You should separate the information by decade: 1950, 1960, etc.
2. Using medium.com, create a site, with the other members of your team, that explains if/how African Americans and Asian American neighborhoods have changed geographically.
 - a. Requirements for your team's medium.com site:
 - i. It must have 500-750 words;
 1. Use proper spelling and grammar;
 2. It's ok to use direct quotes; however, at least 80% of the words must be your own (this includes paraphrasing)
 - ii. It must have 15 images:
 1. At least 3 maps (e.g., 1950, 1980 and 2010) that you create (see below)
 - a. To create your own maps,
 - i. Use information from the work of scholars, the Census Bureau, etc.
 - ii. Use Scribble Maps:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhGYt90ad9A>
 - iii. Here are instructions for Scribble Maps:
<https://www.scribblemaps.com/create/#lat=36.879620605027014&lng=-40.78125&z=3&t=hybri>
 - iv. On the maps that you create indicate where African Americans and Asian Americans have lived in Seattle since 1950
 2. Other context appropriate images (photos from the 1960s, etc)
 3. Only one image from after 2010 is allowed
 4. Each team will have an accountability form that they will submit. In it, each member must tell me what aspect of this group assignment they performed and/or created. All the members of the group will review this accountability form before I evaluate the project.

3. Submit your work via Canvas before [insert due date here]