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**PPUA 5390: Special Topics**  
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**Making Knight Lab StoryMaps**

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**KnightLab StoryMap Info**

- KnightLab StoryMap site: <https://storymap.knightlab.com/>
- KnightLab Support Forum: <https://knightlab.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/sections/202556646-StoryMapJS>
- NULab video on StoryMap: <https://youtu.be/X33ud7RYZFg>

KnightLab StoryMap is a user-friendly, web-browser mapping tool that allows users to choose a map and place markers across the map. Each marker can present images, texts, videos, and audio clips. The goal, then, is to tell a story with these markers and guide your audience through a journey.

For this class, think about how you can use these markers to craft a virtual tour of some topic, process, or sequence of events related to race, place (location), poetry, and material cultures (images, pieces of writing, etc.), and how you can guide your audience through a story that unites these ways of being, living, and moving throughout the world.

**Questions to Consider**

- What story am I trying to tell? What is the main point(s) I want to convey?
- How can I best tell this story/give a tour of a location? How can I integrate a balance of text, images, and other media forms?
- What is the best StoryMap template I can use to convey my information?
- Who is my audience? What kinds of information does that audience need?

**Story Map Examples**

- Mapping Black Paris: <https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/4b074fa299869d47b2d6fd8c4e18d968/mapping-black-paris/index.html>
- Mapping American Childhoods: <https://blog.uvm.edu/mcope-childhoods/american-childhoods-1850-1950/>
- Boston Parks and Playgrounds: Community Scan: <https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/519665db8eee0565cdfe065cd5953daf/science-of-play-community-scan-6-10-19/index.html>
- Mapping Shared Spaces: A Visual History of Boston's Black and Jewish Communities: <https://dhjewsofboston.northeastern.edu/a-visual-history-of-bostons-black-and-jewish-communities-mapping-shared-spaces/>



### Data preparation for StoryMap

DITI suggests that you take a moment to plan out your data collection for your StoryMap before building the map in KnightLab. You can use our [DITI StoryMap Template spreadsheet](#) to get a head start on the planning process and keep your data organized. Be sure to **make a copy** of the spreadsheet template. **Do not edit the template directly.**

When you are ready to add your data, you can copy and paste from your spreadsheet. Please see the handout on using the DITI StoryMap Template spreadsheet.

### Using StoryMap:

1. Create your Map
  - a. Go to <https://storymap.knightlab.com/>
  - b. Click “Make a StoryMap”
  - c. After creating an account or signing in, click “New Map” and name your project
2. Title Page
  - a. The title page will display all the map markers
  - b. The Text box on the bottom-right is where you put the project description
  - c. Add Media for the page in the “Media” box (Image, caption, credit)
3. Add Slides (Map Markers)
  - a. Click the “Add Slide” button in the left-hand column
  - b. Add a Location
    - i. StoryMap uses Google Maps to locate addresses
    - ii. Type the address or coordinates into the search bar in center of page
    - iii. If you can’t find the location, you can drag and drop map marker to specific location
  - c. Add description and media (same as the Title Page)
4. Add Media and Images in Text
  - a. To add additional media to a slide, you can use basic HTML
  - b. Click the `</>` button (turn on HTML)
  - c. Get a URL of your image. Wikimedia Commons is a great source of images. Make sure to use the embed file code--don’t forget to cite!
  - d. Use the HTML `` tag to insert the image.
  - e. Check the “Preview” to see the image
  - f. **Note: you can add spaces between images and files with this HTML code**  
`</p>`
5. To add a link in a caption or credit
  - a. Use the HTML `<a href="URL">text</a>`
  - b. Fill in the link you want to use between the quotation marks, and replace the word “text” with the text you want to be linked
6. Customize
  - a. The “Options” button in the top left allows you to change the design of your map



- b. “Background Options” in the bottom right of the text box allows you to customize the color of the background
  7. To add a YouTube Video
    - a. Find a unique **YouTube video** ID. YouTube displays it in the URL after **watch?v=**. YouTube IDs are **the first 11 digits** you can find after **watch?v=**. For example in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoSFx1Z4M-s>. In this URL, **ZoSFx1Z4M-s** is an ID.  
For example in these YouTube links, the IDs are the following:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fciaxuZY6zA&t=21s>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daepERU8rnE>  
Note that there are more than 11 digits in the first example but you need precisely 11 after **watch?v=** to determine the ID.
    - b. Type this code `<iframe width="420" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/[UNIQUE VIDEO ID]"> </iframe>`
    - c. Note that the width and height are arbitrary, you can select the size that fits your goals!
  8. To add spaces in the text use either `<br>` or `</p>`.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

1. *How do I change my text color in KnightLab StoryMaps?*
  - a. To change the text color in KnightLab StoryMaps you’ll need to use the `<span>` tag in HTML.
  - b. Click the HTML button (`</>`) in the editor. Then add the tag; for example: `<span style="color:red"> YOUR TEXT HERE </span>`  
Note: you must open and close the tags appropriately for the code to work.
  - c. Be sure to wrap the `<span>` tag around **the entire text** you wish to be in a different color.
  - d. Experiment with different colors! Try it on your own by changing the color from “red” to “purple”.
2. *How do I add “alt” (alternative) text to my images for accessibility purposes (i.e., screen readers and other assistive technologies)?*
  - a. You can add alt text with HTML code, using the `<img src = "IMAGE LINK" alt = "IMAGE DESCRIPTION" >` tag to make the image accessible for screenreaders.
    - i. Note: typically, the `<img>` tag is associated with a specific image. However, the software for StoryMap separates the slide image from the caption. Be aware of this as you make accessibility-related improvements to your StoryMap.
  - b. Alternatively, **you can do longer-form, more detailed image descriptions within the caption section** of the image slide. This may be the best approach considering software limitations.

## Digital Integration Teaching Initiative

Schedule a meeting: <https://calendly.com/diti-nu>



Northeastern University  
*NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks*

For learning and gaining more control over StoryMap JavaScript, check the FAQs for Technical Users: <https://storymap.knightlab.com/advanced/>