This assignment will give you a chance to think about the past using numbers and maps. Each student will explore one of twelve interest groups active in the United States before the Civil War. We will work in a computer lab with Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software to develop historical maps that help answer important questions about our interest groups. You will be trained in the use of this software, which will be available in campus computer labs. We will work with others in our interest group to develop historical maps and a written essay that details our findings. I will introduce the assignment in class on Sept. 17. The week of Sept. 24, an IT professional will introduce you to the GIS software. You will have another lab session the week of October 29, before which you will submit an interim report. The final project will be due on *November 26.*

What you are making: In this project, your goal is to produce a webpage for an online historical atlas. This will take the form of an illustrated Microsoft Word document. The purpose of your page is to introduce your readers to the interest group you represent. Your page should inform readers as to *who your people were, where they lived, and what their concerns were*. Each member of the class will select one of twelve interest groups active in the United States on the eve of the Civil War (you can find the groups described at the end of this assignment). You will then work in pairs or groups to study this group (using the historical data and your own library research), and prepare a paper. I will ask you to submit your final paper in hard copy, as well as email me an e-copy of your final paper.

Historical data: In preparation for this assignment, I have digitized data from voting records and from the U.S. Censuses for 1850-1880. Using these data and the GIS software, we can produce maps of various aspects of U.S. history. You will use the GIS software to map census data that helps your reader understand your interest group. You will work with college IT staff to prepare and print your final, full-color maps. You may also find it useful to make charts and graphs of your data. One easy way to do this is to access the data online at the University of Virginia's Historical Census Data Browser <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/>. We will demonstrate how you can take these data and use Microsoft Excel to prepare tables and charts.

Maps help: Working with county-level data can be difficult, since you don't know where the counties are. To help with this, there is a map guide to the census: William Thorndale and William Dollarhide, *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1987). Three copies of this guide have been placed on reserve in the library for this course. You may consult the guide (and xerox it) to gain a visual understanding of your county-level data.

Library research: It will be difficult to interpret your data without an understanding of the historical literature on your topic. Here are some good starting points for library research, accessible through the library gateway or my homepage:
• Library online catalog (word search)
• Maine Info Net and Nexpress
• Online journals available through the library website ("articles and databases")
  Jstor, Project Muse, Academic Search Premier
• America: History and Life (a comprehensive index)
• Library guide to American History (very useful)
• WorldCat (massive catalog of almost everything in all libraries)

Your final paper: Your final paper will consist of an essay of no less than six pages of text, which introduces your interest group and describes its make up and concerns. The essay itself is a formal piece of writing, requiring citations in the form of footnotes (consult Rampolla and my online guides for preparing footnotes). You should include in your essay the illustrations you've developed using historical data (these should be interspersed in the text, so they count toward the six-page minimum). As a minimum, each paper should include *six maps, three tables, three charts, three illustrations,* and a bibliography of at least *twelve references* to relevant secondary sources (books and essays).

Evaluation rubric
1. Demonstrated understanding of interest group (10%)

1

2. Use of maps and data to illustrate that understanding (5%)
3. Technical quality of historical essay, maps, and charts (5%)

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND SESSIONS

introduction in class on September 17

I will introduce the assignment to you in class on this day. I will demonstrate the assignment, show you what I expect, and walk you through the process in miniature. After this session, you'll want to go to the assignment page on blackboard, where you will find the codebook necessary to do the GIS portion of this assignment. You should also plan to meet with your group once before the lab session the next week.

Homework for lab session

Before your lab session, meet with your group to prepare. Download and print out the codebook, and think about the variables that will help you understand your group. Look at the historical atlas of the Civil War (assigned for this class), and other historical atlases for examples (*Mapping America's Past*, which is on reserve for this class, is particularly good).

Lab session for week of September 24

For your lab session, meet in the computer lab (Electronic Classroom, basement of H-L Library). There, we will work with Jennifer Snow, an IT professional, to go over the basic steps necessary to complete the assignment. She will demonstrate the use of the GIS software, as well as of the census data browser and Microsoft Excel. You will learn to query the data browser, copy this information into Excel, develop new variables, format your spreadsheet, and use Excel's Chart Wizard to display your data. This is your chance to experiment with the processes involved in a classroom setting. Later, there will be opportunities to get help from Ms. Snow during walk-in lab sessions. Finally, we will instruct you on how to print your final charts on a color printer.

Monday, September 29 (during classtime): Groups A-F (the northern groups) will meet for the GIS workshop in Electronic Classroom, ground floor of H-L Library. The other groups (groups G-L) will meet with me to discuss *Uncle Tom's Cabin*).

Wednesday, October 1 (during classtime): Groups G-L will meet for the GIS workshop in Electronic Classroom, ground floor of H-L Library. The northern groups (groups A-F) will meet with me to discuss *Uncle Tom's Cabin*).

Walk-in sessions

If possible, we will provide walk-in lab sessions — time and place to be announced. These will provide opportunities for you to work with an IT professional on this project. If you wish to avail yourself of this resource, you must commit to showing up at the session, so the staff does not waste its time. And remember that the IT staff can help with the technical aspects of this project, but not the historical ones.

Project due Monday, October 20

On the day the project is due, hand in at the start of class a hard copy of your essay. You must also email me a copy of your essay, in Microsoft Word (.doc) format. Please staple everything together neatly. The title page should include the names of all group members. Consult my online writing guides and Rampolla for rules on formatting and writing your paper.