

HW1: Sustainability Autobiography

DUE: Thursday, January 6, Draft of first paragraph (including clear choice of location)

DUE: Tuesday, January 11 at the beginning of class, Final essay and “map”

15 points (10 for essay, 5 for “map”)

Overview: You will create both a verbal and visual representation of a part of your environment. This should be a location where you spend (or have spent) a good deal of your time. It can be a natural space, a human-constructed space, or something in-between. Your choice should be a particular human-scale location on earth, not something big (e.g. a city) or something that moves (e.g. a car). It might be a particular spot in your favorite park or a room in a building. Take some time to think of a location that has significance to you (from your present or your childhood). This assignment has two parts: 1) a short essay and 2) a visual representation (“map”).

Learning Goals: This assignment touches on all four University Studies goals: 1) practicing original vibrant writing, and spoken communication in sharing our places; 2) critically thinking about what makes a place sustainable; 3) appreciating the diversity of our experiences and perspectives, and 4) touching on the ethics of being good stewards of the places we value.

Points to consider in writing your essay include:

- Describe your location using vivid and original language that helps your audience appreciate what makes this location special to you. Try to avoid using clichés and too many ‘to be’ verbs (e.g. “is” “was” “were” “are”) in your description. Assume your audience has not seen this assignment. Include an introduction that draws in the reader and helps them understand where you are going in your essay. Also conclude your essay in a way that gives your reader a sense of closure.
- What are the major influences on this location (e.g.: humans, animals, plants, or natural processes such as weather and erosion)? How different do you think this location would be without your presence? Without human influence?
- Do you feel this space is “sustainable”? Can the location exist in its current state over the long term? Why or why not? Are there any actions you have taken to make this place more special to you or more sustainable?

Your essay should be approximately 500 –700 words long and have a title.

Create a “map” of your space using whatever materials seem appropriate and are available to you. Your map should help the reader better understand your chosen location, including how it fits into its surroundings. It does not have to be cartographically detailed, accurate, or to scale. Please be creative. We will share our maps in class. Be sure your map is easily portable.

The assignment will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 1) Degree to which the written essay meets the requirements above, including original language containing minimal ‘to be’ verbs., and thoughtful reflection on the significance of the location (see checklist on back of page).
- 2) Visually interesting and creative map.

Before you turn in your essay, verify that it satisfies all of the following criteria. Check the box for each item that is completed and sign the form. Staple this completed form to the front of your essay. You will get the original assignment sheet back when your essay is returned.

I _____ (print name) have verified that my essay:

- is 500-700 words long and conforms with the requirements for written work specified in the syllabus (e.g. double spaced, one inch margins, header, page numbers)
- has a title
- contains a clear introduction and conclusion
- uses original language with minimal use of “to be” verbs
- comments on the interaction of my chosen location and possible outside influences (human, animal, plant, weather, etc.)
- comments on the sustainability of my chosen location
- has been proofread and edited for clarity

(sign here)

NOTE: Don't forget to make and bring your “map”.