

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY—WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**HIST 490/507: Digital Methods in History**


**Mapping Activity**

Pre-activity step – Sign in to [Google Earth](#) (you can use your WWU email to set up an account)

Google Earth Mapping

1. You can complete the activity using:
  - a. Your research project dataset if there is spatial data that applies.
    - i. If you pick this option, you can begin by creating an excel file with a list of important sites or features that you would like to include in the map. You can then either manually enter these into Google Earth using the search function or you can add the coordinates for the locations into the Excel file and convert this file to a KML file using [Earth Point](#) (if you choose the latter, follow the [Earth Point Quick Guide](#) in structuring your excel sheet layout / column names).
  - b. Washington State Land Treaty History.
    - i. If you pick this option begin by exploring the Indigenous groups of Washington State using the [Native Land App](#).
    - ii. Download the following files from Canvas (under “Assignment Worksheets” and “Mapping Activity”):
      1. KML file of American Indian / Alaska Native Areas / Hawaiian Home Lands (source: [US Census Bureau](#))
      2. KML file of WA State Park Boundaries (source: [Washington Geospatial Open Data Portal](#); you can find the list of parks [HERE](#))
      3. KML file of National Park Boundaries (source: [National Park Service](#); you can find the list of parks [HERE](#))
      4. The map of treaty ceded territories as a reference (source: [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#))
    - iii. Other useful resources include: [information on treaty history](#), [maps showing contemporary reservations](#), and [digitized map of federal land cessions](#). For the federal land cessions, you can access the publication which lists the numbered cession territories and the federal act establishing them as a [PDF](#) or on the [Internet Archive](#) (both are keyword searchable by territory number).
2. Once you have decided on the dataset you will use, consider your research question and the data that you will need to incorporate into your mapping project. Are you interested in mapping territorial

changes over time? Spatial relationships between different places or communities? The movement of people, objects, or ideas?

3. Make a list of points / locations and territories / regions to include and what historical aspects you will want to identify using data attributes. Enter these into an excel file. (If you are working with the Washington State data, create a list of the included elements that you want to appear in your map.)
4. Develop a legend to reflect the attributes relevant to your research question using different colours, icons, textual information.
5. Open Google Earth, select “File” and “New Drive Projects”. Create a name for the project that reflects the historical mapping goals and fill in a short description.
6. You can add KML files (either the WA files provided on canvas or your own prepared through excel if you decide to prepare your data that way) by selecting “File” and “Import KML/KMZ file”.
  - a. You can edit any of the entities added in this way, including changing their shape outline and fill colours.
  - b. You can name any imported polygons / shapes that are not currently named.
  - c. You can “Hide” imported features from view (deselect the eye-shaped icon for the feature—it appears on the list on the left when you click on the feature in question)
7. You can add sites manually to the map by:
  - a. Searching for landmarks that already in Google Earth using the “Search Google Earth” search bar. When you find a location to add with this option, make sure to select the “Save to Project” button on the pop-up window.
  - b. If the place does not already exist, you can locate the spot manually on the map by clicking the “Add Placemark” icon () , or by clicking the “Add” dropdown menu and the “Placemark” option.
8. You can add paths and polygons manually in order to create territories or connecting links (e.g., roads) using the “Add Path or Polygon” feature (you can also find this in the “Add” dropdown menu). These can be named, and the size, colour, and opacity can all be adjusted.
9. You can adjust the background data layers currently provided by Google Earth (the menu can be found by clicking on the “Layers” icon on the map).