Tour assignment

Type: Intensive assignment

Learning objectives

- Students learn to construct, and engage critically with, digital heritage environments. They explore the relations and distinctions between digital and physical environments, engage with questions of access and authority, and develop online presentation skills.
- Students learn to write effectively for the web. They learn to distinguish 'web-style' from other writing styles, and explore its uses and limits.
- Students enhance their creative and innovative skills. They are encouraged to look differently at objects, generate new connections and develop new historical questions.
- Students engage with the web in an academic way. This includes: contextualizing online objects and relating them to academic research and publications, developing critical understanding of metadata formats, understanding copyright issues, and engaging in digital source criticism.

Assignment suggestion

You are now a curator of the European Digital Museum for Science & Technology: *Inventing Europe*. During this course you will create your own tour through European history. A tour consists of six stories with six objects and a general part with an introduction that brings all stories and objects together, centering around one theme.

1. Read carefully the Object of History Guide (http://objectofhistory.org/guide) and then see how the various objects are contextualized on www.inventingeurope.eu. Select an object, image or video from one of the Tours, or from the "What's like this?" section that can be found below each of the stories in each of the tours, and which is empowered by Europeana. Explain what you find intriguing about this object, provide the metadata, and explain briefly, at the hand of the Object of History Guide, how the object of your choice is contextualized in the Inventing Europe virtual exhibit by means of its metadata and accompanying story.

2. Consult the "How to write an academic story for the web?" manual and the excerpts of the *Web content style Guide* by Garry McGovern. Create a 150-word historically inspired web story about your object. The story needs to be inherently different from the way it was categorized originally. Use the newspaper search engine at www.kb.nl and JStor to find RELEVANT articles for your topic. The story needs to be based on at least one source that

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has been critically examined and needs to respond to the requirements for stories as explained in the manual.

3. Write your tour: select 6 objects, find the metadata, ask critical questions to the objects, find and read relevant literature, create a tour title, a 50-word tour introduction and create a one-sentence key statement for each story your will be writing. The key sentences must clearly show the red line of the tour stories within the context of the tour. For this, you can use the Tour Input Form (see Student material) or the "Create your tour" function within the interactive MyEurope environment on Inventing Europe. You will have to account for the literature read for the course, and the various tours on www.inventingeurope.eu.

4. Hand in your tour. If you created your tour in MyEurope you can export it as pdf and send it to your teacher via email or print it (see MyEurope manual for further instructions on the use of this online platform. You can find this on www.inventingeurope.eu/education).

Approach

For this assignment we suggest either an online or an offline approach. Accompanying the options you could pursue, you find helpful tools and search suggestions:

Students create their own tour, individually or in groups. A tour consists of six stories with six objects and a general part with an introduction that brings all stories and objects together, centering around one theme. Students get a number of assignments in which they work towards an end result: the completed tour.

Offline approach:
1. In preparing for your course think of the way in which you want to integrate this assignment. Do you want to work towards the tours with your students gradually, over the timeframe of the course? Or do you want to give them the assignment as final assessment at the end? The above assignment suggestion is an example of the first option. For an example of a gradual approach, you can explore the syllabus of the full course outlines elsewhere on the website.
2. In preparing for your course, think of the number of students you work with and the degree of liberty in organization you want to give them. See Tips for Use and Fellow Teacher Tips.
3. Select the broader topics for the tours, create an obligatory literature list for your students, select important database and search engines for your students' research, and read the "How to create a tour" manual carefully.
4. Instruct your students well at the start of your course, or at the start of the final assignment. Make sure they read the "How to create a Tour" manual. This contains the requirements for their assignment.
5. Let your students work on the various parts of the assignment and make sure you discuss results, progress and make room for questions.
6. For the creation of their tour, your students can use the Tour Input Form, available in word and as pdf under student material on the website. This form creates coherence

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amongst different tours and makes sure that your students complete all aspects of the assignment.
7. Students hand in the tour via e-mail or in print.

Online approach:
1. Follow step 1 and 2 of the offline approach.
2. Select the broader topics for the tours, create an obligatory literature list for your students, select important database and search engines for your students' research, and read the "How to create a tour" manual carefully.
3. Sign up for the MyEurope environment on the *Inventing Europe* website. Explore the opportunities the website has considering the creation of tours online. For instructions, read carefully the MyEurope manual (you can find this on www.inventingeurope.eu/education).
4. Instruct your students well at the start of your course, or at the start of the final assignment. Make sure they read the "How to create a Tour" manual, which contains the requirements for their assignment.
5. Let your students sign up to MyEurope, start a tour (and create a group of curators for it in case you let your students work in groups). Let them work on the various parts of the assignment in their online tour. Make sure you discuss results, progress and make room for questions.
6. On the general tour page, your students can export their tour as pdf, and either hand their assignment in via e-mail or in print.

Tips for use
- The assignment is very intensive and time consuming. By appointing groups, where each student is responsible for one object and one accompanying story within the overall tour, your students can concentrate more on in-depth research of their story question. This increases the quality of the overall tour.
- If you have time, then you can decide to do an extensive round of feedback on the first draft of the finalized tour. Students then have the opportunity to improve their tour one more time. This enhances their learning experience considerably.
- You can choose to show your students the online lecture (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZKQwbKFOAE) by Alexander Badenoch about contextualizing objects which will help them to complete the assignment successfully. The lecture lets your students think about different questions they can ask to objects, from a perspective that is European and transnational.
- This Prezi teaches your students to contextualize all kinds of audio visual primary sources: "Using Sources: (Audio-visual) artefacts and their contextualization". The Prezi was part of a guest lecture given at Eindhoven University of Technology, the Netherlands.
- Let your students watch Johan Schot's lecture (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ28qOzSmtA) on the new vision and historical narrative that forms the basis of Inventing Europe.

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Fellow teacher tips

- If you have more than 40 students this assignment is too intensive for the teacher. Use peer review instead. Students critically give feedback on each others' tours and in-between assignments.
- Make a short list with tour topics from which your students can choose, and appoint a topic to each student or group. This saves time.
- If you have many students, then appoint groups, rather than let them choose with whom to work. This saves time and prevents chaos.
- Provide basic literature lists. Students otherwise tend to write shallow stories, rather than deeply analyzed stories.
- Depending on the space and the level of the students this assignment can be made more or less intensive. At the University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, students created an entire tour on their own. At the University of Zielona Gora, Poland, and at Eindhoven University of Technology students created tours in groups. Bachelor students worked in groups of six. Each student was responsible for one story and one object. Master students worked in groups of three. Each student was responsible for two stories and two objects.

Reading suggestions

- Optional literature list: Cultural Heritage Management course. – University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria (http://inventingeurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Cultural-Heritage-Virtual-Environment_bibliography-English.pdf).
- Take a look at the six volume book series Johan Schot and Philip Scranton ed., 'Making Europe: Technology and Transformations, 1850-2000' (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013-2016). Each *Inventing Europe* exhibition is inspired by one of these volumes and allows you to explore in-depth with your students the themes of consumers, infrastructures, governance, media, knowledge societies and Europe in a global world. Examine www.makingeurope.eu for more details and table of contents of the already published volumes.

Are you planning on using this suggestion and teach with *Inventing Europe*? Then we invite you to join our teaching community. You then keep up-to-date on activities, have ample opportunity to share your materials and experiences, and to be in touch with other teachers.

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