Title of project: Campus Space and Rhetorics of Race—Connecting Injustice to the Liberal Arts Geography & Built Environment

Project abstract (250 words maximum, single spaced): The program pilots a campus map of both the geographical location of liberal arts campuses and the sights within them. It focuses on histories stemming from nineteenth century inequalities, especially slavery, and brings critical analysis of campus space through the vocabulary of rhetoric—the ancient consideration of how symbols work to persuade and constitute communities. Students inventory campus settings and archival holdings for public-facing symbols, create a Pocket Sights app location with photographic evidence and written contextualization, and connect these sights in a coherent campus tour by emplotting a flow. In the end, campuses serve their communities and visitors with a tool for analysis that can be utilized across the curriculum and by various constituencies, and multiple campuses like Richmond and Furman can compare their pasts to find similar tropes and narratives of race in the geographic and built landscape.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS
(Please add rows if necessary.)

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I. Narrative

1. Purpose of the project

   This section should be no more than five pages. Format using single spacing, Times New Roman, font size 11 pt. or larger, and at least 1” margins. Please use the headings below.

   a) Theme(s): Mark the grant theme(s) your project addresses. Be sure to review the ACS Guide for Grant Writers for a definition of each theme.

   Innovative Instruction [x] Collaborative Curricula [x] Diversity and Inclusion [x]

   b) Description: Describe the project in relation to the theme(s) indicated.

Richmond and Furman campuses will work together to become more transparent, with each other and with their public audiences, about how private southern liberal arts colleges work as symbolic conduits for race, specifically related to the legacy of slavery. Each campus is undergoing major institutional initiatives to study slavery’s impact on the college and race on campus (see Richmond and Furman). These campuses are especially similar in that they were built on beautiful suburban “lawns” to attract affluent white students from the American South, and they are not uncommon in the ACS. In order to better understand and communicate that history, the two institutions will generate a) innovative instruction by using blended learning frameworks, b) create collaborative curricula by using the research project as a pilot for in-class activities of app building, and c) enhance diversity and inclusion by giving students and broader constituencies a critical awareness of the rhetorical spaces and geographies they navigated daily.

Innovative Instruction

Blended learning techniques allow technology to enhance teaching. In this project, several innovations are being used to grow research. Each will be evaluated, as explained in Section II.

First, the platform itself will re-center the classroom. Students often request a practical digital output and workplace skills education in college courses, even as faculty want to stress critical reflection and historical context. In this case, the two are not at odds. The PocketSights platform will allow students to launch rhetorical criticism, leveraging the humanistic methodologies of the field, in an imminently practical mobile app that is user-oriented. In other words, it creates full-length criticism in scales: each campus site constitutes a small micro-critique, while the broader campus map forms a broader argument about the strategic decisions by the institution over more than a century.

Second, collaboration between the institutions will allow for a second set of blended learning techniques, as the two campuses share obstacles in the technical setup, lessons learned in critical assessments of spaces, and parallels that improve the critical argument and narrative at the two campuses. Using teleconference media such as Zoom will allow the two classrooms to dialogue across space and time, helping students realize that their experience is mirrored elsewhere (making the project more significant) and that their ideas can be aided by collaborating across borders (making the project more inclusive and global).

Students will complete surveys that measure the pedagogical value of both aspects of blended learning.

Collaborative Curricula

Multi-campus collaboration between Richmond and Furman is a pilot for broader future collaboration through PocketSights or similar space-based mobile apps in rhetoric classrooms. Although mass communication classes can be fairly visible and well-funded due to technology needs for broadcast production, film editing, and digital design, rhetoric classes return to students to ancient texts that are often free, oral presentation skills, writing assignments that depend on an external archive, and critical theory and application that is mostly intellectual labor. Students’ work is not as visible as mass communication, and the
perception is that the humanistic study of communication is not “up-to-date.” Collaborative projects such as this one allow courses in rhetorical studies to regain visibility, in the production of new technologies and the kind of learning that university communications offices are excited to promote.

At Richmond, the Senior Capstone course will be titled, “Race, Place, and Space at the University of Richmond,” using this grant as its central theme. In this way, sixteen highly trained students will devote a substantial amount of time to building the project. At Furman, a slightly different model will be used, as a large number of students from Introduction to Rhetoric courses are tasked with campus exploration and inventories and initial contextualization, while students in upper level rhetorical criticism courses are asked to finalize the critical analyses through the archival research. So while Richmond relies on a smaller pool of highly qualified students dedicated almost solely to this project, Furman will utilize a more general pool of students of various expertise collaborating. This will give us the ability to recommend to other colleges a preferred method for getting this work accomplished.

Issues of race and slavery are often “assigned” to History and Sociology departments, in terms of major university initiatives and interviews with media. This project helps demonstrate the usefulness and potential of also incorporating Communication Studies in this work, as a discipline that concentrates on civil dialogue and audience-focused content creation. Such a focus is needed now more than ever in the wake of moments like the Charlottesville riots, in which there is so clearly a gap between expert knowledge and public action. The curricular processes of mapping critical race on campus should help students understand the privileging of certain representations and voices on campus, and the institutional embeddedness of racial issues. Moreover, it will allow students to reflect on ways to reach diverse audiences and convince them that such awareness matters.

Diversity and Inclusion

Imagine being a person of color, driving away from the diverse downtown, through a predominantly African-American neighborhood. Once you arrive, you walk around that campus on your first day of classes. You see portraits of white donors, buildings dedicated to Confederate leaders and secessionists, statues of white Presidents, and campus landmarks that celebrate a glorious, but mostly white, past. You’re likely to just conclude that your presence itself is a token representation, along with the one or two buildings or statues on campus that represent your identity. But if you were to look even closer, you might see even more, including buildings and art from prior eras with representations of cotton and slaves.

Even as liberal arts campuses build diverse student bodies, moving away from 80% white demographics, it would be hard to claim that such spaces are “inclusive.” The hope is that projects like these make the invisibilities of privilege visible for our majority students, while at the same time projecting a positive narrative about the potential for innovation and critical progress through dialogue and exploration.

Students will be asked to consider the following: (1) Why did campuses move away from or locate outside cities (foregoing easy access to students, businesses, and influence) to idyllic landscapes? Why do we choose the ideals of Plato, of leaving the city to reflect, rather than the ideals of the rhetorical scholar Isocrates, to engage? Were and are some of those ideas influenced by choices not to engage difference? How is that choice a part of most communication? (2) How is this choice further impacted by southern agrarian economies of slavery and their legacy through the following periods: (a) The Antebellum South and the Slaveholder Roots of the University, (b) The Civil War and Sites of Slavery and Resistance, (c) Reconstruction, (d) Jim Crow and Slavery Under Another Name, (e) Lynching, (f) Civil Rights, Desegregation, and Resistance, (g) Rebels, Rhetoric, and the Removal of Neo-Confederate Buildings, Names, Images, and Monuments?

Beginning with an inventory of campus sights under each of these headings, students will process what they see in terms of presence and absence. In other words, not only will it be important to consider what is
strategically leveraged as a symbol or argument in regard to each of these eras, but also what exists from each of them that represents what is made present while other things are absent or silenced. For example, how many sculptures on campus depict white antebellum founders, but not freedmen and slave laborers? How often do they see any representation at all of discomforting pasts, or are those instead drowned out by a narrative of progress? What does that tell us about history?

By collaborating, we add one additional layer to this work, of helping students see the similar maneuvers at each school, realizing that race and racism stemming from the South’s history are not accidental incongruities, but were instead systematic or strategic communicative choices that have been made unconscious, or “normal,” on campuses over time. Video conferencing between and among students, campus visits by grant coordinators (who are scholars in this area), and a shared web presence will illuminate this shared legacy and educational opportunity. These new approaches to classroom discussion will energize topics that can sometimes grow stale if not connecting to the production value of telling that story to other groups.

In many cases, the sites being analyzed will not have been studied or contextualized before. So in addition to archival research to uncover any historical information that can be found, students will be welcome to add quotations from oral interviews of persons who encounter those spaces to describe their relationship to them. Do minority students notice the lack of buildings whose names sound like their own? Do alumni who graduated 40-50 years before have stories about campus sites in the era of desegregation that we might lose? Both archival and interview work will help grow students’ sensitivity toward building inclusive communities.

In addition to the more objective data gathering practices mentioned above, we will provide a class day in which students will discuss what the project has revealed about their own identity, in inclusive community building in the classroom. We will discuss the privilege that comes from not noticing the “background” of campus experience. We will also help improve student success by giving students several opportunities for peer workshops that equalize student voices and ensure a sense that we’re “all in this together,” rather than creating an adversarial competition grading model. Students assigned specific campus sights will be paired together based on the eras and interests of their findings.

Building the initial locations in PocketSights with photography and extended captioning will help students from all backgrounds better understand the past and be able to critique it. By situating the everyday practices of communication on our campuses and the modes of communication (campus advocacy, classroom pro-con debate, special lectures, campus media, curated displays, public engagement), we can better understand how more active modes of communication comingle with the geographical location and strategic curation of the built landscape. Questions about who has access to these collegiate spaces of privilege on a daily basis will also be important to conclude this phase, as we think about forms of exclusion from campus as well as ways that students self-aggregate and isolate within spaces (Andersson, “Consuming Campus,” 2011).

Lastly, we will make it clear to students that this is not an end, but a beginning. This will help campuses as they build contextual markers, new monuments and spaces, and new educational programs for this legacy. As students reflect on the whole process, we will ask what kinds of equity and justice would be necessary to bring about the continual communication demanded by the situation, to build the “beloved community” necessary for pluralism in education and deep community healing.

c) **Need:** Explain the need for the project, using evidence/data to support your rationale.
A gap in scholarship and practice exists that this project will help fill. In “The Changing Social Spaces of Learning: Mapping New Mobilities” (Leander, Phillips, and Taylor, 2010), three scholars setup the theoretical framing questions of this project: how does culture and media “flow” inside and outside the classroom (Appadurai 1996), how are students networked as rhizomes through a landscape (Castells, 1996; Deleuze and Guittari, 1988), and how does power thus infiltrate educational spaces and reproduce itself (Foucault, 2012/2012; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990)? Such scholarship has not led to a robust questioning of university spaces, except in consideration of a single monument or image. This act of mapping asks us to do much more, and thus question the broader idea of a “university” as a place with a universal view (as the name implies) and thus a “view from nowhere” (Conford and Pollock, 2002), a place able to free itself from narrower ideological confines. If this is to be at all true of universities, of at least having a self-conscious view, they must be self-critical as places (Cresswell, 2014).

Of the 283 PocketSights maps, only a minor handful begin to do critical work of campus spaces and most of those are woefully inadequate (i.e., begun in a seminar but never successfully uploaded or completed). Most of the platform is used for ghost tours of cities, fun campus tours based on art or basic timelines developed by public relations, or exercise routes. Thus, if smartphones are to be, in part, educational tools, such popular communicative media ought to have options for critical argument and analysis of space.

This is also important work because of the lack of liberal arts schools with sufficient resources to tackle this issue. Of 32 schools in the Universities Studying Slavery consortium, only seven are liberal arts colleges in the mode of ACS institutions. Ivy Leagues starting with Brown and following through with Harvard, Princeton, and Yale have spent significant expenditures developing multi-year major initiatives and offices to do this work. State research universities similarly appoint broad commissions to investigate the issue, with little success. At small liberal arts colleges, we are often dealing with the small batch of willing faculty to confront these issues “on their own time,” (as Stanley Fish might say), without major university course release or pay for this addition work. So, some enticement by granting agencies such as ACS is key to spurring this kind of work.

Lastly, we can always do better as a field to introduce students to rhetorical studies. We hope to bring visibility to the symbols, texts, and their circulation, enhancing the prominence and curriculum of these programs on our campuses. Scholars in rhetorical studies at these schools have a special role to play in identifying the symbolic moves (tropes), argumentative patterns, contextual situations, and broad cultural and memory ecologies in which these symbols are activated. These are areas that almost no students have a background of study in high school or prior, or in which students will go into further study in graduate programs. Thus, as pointed out by organizations as diverse as the American Council of Trustees and Alumni to the Department of Education’s “Crucible Moment” report, colleges and universities are failing to equip students to live in a democracy that requires understanding their surroundings and systems of influence and that demands frequent participation in voting and vocal dissent. Our project hopes to give students the “once in a lifetime” training to tackle discomforting historical issues, acknowledge structural differences multiplied by the landscape, and then speculate collaborative action to address those differences.
2. Goals and assessment plan
   
   This section should be no more than five pages. Format using single spacing, Times New Roman, font size 11 pt. or larger, and at least 1” margins. Please use the headings below.

   a) Goals: List and explain project goals; we are looking for alignment between your goals and the need for the project as described in point 1.c. above.

   We hope to:

   1. Heighten student awareness of campus histories around race and racism.
      a. Become acquainted with theories at the intersection of power and persuasion about how texts, the built environment, and spaces work to divide and unite communities, and how material conditions affect who attempts to divide and unite.
      b. Learn theories of identity and expand slightly the project to think of how race is both similar to and different from other types of identity formation, including gender, sexuality, belief, disability.
   2. Examine the ways campus spaces are discursively constructed, and the subsequent impact on policies and memories that have taken root in the campus over time.
      a. Find archival records and teach students archival methods to think of texts as central to action, in the formation of campus spaces.
      b. Use multimodal technologies to think of “discourse” not merely as words, but also as visual and sensory experiences that persuade us to act a certain way, usually one that is “hegemonic” and thus asks us to act normal according to the values of those who hold power.
   3. Delineate how vernacular and official voices compete for the ability to name places and events on campus.
      a. Assess types of evidence and the ways that society typically weights those types of evidence. For example, after students collect oral narratives especially by marginalized staff or alumni, compare the weight of their testimony to the “official record” of Trustees minutes, statues, or campus plaques.
      b. Learn the specific processes by which campus donations and historical records help determine the naming rights for specific buildings or the commissioning of specific projects on a campus. Consider how that same process happens beyond campus and thus amounts to a reiteration of existing power dynamics.
   4. Produce (via PocketSights) an account of our findings that others can then add to.
      a. Order the sights in a way that creates a coherent narrative, chronologically and topically, with a discussion of what constitutes an audience-centered narrative.
      b. Use rhetorical concepts to think deeply about the underlying communicative structure of what is inventoried and apply them to the spaces (e.g., tropes, emotion, invention and memory, etc.), while at the same time writing for a public audience that does not want to be slowed by jargon and definitional strategies.
      c. Learn the technology and work with mobile apps as a means of persuasive communication.
      d. Peer review and edit students’ writing until it is ready for public presentation. Motivate students to care about their writing, given this “real world” component.
      e. Allow space for multiple interpretations and multiple meanings, including opportunities for user-generated feedback in the PocketSights app.
5. Collaborate around the shared work between campuses.
   a. Have students work with additional communicative media to work across previous borders.
   b. Help students see similarities in regional identity and experience, and thus better discover for themselves the relationship of individual agency to broader systemic practices and norms.

b) **Activities and timetable:** Outline the major activities for which you seek funding, the details associated with carrying them out, and the time periods for each (i.e., who will be doing what and when). Include a brief statement describing the professional qualifications of each person carrying out assigned activities.

December or Early January:

- Order pre-selected cameras from Amazon.com. (We will utilize Inabinet’s expertise in photography from previous ACS grant on Food Cultures in Southwest China and South Carolina)
- Pay the licensing fee to PocketSight and initiate trial experiments with the technology in collaboration with the student assistants. (Inabinet and Maurantonio will already initiate the project by visiting the old campus locations and programming them into the app. While Richmond has moved once from downtown, Furman moved five times, mostly in the early nineteenth century.)
- Create Excel spreadsheets for campus inventories (Inabinet will use his expertise on the Task Force for Slavery & Justice to identify types of landscape markers and symbols, from reports like Brown’s Report on Slavery & Justice and Yale’s Commission on Naming letter. Maurantonio will begin with the university’s Race and Racism project, which has begun archiving and organizing campus newspaper articles and yearbook stories around this topic.)
- Create assignment specifications in detail in collaboration with one another, including required source citation standards, length of context writing, and length of analysis writing.

Mid-January

- Introduce the Senior Seminar (Richmond) and Introduction to Rhetoric sections (Furman) to the project. (Inabinet and Maurantonio have both assigned multimedia projects in courses before involving video and digital media. This will be the first mapping project, which will utilize collaborations with the Center for Teaching & Learning at Furman [Jean Schwab] and the Digital Scholarship Lab at Richmond [Robert Nelson]).

Late January

- Ask students to use an existing campus map to divide up “territory” and inventory an area of campus using course-wide Excel spreadsheets. Students should snap preliminary images with their smartphones and import those low-resolution photos to the spreadsheet. (Inabinet and Maurantonio will use Box Excel Online or Google Sheets, depending on campus resources.)

Early February

- Initiate a class discussion about the findings, including: percentage calculations of findings such as total representations of minority race, gender, and other factors; periodization and how the categories first assigned help up in terms of clarity; genre of symbols from statues to plaques to building names and any decorative arts or furniture with clear cultural codings. (Inabinet &
Maurantonio will use their training in rhetorical theory to lead students to innovations in these areas.

Late February

- Travel with students to campus sights with the camera to obtain high-resolution photographs, discuss the sights, and begin coaching the students on their organization and description of data for cataloging.
- Visit by the University Archivist or other library personnel offers suggestions in terms of contextual data for sights encountered, and introduces the archive to students. (Jeffrey Makala and Irina Rogova have great command of university resources, especially those digitized that can be linked to the app platform).

March

- Peer review workshops of each others’ assigned spots begin. First draft due mid-March at Sewanee, final draft due mid-March at Furman. Rhetorical Criticism class at Furman revises and gives feedback to the Introduction to Rhetoric students. Richmond students initiate second draft. (Maurantonio and Inabinet both serve as primary, trained writing-across-curriculum instructors at their institutions as well.)
- Campus dialogues over teleconference media begin to share insights and overarching pathway narratives for the design. Communicate to begin standardizing style and design of finished products. (Teleconference media and best practices will be taught to students by Maurantonio and Inabinet who have experience using them.)

April

- Final draft due and initial walking tours completed. Students test the app and give feedback, along with feedback about the process and project itself, including surveys about pedagogy and learning. (Inabinet designs pedagogy survey as an IRB-approved researcher).
- Faculty visit each others’ institutions to try out the walk, meet with the other class, and share insights for the project. (Visits coincide with a conference studying slavery at Hollins College in Roanoke Virginia, which is at a midpoint between institutions. The visits will have cascading effects of insuring consistency, allowing for a visiting lecture at each institution, and giving administrators at each school time with the directors of the project.)
- Senior Capstone students at Richmond will present their walking-tour-in-progress and reflections to the faculty of Maurantonio’s department, followed by Q&A. Students at Furman run the trial of their app at Furman Engaged, a day in which undergraduate research is exhibited from all sectors of the university.

May - July

- Student summer interns (paid through the institutions) compile the project at Wix.com to showcase the work accomplished for grant reporting and for sharing with other ACS institutions to participate. (Inabinet did this before for the prior ACS grant, which led to keynote conference presentations on the work)

August
- Canvases of high resolution photos and context are created to advertise the project for several years in places like Humanities buildings, Admissions, and Student Centers’ Diversity & Inclusion offices, with QR codes. (Maurantonio will use his experience of space and place research to design these final outputs).
- All collaborators provide feedback on the project and send one-to-one emails to other ACS campuses to encourage wider participation.
- Robert Nelson and Jeffrey Makala incorporate the projects into university digital webspaces and university press releases.

c) **Assessment:** For each goal you identify above, describe the methods/instruments you will use to evaluate project success (e.g., noting that “a survey will be used” lacks adequate specificity).

1. **Heighten student awareness of campus histories around race and racism.**

   Methods: Rubric-based evaluation of the context and analysis of the various sights (i.e., grading the drafts of the captions for PocketSights). Faculty discussions with students in-class will also assess learning.

2. **Examine the ways campus spaces are discursively constructed, and the subsequent impact on policies and memories that have taken root in the campus over time.**

   Methods: In-class testing will see if students have learned rhetorical concepts that applied to the campus sights. Faculty discussions with students in-class will also assess learning. Students will write 3-5 page, campus inventory papers based on their assigned area.

3. **Delineate how vernacular and official voices (Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 1992) compete for the ability to name places and events on campus.**

   Methods: Ask students to apply this framework to their own sights and discuss in class. Less tangibly, a goal of the project is to combine theories of place and space with the practices of undergraduate rhetorical criticism and diversity learning objectives. This might lead to publications within the field of rhetorical studies or communication pedagogy, especially if we find students making innovative arguments regarding the way campuses serve as “texts” in regard to race. Having scholars in other fields on our campuses take note of this new rhetorical perspective and integrating it into their own scholarship would be thrilling.

4. **Produce (via PocketSights) an account of our findings that others can then add to.**

   Methods: Send out an early version of the developed app in early April to a limited subset of university administrators and relevant faculty on campus, and let students hear the feedback to the usability and dissemination of the app. Then create the website and track the number of hits for grant reporting. If through the digital app’s analytics we could see that we attained a hundred uses of each campus’s tour by December 2018, this would be seen as an initial success. In terms of our own campuses, the learning by the Digital Scholarship Lab and Center for Writing and Teaching would make similar projects easily available (for example, focusing exclusively on gender or religious diversity).
5. Collaborate around the shared work between campuses.

Methods: The inter-institutional video conference in our courses can reveal that students are fully engaged and prepared with good questions for the other campuses, in regard to technical best practices as well as theoretical and value claims (under the four guiding questions above). Survey students about collaboration and lessons learned on the project, through Survey Monkey. Specifically see if the above four criteria were met and on the pedagogical methods utilized. Publish the results on the website so that other instructors have a good sense of what works and what does not, even down to percentages.

6. Help students see similarities in regional identity and experience, and thus better discover for themselves the relationship of individual agency to broader systematic practices and norms

Methods: The project website and app’s links by Diversity & Inclusion pages of two institutions would show campus embrace of the project, and linking by our colleagues at other institutions would show disciplinary embrace. Here, the measure for success is less the raw number of viewers, but instead the quality of integration, so that other campuses (especially colleagues at other ACS schools, who will be emailed the link to the project page) will join in the project. Moreover, we really hope to see sufficient news in our local area, so that community members are visiting campus just to use the app and learn about the interesting legacies and symbolic histories revealed on our campuses. In terms of campus considerations, we hope this really drives the studies of slavery and race histories profoundly, by taking seriously the built environments on campus. If in future decision-making, the app was consulted to build more inclusive memorials, plaques, and buildings, the project would be a major asset to our communities.
II. Budget

This section should be no more than two pages. Format using single spacing, Times New Roman, font size 11 pt. or larger, and at least 1” margins.

1. Justification

Provide a description of and justification for your proposed budget. We are looking for alignment between your project goals (point 2.a. above) and funding requests.

DSLR package from Amazon.com: $550 x 2 = $1100 (The minimal cost for reasonable good cameras to share high quality images with University Special Collections.)

PocketSights Builder: $400 x 2 = $800 (This fee was negotiated down given two campuses’ use.)

Shared domain and hosting (Wix): $100

Faculty stipends: $1000 x 2: $2000 (Additional time utilized to learn new technology, devise new assignments, train and supervise student workers, and complete grant requirements.)

Partial Stipends (three faculty, one staff professional development fund): $500 x 4: $2000

A visit to each others’ campuses to take the tour and share advice: $350x2=$700 (car rental) and $150 x 2 = $300

Canvases for a campus display to advertise the projects on our campuses: $250 x 2: $500 (If multi-year use can be achieved through a permanent set of images on the two campuses, with the ACS credited, this will help boost the likelihood of future app usage, collaboration on this project, and other grant submissions.)

Total: $7500
III. Appendix

1. A bibliography/reference list

Bibliography


