Major Assignments in Writing 105M

1. Dear Data project

Following the examples of *Dear Data* and Dear Data Two, gather, analyze, and visually represent data about yourself for two weeks. You'll create two postcards, each of which represents one week of data that you've gathered on a specific topic.

The front of the postcard will present your visualization of the data you've gathered and analyzed. Use visual elements (size, color, shape, location) to indicate attributes. The front of the postcard should not have any text: no letters, no numbers.

The back of the postcard will provide the legend and other explanation that helps readers understand the visualization. Giorgia and Stephanie typically include a salutation ("Dear Data,"), the week and topic, a section "about the data", a section on "how to read the data", and additional notes and extra information. On the right side of the back of the postcard, include your name and a fake stamp at the top, and the name and address of the student you're writing to. For the address, use 1518 Phelps Hall / UC Santa Barbara / Santa Barbara, CA 93106.

In addition to turning in these two postcards, you'll write a reflection that discusses how you approached the project and what you learned from it. For instance, you might have learned something about yourself or others by virtue of collecting data; you might have a new understanding of data and its collection, analysis, and representation; you might have new insights into the processes of visualization and/or writing; and you might have gained other new perceptions and ideas about other topics altogether. In your reflection, write about whatever aspect of this project has been most interesting and impactful for you.

You should also seriously consider incorporating quotations and ideas from the readings we've done: Popova's Preface, Giorgia & Stephanie's Introduction, and the articles by Wolf and Drucker. Ideas from these readings can help you draw conclusions and make larger statements based on your own experiences with the project.

Please email me a digital version of your reflection. Please also include your reflection draft and peer review sheet in the materials you turn in.

You'll be most successful with this project if you keep this advice in mind:

- select topics that are genuinely interesting to you
- test your data collection plan before you start
- collect data carefully and completely throughout the week

- keep notes and reflect on the project as you're working on it
- analyze the data you've collected in order to find the most interesting messages or stories in it
- experiment with different ways to visualize the data and get feedback from others on your designs
- take time to reflect on what you're learned and compose your reflection with care

2. Public Service Announcement project

Create a data/image combination that targets a specific audience and attempts to raise awareness and change attitudes about an important social issue. You'll need to verify and cite the source of the data that you include; the image should be a collage or an edited image created in a photo editing program (e.g., Photoshop, GIMP). In addition to turning in the data/image combination, you'll write a reflection that explains the process you used and the choices you made in creating the public service announcement and that also describes a plan for presenting this work to its target audience.

You'll be most successful with this project if you keep this advice in mind:

- choose an issue that you care about
- choose a target audience that genuinely needs to be informed about the issue
- include data that would be most compelling for your target audience
- verify the data and accurately represent its limitations use the photo editing techniques covered in class to create a compelling and original image
- take time to reflect on what you're learned and compose your reflection with care
- present a reasonable plan to get the PSA to its target audience

3. Text Visualization project

What happens if, in addition to or instead of reading text, we analyze it and visualize it as data? This projects asks you to select some text—for instance, essays that you've written, novels by a particular author, presidential speeches or tweets—and use one or more text visualization programs available online to analyze and represent text as data. The goal of the project is to see if you can come up with new insights into the text by treating it as data.

After selecting your text and making it available to yourself in a .txt file, you'll run it through various text analysis and visualization programs listed at the Resources page of our class website. Take screenshots of the visualizations that you create.

In the essay that you turn in for the final project, discuss why you chose this particular text to analyze and visualize. Then discuss particularly interesting visualizations—those that yield insight into the text and perhaps those that don't as well. Intersperse your commentary with screenshots from the visualizations you're discussing. The overall idea of the essay is to indicate

what you learned (and perhaps also what you didn't learn) from treating text as data and visualizing it.