



## **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Open Pedagogy Fellowship**

### **Identifying Our Historic Urban Landscapes**

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2021-2022

#### **Introduction:**

You are a part of a collegewide effort to increase access to education and empower students through "open pedagogy." Open pedagogy is a "free access" educational practice that places you - the student - at the center of your own learning process in a more engaging, collaborative learning environment. The ultimate purpose of this effort is to achieve greater social justice in our community in which the work can be freely shared with the broader community. This is a renewable assignment that is designed to enable you to become an agent of change in your community through the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this work, you will integrate the disciplines of Anthropology and Geography to achieve SDG #11: Sustainable Cities and Communities. With a focus on Targets 11.4 – Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, 11.a – Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, per-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning, 11.c – Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- To understand the concepts of tangible and intangible cultural heritage
- To appreciate that cities are composed of complex systems, natural and human-made, operating at all scales
- To apply the concept of Historic Urban Landscapes to generate an online map of cultural heritage landmarks in your own community

### **Purpose/Rationale:**

This assignment asks students to identify elements and landmarks that are part of the intrinsic cultural fabric of their own cities and communities. Students will have a better understanding of the broader landscape the community is situated in, as well as the historical trends that have shaped the communities we're familiar with today. By producing and sharing maps of these landmarks, students will begin a wider conversation about what areas, buildings, parks, or cultural events define the character of our communities.

“The historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of ‘historic centre’ or ‘ensemble’ to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting. This wider context includes notably the site’s topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features, its built environment, both historic and contemporary, its infrastructures above and below ground, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization, perceptions, and visual relationships, as well as all other elements of the urban structure. It also includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversity and identity.” -UNESCO

The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) is an approach to the management of heritage resources in dynamic and constantly changing environments. It is based on the recognition and identification of a layering and interconnection of natural and cultural, tangible and intangible, international and local values present in any city. According to the HUL approach, these values should be taken as a point of departure in the overall management and development of the city.

– The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for Asia and the Pacific Region (WHITRAP)

### **Instructions:**

We are building a public space to share our own interpretations of the historic urban landscapes that make up our cities and communities. One of the goals of HUL is to break the cycle of preservation planning as a reactive process and instead plan for risks from socio-economic pressures, climate change, and natural disasters. Your work will begin a community-wide conversation about what aspects drive the decisions around what gets preserved and what gets lost.

#### Part 1

- First, familiarize yourself with the concept of cultural heritage as defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):  
<https://whc.unesco.org/> Be sure to understand the difference between tangible cultural heritage

(things we can touch like buildings, clothing, food, and objects) and intangible cultural heritage (things like songs, or dances, or other traditions).

- Likewise, explore the concept of the Historic Urban Landscape by exploring the following sites and documents: <http://www.historicurbanlandscape.com/> and <https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/news/documents/news-1026-1.pdf>
- Also explore SDG 11 in the ICOMOS cultural heritage policy guide: [https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2021/SDG/ICOMOS\\_SDGs\\_Policy\\_Guidance\\_2021.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2021/SDG/ICOMOS_SDGs_Policy_Guidance_2021.pdf)

## Part 2

- Select a community or city you would like to map. This can be your own neighborhood, or your city, or even a nearby city such as Washington, D.C. You should select an area that is large enough, and varied enough, to have a decent number of landmarks for you to map. A community that has a ‘fabric’ rich enough to explore.
- Set up your own map using Google’s My Maps function here: <https://mymaps.google.com/>
- Using the framework of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), begin to lay out the cultural and physical landmarks and areas that are integral to the cultural, social, physical, and/or economic identity of the community.
- Consider issues of social, ethnic, and economic inequity when exploring the composition of your city. Is ‘gentrification’ present in your city? How is that defined? Are there specific areas, neighborhoods, or cultural backgrounds whose urban landscapes are valued, preserved, or invested in more heavily than others?
- Place location pins and draw polygons (areas) on your map. Label everything. For each object, insert a photo or video and a text description (at least 2-3 paragraphs) that explain the importance of that location.

## Part 3

- Upload your map to our shared Pressbooks site.
- Write a one-page reflection of your experience mapping your community’s historic landscape. In it, consider some of the following questions:
  - Are there trends in the type of landmark you mapped?
  - Are there ethnic and cultural groups living in the community that are represented by any place or event on the map?
  - What sorts of buildings or other parts of the built environment have been preserved?
  - Are there areas of your community where significantly older buildings still stand?
  - Explore maps uploaded by others of at least two other communities you’re familiar with. Do you see things you’d not known about, or notice things that you would include, if it were your map?

### **Format Requirements:**

Maps must be publicly viewable, and all markers and polygons must have complete descriptions with at least one image or audiovisual link.

"Cities are dynamic organisms. There is not a single 'historic' city in the world that has retained its 'original' character: the concept is a moving target, destined to change with society itself. To reserve the urban historic landscape, strategic and dynamic alliances need to be built between various actors in the urban scene, foremost between public authorities that manage the city and developers and entrepreneurs that operate in the city." -UNESCO

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