

Field Guide to Lost Futures Assignment Overview

The Field Guide to Lost Futures project is a collective and collaborative digital humanities project at the heart of our course. The Field Guide is addressed to audiences a few decades from now who will have endured much more of the catastrophic effects of the Anthropocene than we already have. Each entry in the Field Guide identifies something we imagine will be lost due to the Anthropocene's wide-ranging yet localized effects. From species and land or water bodies to practices and relationships, each entry contributes to a vision that looks forward and back to document worlds that were and worlds that are becoming. These losses may be things we long for and wish would return, but they may also be phenomena from which we are glad to be free.

Entries will contextualize the lost phenomena, with careful attention to locatedness and relationality. To build the Field Guide to Lost Futures, entries will combine a variety of critical theory approaches with the imaginative power of speculative thought. Unlike a traditional essay, the Field Guide is a digital project that is designed to be engaged with as a visual, web-based object. Entries will be written with both the screen and wider audiences in mind, will use hyperlinks for citation, and will be accompanied by three illustrative elements, such as photography, film, or maps.

We will develop our Field Guide entries through a portfolio of four short assignments: a research memo, a practice contributor post, a visual analysis, and a draft entry with peer review. Through these assignments, you will conduct research and analysis necessary for a compelling Field Guide entry, as well as develop required technical skills. For each of these assignments, you will receive a guide that lays out specific expectations. Assignments will be graded as "meeting expectations" or "not meeting expectations." In all cases, students will receive feedback from me and your peers that will help you develop and refine your Field Guide entry. Together, these four assignments will be bundled as 30% of your class mark. This grade will be calculated by how many of your assignments meet expectations: 4 assignments meeting expectations = A, 3 = B, 2 = C, 1 or fewer = D.

Field Guide Portfolio Assignments

▪ **Research Memo: Due Week Seven**

The research memo is the starting point for your Field Guide entry and will be due on Week Seven. It is meant to: a) get you thinking about your case study early; and b) to maximize the time we have to develop your project together. Here, you will gather the material, from which you will develop your entry and its analytical argument. To create the memo, assemble as much information as you can find about your entry's topic: the who, what, when, why, and how your selected entry topic was lost. This is the info gathering stage, not the analysis stage. Try to stick to facts, description, and examples. You will use the information you gather here to develop the next steps in the Field Guide assignment. The completed memo should be 3-4 pages and should include a bibliography.

▪ **Contributor Bio Post: Due Week Eight**

This short assignment will give you the opportunity to familiarize yourself with the process of creating and publishing a post on the Field Guide website. By Week Eight, you will login to the

[This file is supplemental material to Taschereau Memers, *Field Guide to Lost Futures: A Collaborative Engagement with the Anthropocene*, prompt 7.1 (2023), doi: 10.31719/pjaw.v7i1.117]

Field Guide Wordpress site and create a draft post to the Contributors page. The post will include your name and a brief bio. If you like, you can include a photo or illustration. A list of expectations will be provided in advance. Before the due date, I will demonstrate how to create a post and you will have access to video tutorials. I will review the draft posts and will publish those that meet expectations.

▪ **Visual Analysis: Due Week Nine**

Your Field Guide entry will feature two illustrations. These can be photographs, maps, video, audio, archival images, or drawings/paintings. You can make your own illustrative content, or you can find them elsewhere. An important aspect of digital publishing is ensuring you have permission for using media created by other people. There are several good options for free stock photography and many museums and archives allow the fair use of their materials. All of this requires proper captioning and attribution. To ensure the Field Guide is inclusive, we will also provide alt text so users with screen readers are able to access the visual information included in our entries. For the visual analysis, you will identify the two illustrative elements your entry will include, as well as the appropriate captions, attributions, and alt text. A list of assignment expectations and specifications will be provided in advance. The visual analysis is due on Week Nine and should be two pages long.

▪ **Field Guide Entry Draft: Due Week Ten**

A full draft of your Field Guide entry will be submitted on Week Ten, for in-class peer review on Week Ten. In the draft, you will build on the information you gathered for your research memo by integrating your observational and descriptive information with analytical frames drawn from critical perspectives engaged throughout the course. The Field Guide to Lost Futures is speculative in nature. For speculations to be compelling, they must be nuanced and attentive to power structures. The draft should contain the text of your entry, as well as two illustrative elements. Images must be properly captioned and accompanied by alternative text (alt text) descriptions. The draft must include proper citations, which will be hyperlinked in the final entry. To give you the opportunity to learn from one another, we will do peer review of our entry drafts. This will give you the chance to consider the ideas and approaches of your peers and to practice giving constructive feedback on the content, style, and illustration of your entry.

Questions and Prompts for Writing

When you are working on your entry, here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- What can you notice?
- What have you been expected NOT to notice?
- What kinds of things feel “normal”? Why?
- What or who is at risk in a situation of loss?
- How can we talk about loss and what is on the line in ways that don’t only revolve around humans?

If you get stuck, here are a few prompts to help you think about your entry in different ways. I recommend picking one and writing a response by hand. Set a timer for 5-7 minutes and write what comes to mind, without stopping.

- Where are you? Describe the place of your entry in sensory detail. Work with one sense at a time.

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- What is most important? Why?
- What is least important? Why?
- Stories can be told from many perspectives. Who (or what) could be telling the story of your entry? If you switch perspectives, what becomes more or less important?
- Step away from your notes, your research, your drafts and finish this sentence: What I really mean is.....

Final Field Guide Entry: Due Week Thirteen

The final Field Guide entry is due Week Thirteen. You will create a post on the Field Guide for Lost Futures website and leave it as a draft post. I will review and publish each final post. Each entry will be 800-1000 words and will introduce, contextualize, and analyze a lost phenomenon in relation to a specific theoretical lens drawn from the course, such as: race, gender, sexuality, class, species, etc. Contextualization should attend to the specificities of location and relationships. I will assess your entry based on its written content (well-researched context, critical analysis, compelling speculative thought) as well as on illustrations and style.