

Mapping race in the 18th century

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Introduction: These activities can be facilitated in face-to-face, online synchronous, and online asynchronous learning modalities. They are intended to complement course assignments that foster close readings of texts from an anti-racist perspective. They are designed for lower - and upper-level undergraduate literature courses. There is only one French resource, *Méthode pour étudier la géographie*, that can be easily explained by a professor with basic reading skills in French.

Goals: Students will understand the purpose of maps in travel narratives to create and fix identities on peoples and territories. Also, students will learn to analyze maps as a complement to understand travel narratives and grasp the *imaginaries* based on ethnic stereotypes.

Assessment: These formative activities are part of the engaged learning grade for the course, and as such, students earn full credit by participating in them. The skills that are gained in doing these activities can be assessed more formally in assignments that involve reflection and metacognition, such as written reflections on completed assignments, cover letters to course portfolios, etc. Sample rubrics for assessing what the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) refers to as “Personal and Social Responsibility” can be found in their VALUE rubrics: Terrel Rhodes. *Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics*. Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010.

<https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>

Course Activity 1:

- **Introduce students to cartography:** What is a map?: [Your Map Is Lying to You | Outside Online](#)
- **Recognize the elements of maps:** How to lie with maps, Mark Monmonier (1991). Chapter 1 and 2.

- **Practice and discuss recent maps used in politics, media, and other resources.** In small groups and/or full-class discussion, search for maps and explain which ethnic groups are present and who is absent. Similarly, discuss which group is closer to power/poverty? And Which labels are assigned to ethnic groups?

Course Activity 2:

- **Introduce students to cartography:** *Méthode pour étudier la géographie* (1768): [Gallica BNF](#) (Pages 1-11). Explain in class how maps were understood in the early 18th century and their importance to describe *Otherness*.
- **Maps of the great explorers [electronic resource]** / Grand Angle Productions present ; with the participation of Planète Thalassa ; a film directed by Gil Kébaïli (2009).
- **Discuss insights gained from the activity:** In small groups and/or full-class discussion, talk about why maps were important and what the role was during the colonial period. Also, ask the same questions from **Course Activity 1**.

Course Activity 3:

- **Introduce ancient cartography through monsters:** Maps and Monsters in Medieval England, Asa Mittman (Chapter 2). This section can be connected to Medieval Literature or Classic Literature to grasp the description of monsters and a possible connection to foreigners. *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, and *Gargantua and Pantagruel* could be useful.
- **Compare racial representation in maps:** Virtual Mappa 2.0 [Hereford Map](#) (1300?); [Nieuwe Caerte van het wonderbaer ende goudrijcke landt Guiana](#) (1598); [Nova Virginiae tabula](#) (1600-1650); [Africae nova tabula](#) (1623); [The Kingdome of England](#) (1630); [Asia recens, summa cura delineata](#) (1600?); [Carte nouvelle de la Louisiane et de la rivière de Missisipi](#) (1713).
- **Discuss insights gained from the activity:** In small groups and/or full-class discussion, debate the same questions from **Course Activity 1** and explain the evolution of maps from the 14th century to the 18th century.

End-of-Semester Course Reflection: This could be done as a written reflection and/or discussion activity.

- What did you learn about how notions of identity (such as class, gender, nationality, race, religion, and sexuality) impact and connect with many of the prominent themes associated with cartography and literature that we studied this semester?
- How does your answer to the previous question impact your worldview?

Guillermo Pupo Pernet is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Arkansas. For his dissertation, Guillermo is doing comparative work between Louisiana and the Orinoco basin during the early 18th century. He wants to analyze the representation of racial discourses, biopolitics, and geopolitics in travel literature and maps.