First Year Seminar
Culture, Art and Society: The Shaping of Los Angeles

Special Collections Assignment: Picturing the City

In class on October 3, we will visit the Hannon Library Department of Archives and Special Collections where we will learn about the rare materials contained at LMU and we will view the postcard collection portraying images of Los Angeles.

Project Overview: The following project will help students to analyze an object and understand that work’s historical context. The project will consist of various parts:

1. In Special Collections, each student will be given a box of postcards related to the city of Los Angeles from which five postcards should be selected – at least two of which must have some handwritten text on them and at least two of which should have no handwritten text. You will fill out the appropriate material for each postcard on the Special Collections Worksheet, using the back of the sheet if necessary.

2. After you have completed the Special Collections Worksheet, you will select one of the five postcards as your focus. Using that postcard, you will need to determine the exact location in Los Angeles of the site represented. You will be required to have a photograph of both the postcard and the current location, both of which will be uploaded on Historypin.com along with some textual documentation, including a description of the postcard site. A copy of your description of the postcard site will be turned in as a writing homework assignment.

3. You will do a 3-4 minute oral presentation in class that will deal with your focus postcard and the contemporary appearance of the site.

Through this project, students will accomplish the following:

- learn about the holdings of Hannon Library Department of Archives and Special Collections
- understand the appropriate way to handle materials in Special Collections
- determine a historical context
- understand the transformation of sites over time
- use mapping software to better understand the city of Los Angeles

Schedule and Deadlines:

- Thursday, October 3: We will meet at Hannon Library Department of Archives and Special Collections found on the third floor of the library. Be sure to print out a copy of the Special Collections Worksheet found on Blackboard and bring that with you; you will need that sheet to complete the assignment. Students are also encouraged to bring a camera or a phone capable of taking a photograph during our visit.
• Tuesday, October 8: Special Collections follow-up visit during class time. Students will have the opportunity to return to Special Collections to continue the Worksheet and the overall project.

• October 10: No formal instruction: students will work on their Picturing the City project. Tara Radniecki (LMU Emerging Technologies Librarian) will be available in Special Collections during class time for assistance with mapping and Historypin.com.

• Thursday, October 17: All students will do their 3-4 minute in-class presentation. At that time you will need to turn in a completed Special Collections Worksheet (for 5 postcards) and a print out of your Historypin.com postcard description.

Grading:
You overall project will be worth 13% of your course grade:
• 10% for Oral Competency (2% for the Special Collections Worksheet and 8% for the in-class presentation)
• 3% for the postcard description on Historypin.com

Additional information on Historypin.com and the in-class presentation:

Historypin.com: Historypin.com is platform for sharing images with a larger community. Use the following g-mail account information to log in and post your two images:

FYS: 1:35-2:50: username: LAcultureFYS1@gmail.com; password: LAculture

FYS: 3:00-4:15: username: LAcultureFYS2@gmail.com; password: LAculture

Information on how to use Historypin.com will be provided in class and on the course Libguide. During class time on Thursday, October 10, Tara Radniecki will be available to assist you individually with any questions that you might have about posting on Historypin.com; she will be in Special Collections during our class period on that day. Because you will all have the same access to the Historypin.com page, be sure to be careful not to disturb pins/images that have already been posted on the map of Los Angeles, as they will belong to other students in the class.

Using Historypin.com, you will post two pictures on-line: a jpeg of your focus postcard from Special Collections and an image of the current location. The image of the current location can either be a screen grab of a Google street view, an aerial view (if appropriate) or a photograph taken on site; you will need to upload a jpeg of this image on Historypin.com. Do not rely on the Google street view that is part of Historypin.com, as this will not generate a separate jpeg – you should have two distinct images (postcard and present site) on your pin. Students are encouraged, when possible, to visit their focus site in person.

Information required when posting images on Historypin.com:
• Title: make sure that your title accurately describes your image and fits within the character limit
• Description: your description for the postcard should be the equivalent of a minimum of one typed page (double spaced) – maximum of 2 full pages. You will only need to provide a description only for the postcard image – not for the current street view/aerial view that you will also upload. Because you will need to turn in a hard copy of the postcard description, I would recommend that you write it up as a word document and then cut and paste the text into the box on Historypin.com. You postcard description should address the following:
  o describe the location and its historical significance
  o justify the location of the pin based on your research
  o justify the date that you provide for the postcard image. Your justification cannot be based merely on a postmark (if the postcard has one). You will also need to describe other elements on the postcard (image, paper, design, etc.) that assist in your dating process.
• Tags: your tag should read: First Year Seminar Fall 2013
• Licence (License): indicate “Copyright (c) all rights reserved” for the postcard image in the drop-down menu
• Leave the copyright holder blank
• Date required: indicate your estimate for the postcard date. Your date for your other street view image will be the date that you accessed it.

Presentation: For your 3-4 minute in-class presentation, you should consider the following:
• what is represented on your focus postcard? what is the angle used to portray the site? is it a distant view or a close up? what impression is created of the site based on the vantage point and what is represented?
• what is the significance of site – why did it warrant a postcard?
• what is the period of the image and is there a historical significance to that particular period?
• is there a reason why the site looks the same or different today?
• does the postcard reflect a particular architectural style that is significant in its own right or is important for the history of Los Angeles?

You will have access to the materials that you have posted on Historypin.com to use during your presentation.