

**MEDIEVALISMS—THE THEME PARK
A COLLABORATIVE FINAL PROJECT**

**GROUP RESEARCH DAY: DECEMBER 3RD
FINAL PRESENTATIONS: DECEMBER 17TH**

Context: A group of wealthy investors is planning to develop an edu-taining theme park about medievalism. This will be an immersive venue designed to entertain adults and children, while also educating them about medievalisms (past and present). By interactively engaging with examples of medievalisms—both obvious examples and some more unexpected ones—theme park visitors will learn how repurposing the Middle Ages has always been a way for post-medieval societies to reflect upon & discuss their own cultural, social, political, environmental, religious, and scientific issues. The theme park obviously cannot effectively cover *all* examples of medievalism. Instead, those who design the park will need to think strategically about what inclusions will best serve and successfully fulfill the investors' goals.

Presentation Format: The investors are seeking proposals for this theme park. You will divide yourselves into teams of 2-5 people each. Each of your teams will propose its theme park concept to the investors. Each proposal must include a visual display that conveys the concept's overarching principles, aesthetic, major components, and execution. Every team will have a maximum of fifteen minutes in which to pitch its concept to the investors and to convince the selection committee that its approach will best serve the goals for this theme park. You and your team members will need to determine how best to use these fifteen minutes in order to make your case. The selection committee has encouraged teams to think constructively and creatively about how you would create an immersive, edu-taining visitor experience.

Questions to consider:

- What examples of medievalism will you include in the park? How will you balance the “expected” with the “unexpected” examples?
- How will you bring medievalism to life for visitors? How will you teach visitors the difference between “medieval” and “medievalism”? How will they learn that medievalisms reveal things about post-medieval cultures and societies?
- Think about the different elements often found in a theme park—animatronic displays, performances, restaurants, gift shops, rides, interactive exhibits, etc. What kinds of elements will you include and what is the best medievalism to explore in each? What experiential and/or interactive elements will your park contain? What specific purposes are those designed to serve?
- What is the overall aesthetic? How will the park feel, look, and sound to visitors?
- What is the layout? Will it direct visitors on a particular journey through the park or will the layout invite a self-curated experience?
- How will you balance education and entertainment?

Goal and Outcomes: This assignment is designed to help you think across our entire semester in order to deeply interrogate medievalism's goals and functions in a critical, creative, and collaborative fashion. I will determine your individual grade based upon your:

- 1) Active participation during the research/preparation day and the presentation itself
- 2) Use of relevant and appropriate sources (both assigned sources and other materials found through additional independent research)
- 3) Creativity in engaging the scenario.

This project is worth 30 points.

Jill Stevenson (jstevenson@mmm.edu)

Marymount Manhattan College

Brief Reflection Paper: On the same day as your presentation, you must also hand in a 4- to 5-page typed reflection paper in which you discuss what you learned from this final collaborative assignment. I will grade this paper based upon the specificity of your ideas and on how clearly you connect your work on the presentation to the course material we have covered during the semester. While it might be useful to refer to specific sources we've read, you need not cite them or include a bibliography. Your goal is to demonstrate how working on this collaborative project aided your learning process.

You may use a more casual tone than you would in a formal research paper, but please keep in mind that although this paper is reflective it is also a graded assignment. I expect a typed, clean, grammatically sound paper (no typos, spelling errors, etc.) that shows serious thought, analysis, and effort. This assignment is worth 10 points. I will not accept any late or handwritten papers.