

## “October the Twelfth” Assignment Guidelines

### Project Overview

For the “October the Twelfth” assignment, you will work individually and as part of a small editorial team to put together a digital version of something that will resemble, in form and spirit, Mass-Observation’s compendium of diary entries, *May the Twelfth*. In that book, members of Mass-Observation published a collage of diary entries that ordinary citizens wrote on the date of the coronation of King George VI. Prompted by survey questions written by members of Mass-Observation, diarists documented the day from their individual perspectives—they detailed their dreams and what they did, thought, and felt while at work, leisure, and at home. The book was meant to serve as a record of the collective experience of one day in the life of British citizens. At times oral history, at times collectively-authored poetry, *May the Twelfth* is undoubtedly one of the strangest texts in the history of life writing.

You will sign up for one of four groups: “Dream,” “Work,” “Home,” and “Leisure.” Together with your group, you will craft a short questionnaire, consisting of 6-8 questions, that will guide your classmates/diarists as they consider how to focus their entry for your topic. **Note:** these questions will be meant as “prompts,” not prescriptive guidelines—they should be designed to get your classmates thinking.

Example:

What was the setting for your dream? Was the place real or imaginary? Have you been here before?

After consulting with your group and agreeing on a list of questions, you will upload them to Moodle by **30 September 2017**.

Advice: Your questionnaire should consist of a mix of straightforward, specific questions and more open-ended, even mysterious, questions.

**NB:** You will all write diary entries for each heading, and submit them both to me and to the various groups; in total, you will write four separate entries, each of which should be between 150-300 words in length. You will submit these entries on **13 October 2017**.

Once you have the entries for your group, you will read, edit, and organize them in a sequence. You will then be responsible for meeting with your group, in class, to discuss the common threads, patterns, recurring themes, anomalies, or whatever insights—strange or otherwise—you gleaned from your reading of the diary entries. You will then be responsible for writing a short “critical introduction” (300-500 words) for your groups’ section, where you will describe these insights to a prospective reader.

Each group will appoint one person who will act as your groups’ Editorial Representative. The four Editorial Reps will be responsible for writing a critical introduction to the project as a whole (500-750 words) and for publishing “October the Twelfth” online. I recommend using Wordpress—it’s a versatile, easy-to-use platform.

**Table of Contents:**

The table of contents for the finished project will look something like this:

Introduction to “October the Twelfth” .....
Part One: Dream Diaries.....
Section Introduction .....
The Diaries.....
Part Two: Work Diaries.....
Section Introduction .....
The Diaries.....
Part Three: Home Diaries.....
Section Introduction.....
The Diaries.....
Part Four: Leisure Diaries.....
Section Introduction.....
The Diaries.....

**Evaluation:**

Your grade for this assignment will be a combination of my evaluation of your diary entries (55%) and your self-evaluation of the work you did as an editorial team member (45%). As part of your self-evaluation, you will be asked to fill out a rubric, describe the work you did, and provide a short rationale for the grade that you assign yourself. The assignment itself is worth 25% of your final grade for the course.

**Final Submission:**

“October the Twelfth” should go “live” by **6 November 2017**; it is each groups’ responsibility to submit the Section Introductions and diary entries to the Editorial Representatives in a timely fashion.