

Introductory Statement for Faculty

This activity and the rubrics were originally created for ENGL 6820: Theory and Methods -- Public-facing Humanities in Fall 2021 by Liz Angeli, Associate Professor of English. It was revised for Mission Week 2022 by Liz Angeli and Serina Jamison, graduate student and instructor in the Department of English, with feedback and support from the Ignatian Year Classroom Engagement Committee. The discernment map examples were created by students in ENGL 6820 Fall 2021 and are used with permission.

More than decision making, discernment is an intentional, life-long process of determining what brings a person closer to their authentic self. The discernment map is a visual representation of that process, requiring students to identify key people, moments, and events that guided them to their current position and to consider how and why these people, moments, and events were influential. For this assignment, students will leverage three parts of discernment: Desire, Freedom, and Authenticity. Before creating their map, it would be helpful to ask students will identify their desires and what [values](#) feed those desires, thus leading them to freely make decisions that lead to authenticity. For example, a student might desire a career in public policy and climate change because they value advocacy, the environment, and writing.

The word “map” in this context refers to a visual, textual, or auditory product that represents a journey – it does not need to be a literal map or chronological timeline, although it can be. The audience for this map is the student and the instructor.

The discernment map activity has two parts, the map itself and a reflection, and they can be used together or separately. These two parts can be used as:

- An icebreaker (maps could be created quickly in class, or the questions in the prompt could be used on their own, aside from creating an actual map)
- Capstone project
- Mid-semester check-in
- Beginning-of and end-of-semester activity, sort of a pre/post comparison
- Team building to apply discernment and course-specific content (“Create a discernment map of St. Ignatius’s life using discernment concepts and what we’ve learned about his life in class [or a character/figure relevant to course content]”)

Suggested resources:

- Reynaldo Belfort Pierrilus, SJ, [“Jesuit 101: Finding Our Way through Ignatian Discernment”](#)
- Jim Manney, [What Do You Really Want? St. Ignatius Loyola and the Art of Discernment](#)
- Rev. Doug Leonhardt, SJ, [“What is Ignatian Discernment?”](#)

- SoulSalt, "[Defining Your List of Values and Beliefs](#)"
 - Brené Brown, "[Dare to Lead List of Values](#)"
-

Discernment Map Prompt

To know how to move forward, we need to know why and how we got where we are, to the best of our ability. Create a discernment map that visually represents the decisions you made that brought you to who you are today and the people, places, and things that informed those decisions.

These questions should guide your process:

Start here: Who are you right now, today?

Look back: Where and when did your journey to today start?

- Whose voices informed your journey, both in positive and negative ways? "Voices" is broad here; it includes family, friends, classmates, teachers, or a person who you met in a grocery store line who changed your perspective.
- What places and spaces influenced your journey?
- What books, movies, songs, or artwork influenced your journey?
- What values, desires, spaces, and items influenced it?
- What turning points or shifts can you identify? What and who informed them? What happened next?

Look ahead: What do you anticipate your next place on your map will be?

You can represent this in any way that feels appropriate and aligned: a poem, story, podcast, video, photo, paper, puppet show, board game, etc. The only caveat is it needs to be uploaded to Dropbox. If you create a hard copy of something, like a poster, you can hand the poster in physically and upload a photo of it to Dropbox.

The audience for this project is you and me, unless you give me permission to share your map with a larger audience, such as part of a university-wide display. You'll write a reflection about your process on D2L, and you're welcome to share your map on the discussion board if you want.

Discernment Map Reflection

Part 1

After you upload your discernment map, write a reflection here in 200-250 words by answering the questions below. If you want to share your map here, you're welcome to but not required to.

1. Write a six-word story to summarize your map (e.g., "A brave journey to parts unknown" or "Many turns, one direction, slow down")
2. Explain the process you followed to create your discernment map. For example, why did you include the people, places, and things you included? What got "left out"? How did you know it was ok to leave those things out?
3. What was challenging about creating this map?
4. What was easy about creating this map?
5. What surprised you?
6. What questions are you left with?

Part 2

Respond to two people, working to make sure everyone has at least one reply to their original post. In 50–100-word responses, show close engagement with their original post by providing helpful feedback on their points, posing thoughtful questions, or offering suggestions for further thinking.

Discernment Map Rubrics

The purpose of assessing maps is not to grade the final design, presentation, or even the content of the map itself. Students may be vulnerable in what they share in their maps and reflections – grading for “polish” or product can prohibit students from feeling safe to take risks and really delve into the work that this activity invites them to.

Map feedback	Yes (2)	Partially (1)	No (0)
Map represents discernment journey			
Map is submitted on time			

Alternatively, the map itself does not need to be assessed, and the reflection could be the only part that earns credit.

Reflection feedback	Yes (2)	Partially (1)	No (0)
Reflection is fully completed, all			

questions are answered			
Reflection follows directions, including meeting word count			
Reflection is submitted on time			

Notice-Appreciate-Wonder Feedback (format by [Diana Millis, PhD](#))

This form of feedback is inspired by a form of listening-and-response developed by professor and spiritual director, Diana Millis. The listener/responder, in this case, is the professor, and they offer one noticing, appreciation, and wondering to the student about the map and/or reflection. This feedback can be used alone or in conjunction with the feedback above.

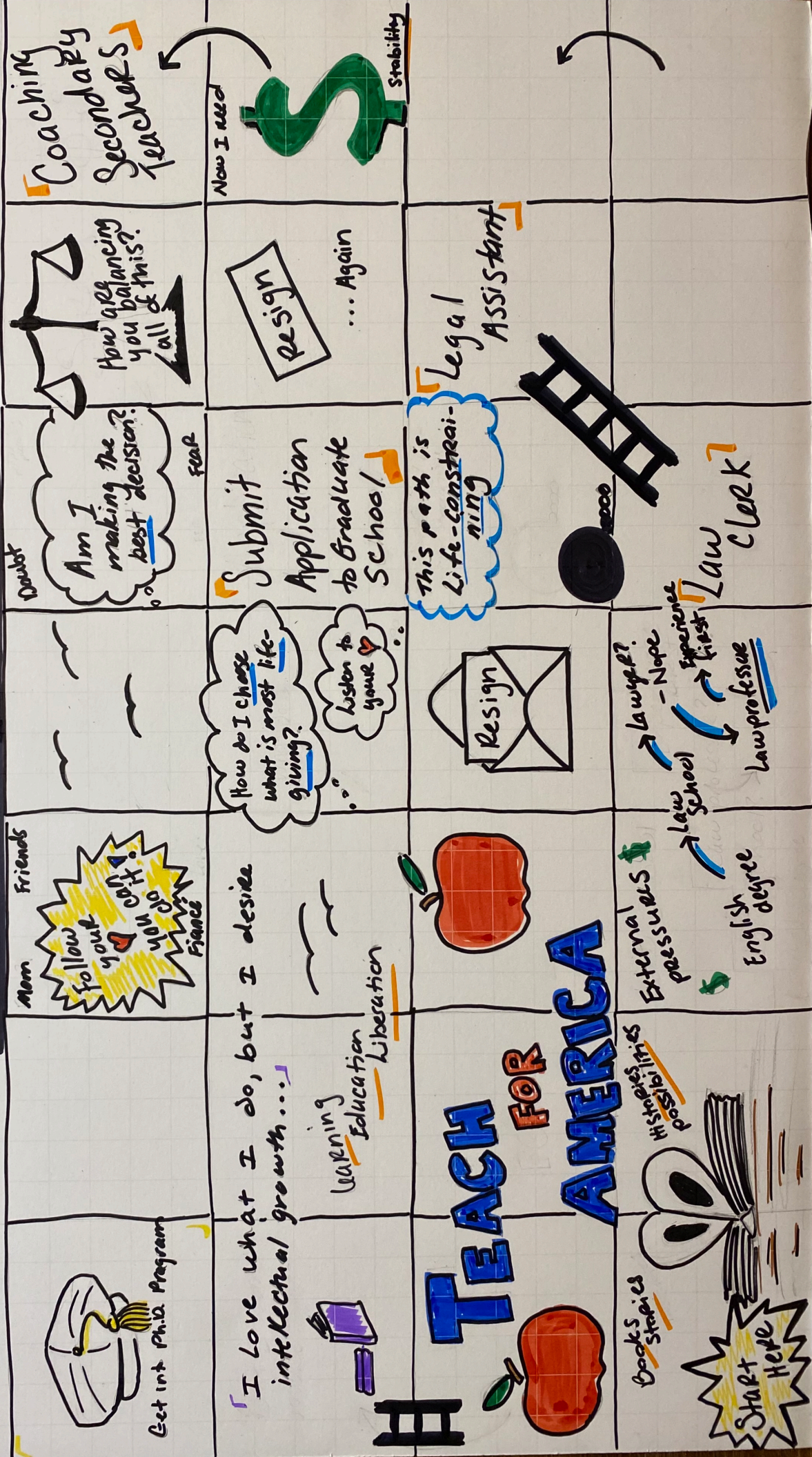
I noticed:	
I appreciated:	
I wonder:	

Example:

I noticed:	Your map took many pivots, twists, and turns, and you were able to relate them to each other in a way that made sense to someone outside your journey.
I appreciated:	The depth you went into with the reflection – you offered specific details into what you “left out,” and it helped me as someone outside of your journey better understand the map.
I wonder:	What would it look like to create a map of what was “left out”? Given how much detail you provide there, it might be interesting to capture those voices and see what they say to you.

Pivots & Ladders

An exciting "journey through desires..." - Sheldrake



Discernment Map: A Timeline

Grace Anne Cochran

Dr. Liz Angeli (THEO 6820)

October 1, 2021



June 2016:
Governor's School
for the Humanities.

- At gov school, as a rising high school senior, I take a college philosophy course and fall in love with it. It's my first exposure to intellectual Christian thought. I decide I want to go to Notre Dame and study philosophy of religion.



July 2016-May
2018: I went out
with and broke
up with Noah
Kropp.

- This photo is from the last concert we went to before breaking up (we saw the Killers).
- Because I'm dating Noah, who wants to be a worship leader, I decide to stay closer to home for college and follow his path by majoring in Theology with a Ministry Emphasis. He was doing ministry, so I figured I could do that too.



August 2017: Started
college at Lee
University

- Photo of me with a chicken my freshman year of college.
- As part of Lee's honors program, I'm required to take Honors Rhetoric and Research, even though I had AP credit for the class. I am so peeved about this that I use a black notebook all semester as a metaphor. The professor (Chad Schrock), however, is totally awesome.



Spring 2018:
Theology and
Literature are
Cool

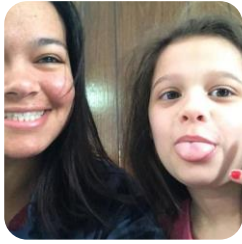
- Spring of my freshman year, I need another humanities credit, so I take Ancient Western Lit with Chad.
- We read Dante's *Inferno* and Augustine's *Confessions*. This is the first time I saw the intersection between religion and literature. These texts inspire me to break up with Noah.

Fall 2018: Ministry is
out & English is in

- Photo of me and my best friend Cam from my birthday this year, whom I met this semester.
- This semester, I drop my ministry emphasis and add an English minor because I just keep taking English classes (with Chad) and keep loving thinking about them theologically.
 - I also get into McNair this semester and decide I want to go to grad school for literary criticism of the Old Testament.

Spring 2019: A near
death experience?

- Photo from my first academic conference, the Society for Pentecostal Studies!
- This semester (spring of sophomore year) I take *Origins of Protestant Literature* with Chad, fall deathly ill, and write a paper on resurrection about my favorite George Herbert poem. I also write my best paper of my whole undergrad on the sanctification of the imagination in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. (subconsciously falling in love with early modern religious lit)
- I also start a youth internship even though I am still against a career in ministry...



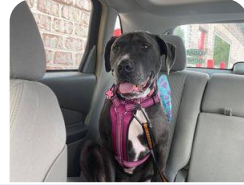
Fall 2019: Darkness and Light in the same semester

- Photo of me and my Little Pal, Layla. I'm VP of Big Pal Little Pal at this point--God keeps drawing me into positions of spiritual care despite my own frailty.
- This semester, I am assaulted, my brother relapses, and I have my first (unsuccessful) Autism assessment. It is very heavy, but I meet two of my best friends (Stephanie and Kevin Nordby), and my support system rallies around me.
- This semester I also finally add my English major after a significant spiritual experience presenting a paper at a conference. God uses literature and theology to speak to me.



Spring 2020: Self-Explanatory

- Photo from Tintern Abbey in the UK. I am barely able to make it on my study abroad trip because it's during the very beginning of Covid.
- We come home from our trip and have to isolate for two weeks, which was completely new at that time. We never go back to campus in person after spring break. Those two weeks are dark (suicidal ideation & mania), and then my mom doesn't want me to come home, so Stephanie and Kevin, my married philosophy professor friends, graciously let me stay with them for the summer.
- I also get my autism diagnosis this summer.



Fall 2020: Am I cut out for grad school? + personal discernment

- Photo of Pumba, the perfect dog.
- This semester I'm applying to grad schools but having a truly terrible time trying to finish up my undergrad. My mental health is at an all time low and I can't write a paper to save my life. At this point I had decided to pursue English instead of Biblical Studies (I decided I want to teach so I can mentor students in the ways I've been mentored). I nearly trash my Notre Dame (yup, full circle) application the night of the deadline.
- In English Capstone (taught by Chad, my now academic advisor and spiritual mentor), we read *Glittering Images*, which inspires discernment about my sexuality/desire/autism. I realize God is calling me to love selflessly. But how?



Spring 2021: Graduation and revelation

- Photo of me with Chad and Riley Grace, my primary spiritual friends and support!
- I drag myself across the finish line and graduate. I am rejected from Notre Dame, cry and impulsively buy an Apple Watch, but quickly realize that Marquette is going to be a much better fit.
- I read *The Wounded Healer* by Henri Nouwen and begin discerning a call to spiritual direction in light of the spiritual care that God keeps challenging and entrusting me with (Big Pal Little Pal, youth internship, my relationship with my recovering brother). I realize my autism is actually a gift that allows me to hyperfocus on *people*. Then I fall into a pit of selfishness in a relationship and read *Life of the Beloved* by Nouwen. I realize I have a lot of personal healing work to do that will equip me to love others selflessly and extend the spiritual care the Spirit is calling me to.

Fall 2021: New life, new me, who am I? Who is God? What is real and true and good?

- Photo of my first day of class at Marquette.
- I have landed in a new world and culture, wherein no one knows me and no one has any expectations of me. Now I'm learning how to be a person here, who I want to be, what my priorities are. I'm doing the personal work that I need to do and making a lot of mistakes and having a lot of fun along this path of discernment I'm on.
- Specifically, I'm untangling my mania from my true self and my inherited theology of desire/pleasure/sexuality from my true beliefs about it, all while testing out new theories as I go. I'm on a path toward a PhD in medieval religious literature. I'm also discerning a call to spiritual direction. I'm also being a 22 year old who has no idea what she's doing. Thanks for coming along for the adventure that this life is.