# "*THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY*"
Midterm Mapping Project

Maps are visual representations of spatial relationships. Maps are a way of organizing information and helping us navigate our environments. There are several approaches to arranging information spatially. Often cartographers try to correlate spatially coded information to a representation of a physical terrain.

Example 1:

Geographic Distribution of Median Income by Quintile in NYC

- 2,200. - 38,501.
- 38,501. - 50,051
- 50,051 - 60,502
- 60,502 - 74,252
- 74,252 - 140,255
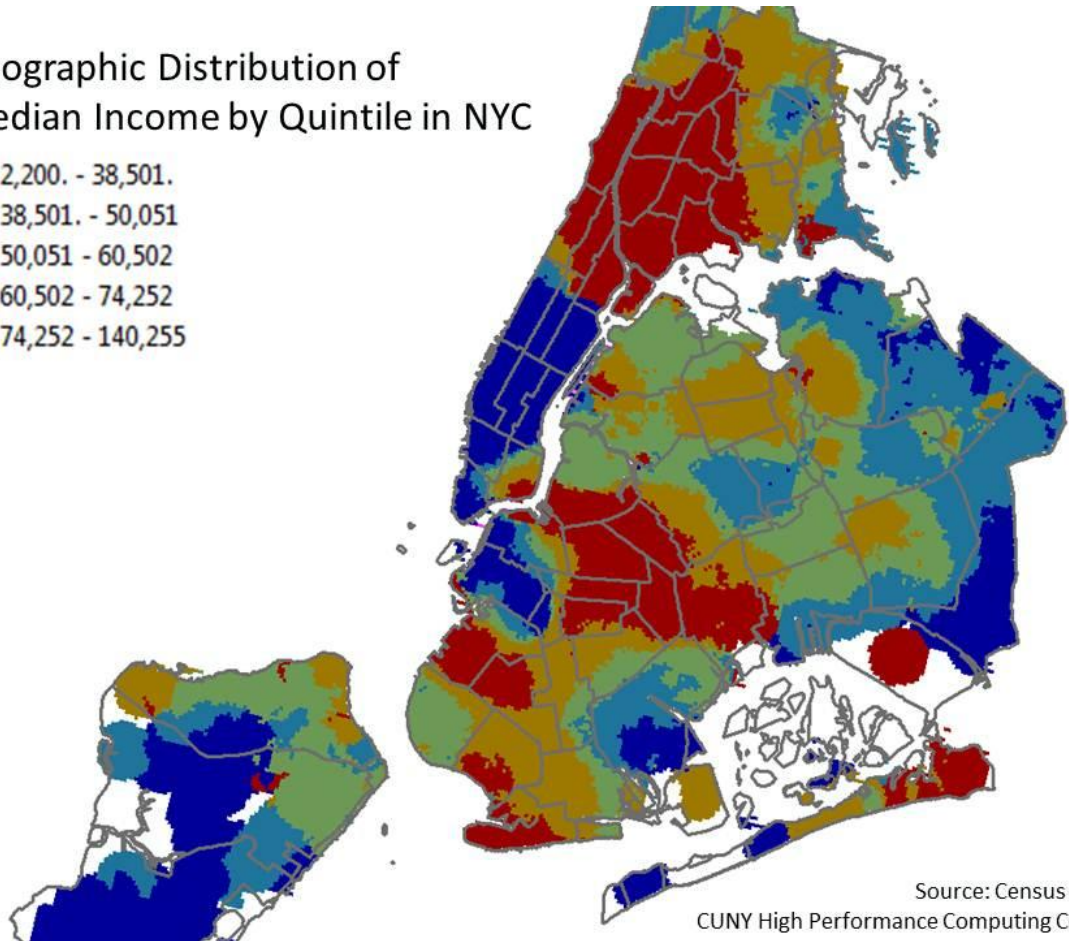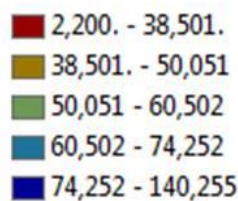
Source: Census 2010
CUNY High Performance Computing Center

This map, for instance, has data for average income correlated with zip codes (spatially coded information). Income ranges are denoted in different colors and 'mapped' to correlating zip codes.

However, maps do not have to try to correlate with exact physical terrains. Information can be organized in abstract space as well. The map below organizes information about the disposition of nations in abstract quadrants.

Example 2:

Maps can also attempt to create a physical terrain for non-tangible, abstract concepts. The map below is a, somewhat humorous, effort to map the Internet

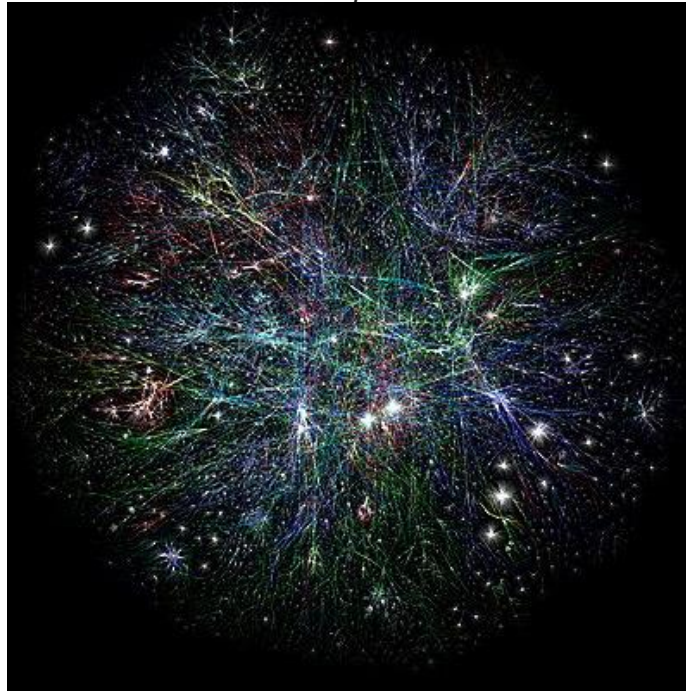*Example 3 (http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/files/2014/01/internet-map.jpg):*
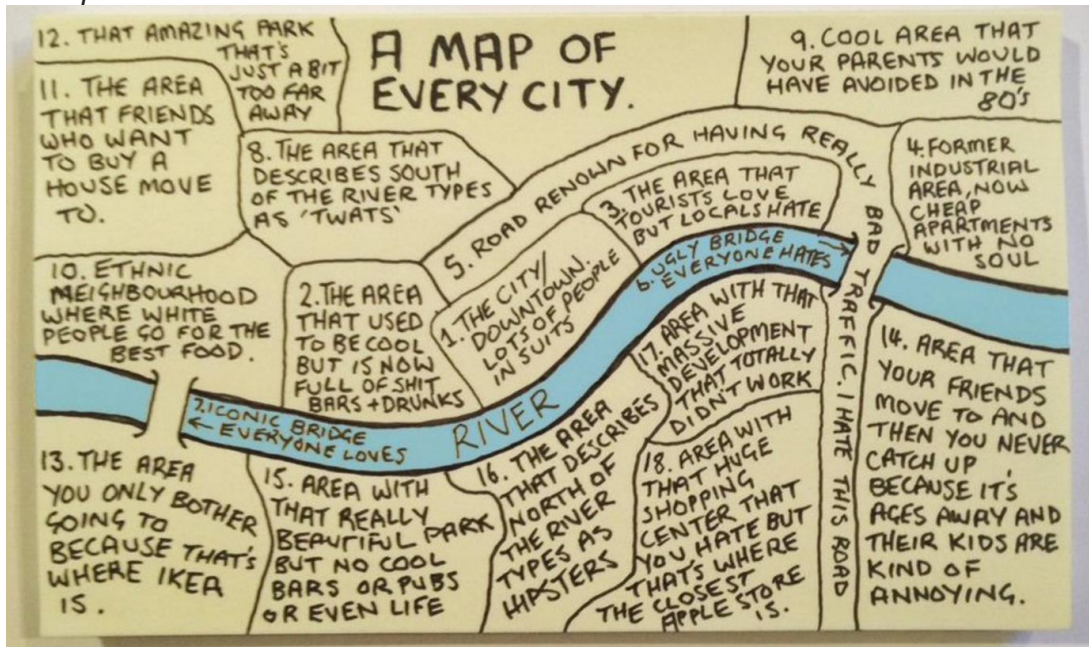
Here is another map of the internet based on IP addresses.

Example 4:

Below is another map attempting to be funny, by highlighting the idea that all cities have similar socio-economic issues.

Example 5:

More practically, all of us produce and revise mental maps of the space around us every day. What train to take to get to a museum? What aisle of the grocery store is the hummus in? What seat should I sit in in class so the teacher won't see me playing Candy Crush on my phone?

Below is an example of a mental map of mine about bicycle shops in my neighborhood. Using Google Maps, I translated this mental map into a visual map that I could print out or send to others.

Example 6:
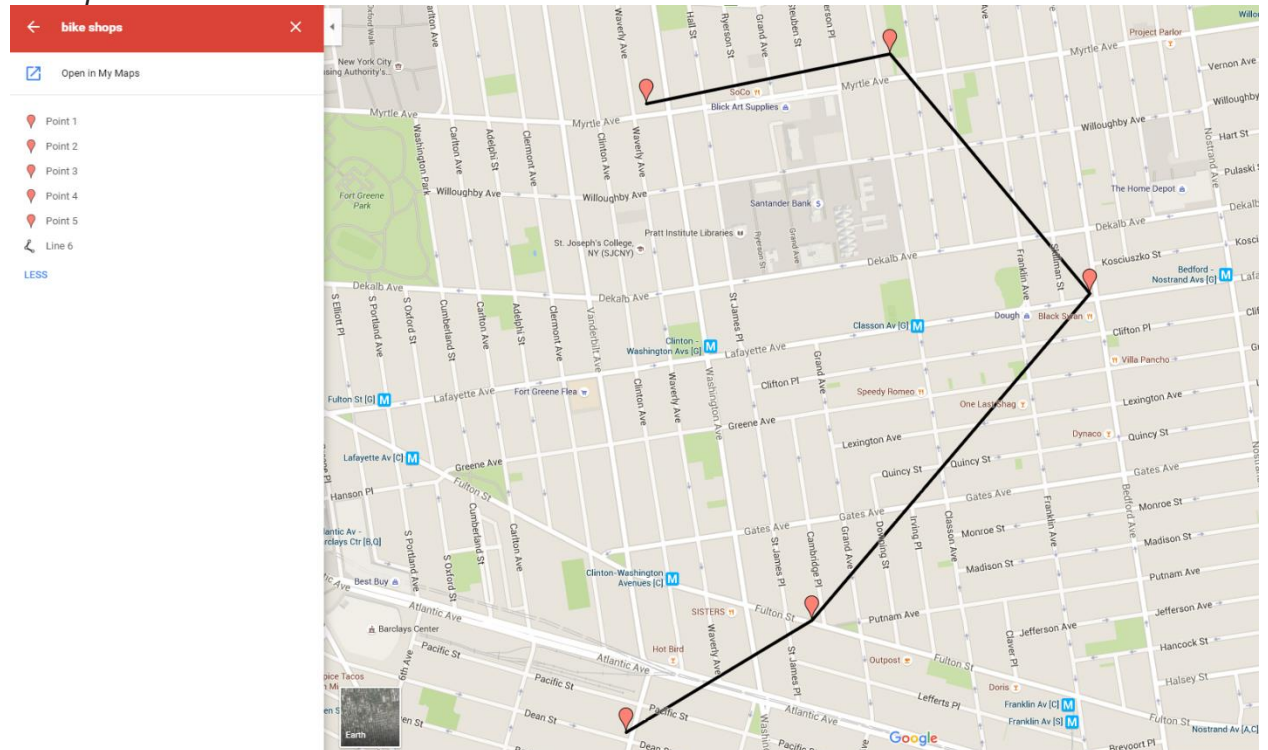
ASSIGNMENT

Your job is to create a map. That is, you are to arrange some information spatially. You can use any information you would like. It can information that is personal to you. For instance a spatial biography of your life, mapping out every place you've ever lived, and how many times you've moved. Or, the map can be about more contemporary social concerns, such as a map of all the mass shootings over the past five years, a map displaying the movement of refugees out of Syria, a map of coastal areas that will be underwater if Arctic sea ice continues to melt at its current rate.

In addition to creating this visual, you are to write a one page summary of the meaning behind your map, and how you created it, including where you got your data – was it from a website, a book, or your own first-hand recording of information.

You are to turn in both the visual map and the one page summary on Blackboard as a single file (preferably a PDF, but a Word file will be fine too).

HOW DO I MAKE A MAP?

You can choose many different ways to make your map. You can draw it with pen and paper, create it on a computer using photo editing software, or create using any number of free dynamic cartography programs off the internet (see resources below). Keep in mind though that your submission needs to be electronic, so if you do a hand drawing you'll have to have some way of scanning it to make it digital.

Google Maps offers a free and easy to use map-making feature that may be useful[1]. I'll demonstrate this in class, but here are a few screenshots that may help to get you started.
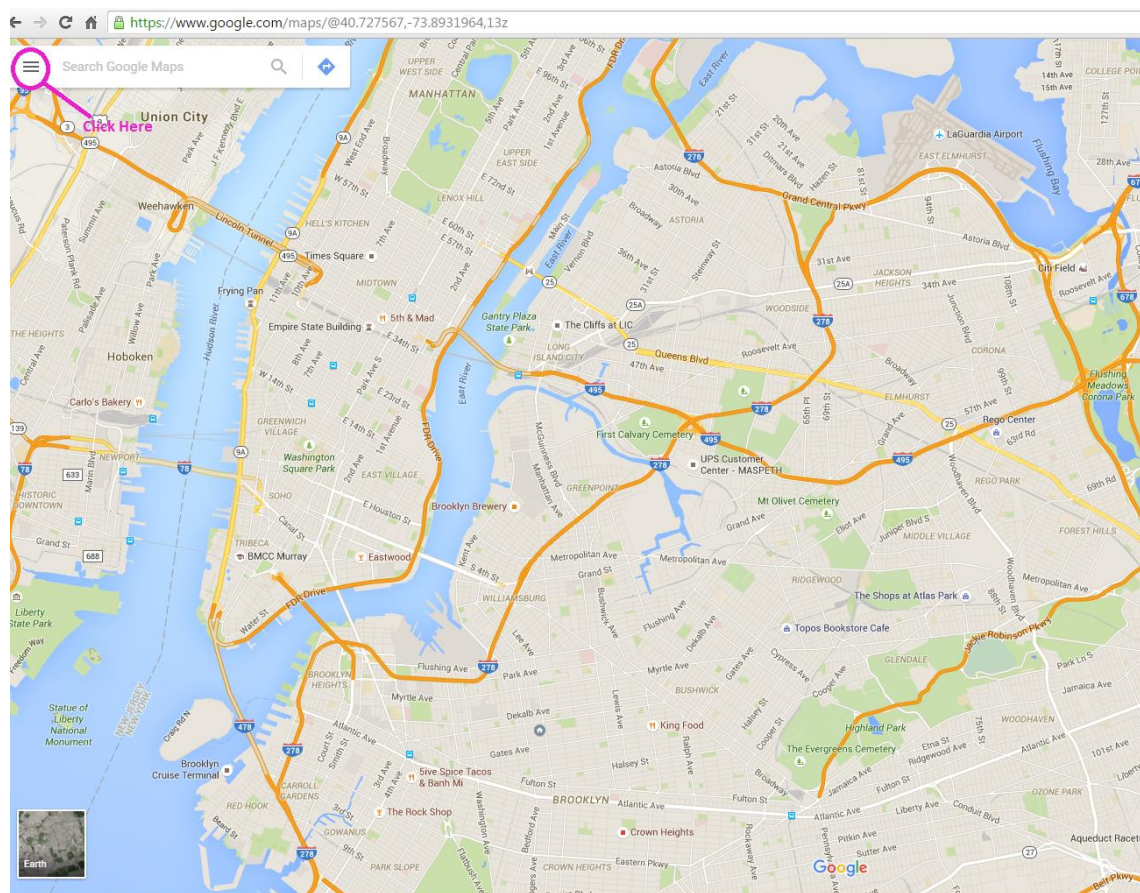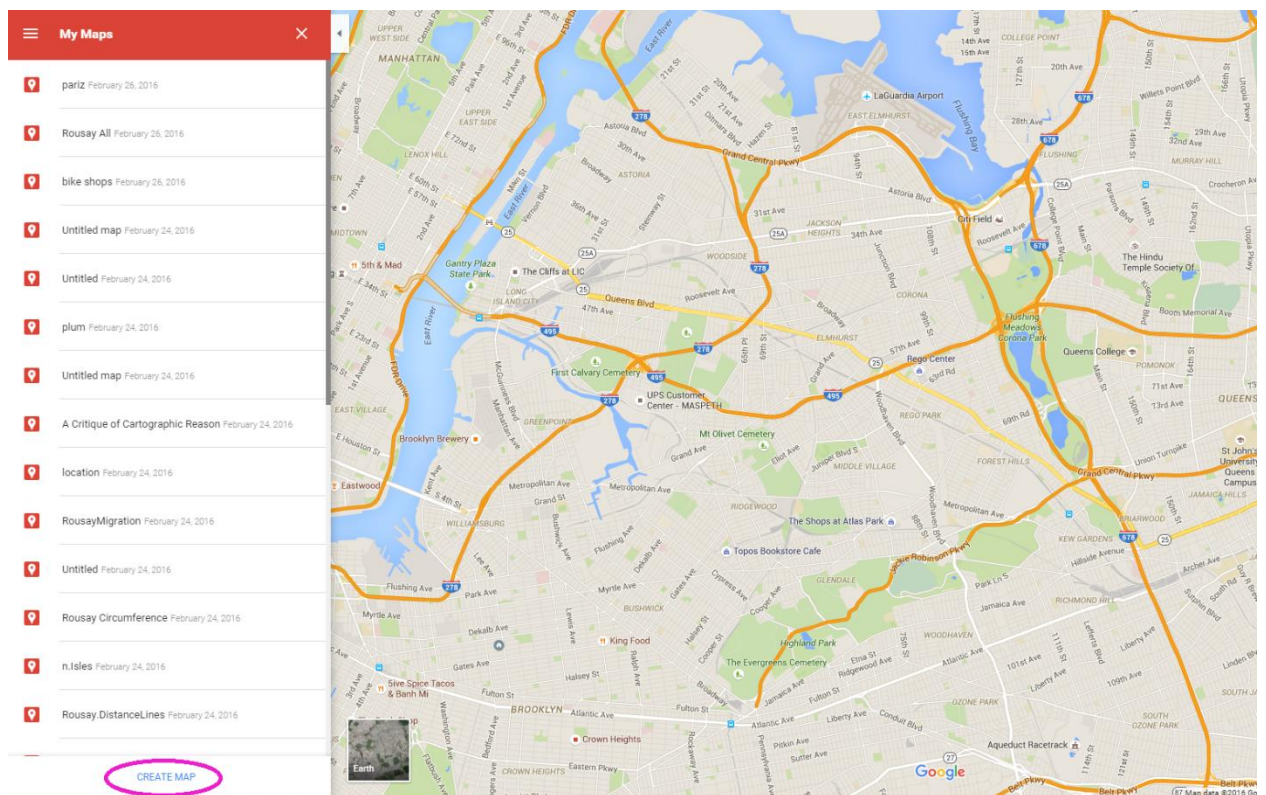

If you go to google.com/maps, click in the top left on the Menu options.

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[1] I am in no way endorsing Google as a company. If you have any reservations about submitting private information to a corporation that may use that information to profile your commercial preferences and lifestyle choices, that is completely understandable.
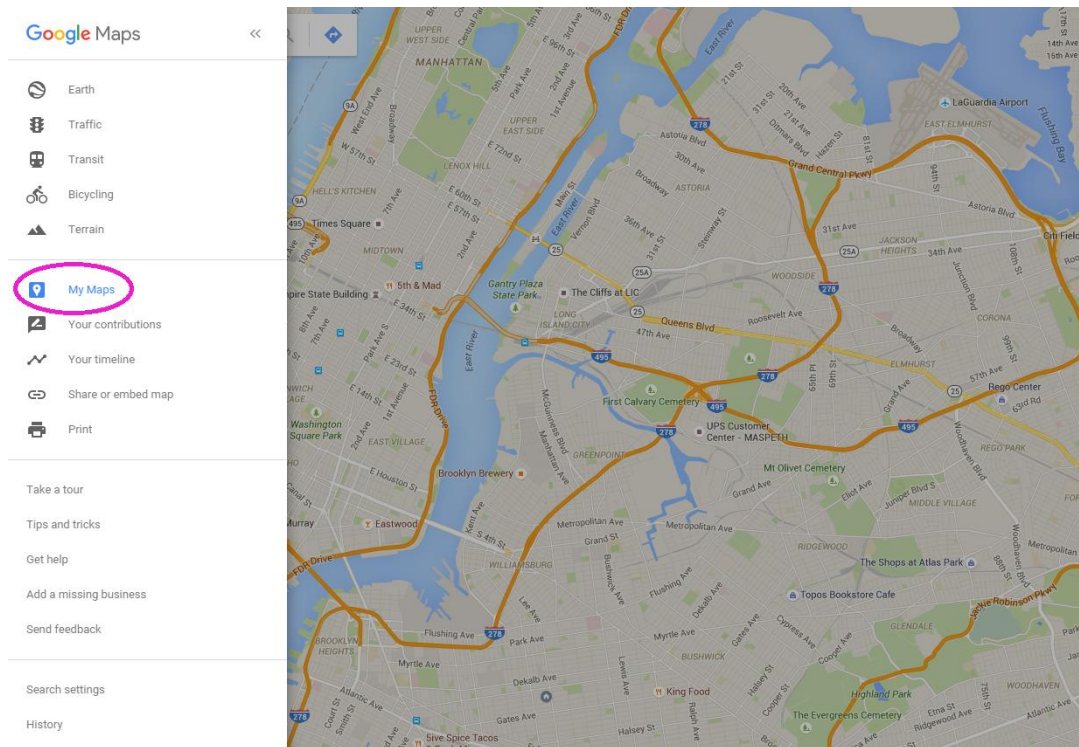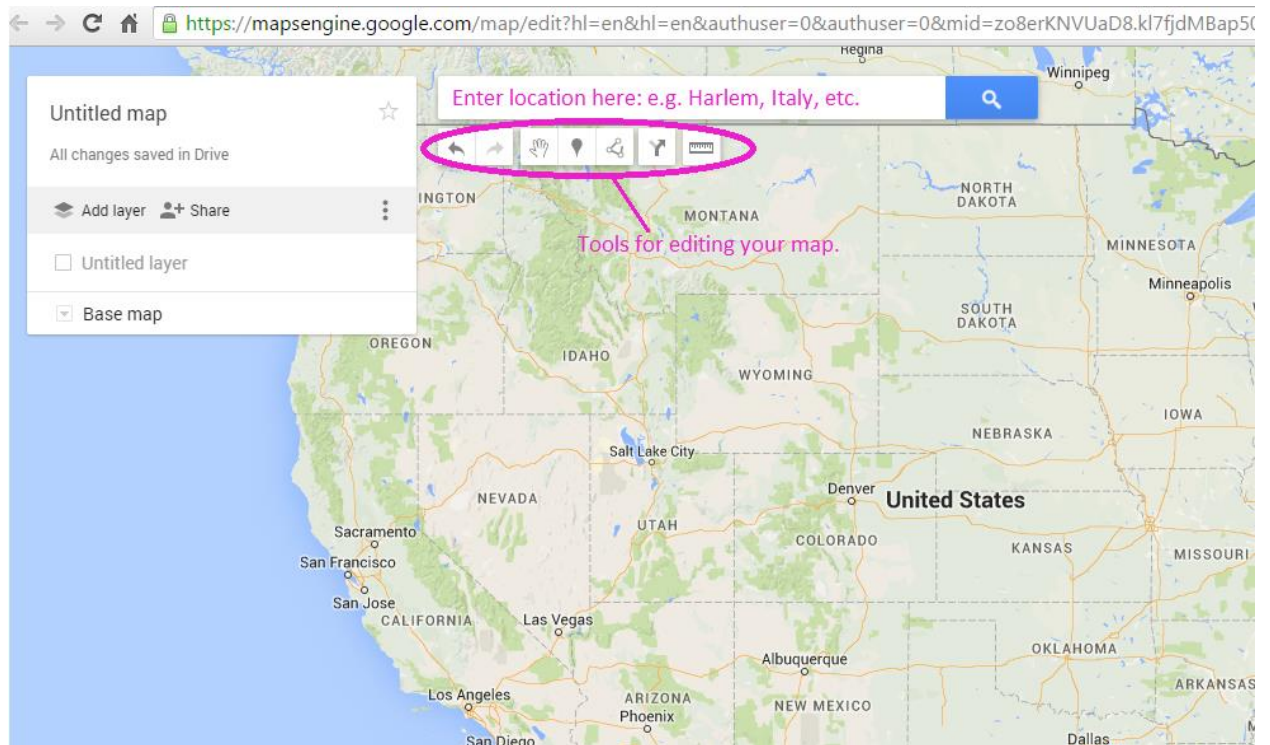
You can then click on My Maps.

Then click on CREATE MAP

You can search for any location in the search bar to use as a base for your map. Using the tools below the search bar you can mark multiple locations, and map out routes between them, and calculate distances.

Keep in mind that all good maps that attempt to represent physical reality have at minimum these FIVE elements:
1. Title
2. Scale
3. Orientation
4. Legend
5. Source/Author/Date

OTHER RESOURCES

Examples of maps for inspiration:
http://bigthink.com/articles?blog=strange-maps
http://cartographerswithoutborders.org/

Data Centers
https://nycopendata.socrata.com/

Mapping tools
https://www.google.com/maps/
https://cartodb.com/
http://www.gmapgis.com