

Neatline

What do you get when you cross archives and artifacts with timelines, modern and historical maps, and an appreciation for the interpretive aims of humanities scholarship?

[Neatline](#) is a geotemporal exhibit-builder that allows you to create beautiful, complex maps and narrative sequences from collections of archives and artifacts, and to connect your maps and narratives with timelines that are more-than-usually sensitive to ambiguity and nuance. In other words, Neatline lets you make hand-crafted, interactive stories as interpretive expressions of an archival or cultural heritage collection. Every Neatline exhibit is your contribution to humanities scholarship, in the visual vernacular.

The [Scholars' Lab](#) designed Neatline as a suite of plugins for the open-source [Omeka](#) framework, which provides a powerful platform for content management and web publication. Through Neatline, you can create create rich representations of places, objects, events, narratives, and documents — like [these demo exhibits](#).

Use Neatline to create:

- A geographic and institutional map of 20th century literary theory. We tend to identify clusters of literary critics with universities, cities, and countries – the Yale school, Russian formalism, Marxism and the Frankfurt School, etc. You want to plot the institutional affiliations and career arcs of ~100 prominent 20th century literary theorists, grouped by critical school, to explore to what extent the real-world locations and temporal overlaps of various critics do or do not correspond with the conceptual connections that emerge in their work.

- An in-depth look at the signatories of the *Declaration of Independence*: You want to create an interactive exhibit that “attaches” biographic information about the signatories on the *Declaration of Independence* to a high-resolution image of the actual document. Neatline’s map annotation tools make it possible to draw precise, translucent outlines around the signatures on the document, and interactively display long-format biographies and pictures as your users interact with your annotations.
- An interactive narrative of the 1924 British Mount Everest expedition: Did George Mallory and Andrew Irvine make it to the summit on June 8th? You want to create a map showing the climbing lines that the parties followed on their summit attempts, the conjectured routes that Mallory may have taken, and the location of his body when it was discovered in 1999. The phases of the climb can be plotted as time spans, and minute-by-minute accounts from the Odell diaries can be captured as individual points.
- A map of the movements of characters and concepts in *The Tempest*: Shakespeare’s play takes place in a indeterminate space, an island outside the moving world, an aesthetic throne – and yet the literal, spatial movements of its characters are described in significant detail. You want to use a Renaissance-era map of an island in the Mediterranean (or the West Indies, or the Carribean) to create a speculative mapping of the text – Prospero’s lair, the shipwreck, the carousing of Caliban and Trinculo, Ariel’s errands, and the journey back to Italy.

Go to the website: neatline.org

Download Neatline 1.0 for your own Omeka installation,

or check out our [demo exhibits](#),

go straight to [the source](#),

or play with a [sandbox version](#) of Neatline (only lacking historical maps) right now.