

The University of North Florida Pilgrimage Project combines interdisciplinary approaches with digital and STEM technologies and applies them to the study of pilgrimage. The broad definition pilgrimage employed by the project encompasses the flow of people, ideas, technology and trade along a sacred or spiritual route. This project focuses on the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain and grew out of the noteworthy 2015 study abroad trip led by the Department of History and the Department Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work. During the three-week journey, which included walking the final 113km from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela, students explored human-environmental interaction as they hiked along this sacred route. Specifically, they interviewed pilgrims and local residents, mapped pilgrim spaces, captured images, and collected GIS data.

As this successful field-work/digital project moves forward, additional phases will include the publication of student-conducted ethnographic interviews in English and Spanish, as well as geospatial projects that examine the spatial dimensions of pilgrimage in the past and present utilizing remote sensing data and GIS techniques. Future initiatives will include: the landscape, art, and architecture, of the Camino as well as the business of pilgrimage with special focus on sustainability of this historically sacred route.

Publication through the Digital Humanities Initiative will contribute to a more thorough and multidisciplinary understanding of the phenomenon of pilgrimage, while allowing students from the various colleges to engage and contribute. At the same time, by participating in the production and dissemination of new knowledge, students will develop valuable research and technological skills essential for academic and career success. This is particularly important in a workplace that values both creativity and technological knowhow.