GGS 310: Introduction to Digital Cartography

Fall 2015
Course Syllabus

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Class Time:
M 1:30 – 4:10 p.m.
Exploratory Hall 2310

Recommended Text:
Making Maps, Second Edition: A Visual Guide to Map Design for GIS
by John Krygier, Denis Wood
Publisher: Guilford Publications, Inc

Instructor:
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Assocate Professor
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Office Hours: M 4-5, Th 2-3 or by appt

Course Mission: Cartography encapsulates both the art of and science governing map creation, and this course, at its core, is about the creation and production of maps. In addition to engaging in the artistic process, we will develop an appreciation for the diversity of representation forms that geographers and other researchers use to understand spatial phenomena. Lectures, lab assignments, map critique, and discussions will build the basis for identifying and analyzing formal elements of a map. We will blend subjective exercises in creative thinking with the objective imparting of knowledge from teacher to student regarding scale, projections, symbolizations, classifications, colors, typography, and effective visual displays. Finally, we will work through the process of communicating spatial messages effectively by developing an understanding cartographic guidelines and accepted design practices. Additional focus will be placed on strategies to guide product design toward intended audiences, tasks, and contexts.

Expectations: This is an upper-division undergraduate course, and as such I expect preparation and participation at every class. Your work should show attention to detail. Attendance is critical – this includes coming on time.

On the Web: PDFs of lectures will be through the online Blackboard at http://mymason.gmu.edu. You must activate and check your GMU email account. Important class and university information will be sent to this email account over the course of the semester. If class is cancelled or the university is opening late, I will send an email as soon as I hear. If you do not wish to use your GMU account as your primary email, you can set it to forward all emails to a preferred address.

Grading: Your grade will be composed in the following manner:

40%	Lab Modules	10%	Map Critique
20%	Final Project	10%	Discussion on Readings
10%	Midterm Exam	7%	Participation in Discussion
10%	Final Exam	3%	Skill as discussion leader

Grades generally follow 90/80/70/60 with plus/minus being within 3 percent of the cutoffs. I reserve the right to alter the exact boundaries at the end of the semester. ***Important:*** Students that do not have a passing grade in the lab portion of class will fail the course.

Honor Code: Academic Integrity is essential and each individual is expected to do his/her own work; violations of the University Honor Code will not be tolerated and will result in course failure. Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or

lie in matters related to academic work. It is the students' responsibility to conform to the honor code as established by George Mason University (consult the University Catalogue) in the performance of class participation, assignments and examinations. Please familiarize yourself with the Honor Code policies: http://honorcode.gmu.edu/

Discussion: Reading is the lifeblood of education; it is absolutely essential for comprehending the breadth of a field. You are expected to digest and give though to all readings before each class meeting. Informed discussion and debate represent a key element to this course. I cannot imagine an intelligent, open-minded, curious person **not** having a reaction to things they read. And while we may exhibit carrying "natural" proclivities for speaking out, **it is imperative that everyone expresses their interpretations and views**. Developing skills in critical discourse is a key element to success later in life.

We can (and will) disagree. Expressions of disparate points of view are welcome, as reasonable minds may differ. Spirited debate is often illuminating. I have two caveats about this. First, express your views as informed readers, giving the author a fair reading in terms of what she/he sets out to do. Second, express your views and criticism in a constructive spirit. We should not expect a "love fest" of united peace and harmony each week, but please remain civil and refrain from vitriolic language.

Discussion leaders will be assigned for each week. The purpose of the leaders is **not** to summarize the readings; rather the mission is to **stimulate discussion and debate** based on the readings, assuming everything has read the pieces thorough. To expedite discussion, leaders are required to craft three penetrating questions to start conversation for the week (conversation often ends up in a completely different location from these starting questions, but they are crucial to avoid that awkward silence at the start of discussion). These questions are to be distributed to all class participants by Sunday afternoon (4:30) via e-mail. Discussion leaders should strive to write questions that foster critical thinking, however discussion is not required to follow their lead.

Extra Credit: I have a standing extra credit policy for the readings – if you find an academic paper that is superior to ones I designate as readings and send it to me with an explanation as to how the reading is superior to what I am using; I will give you up to one percentage point onto your final grade.

Tentative Schedule

Date	**Class**	**Lecture Topic**	**Reading Topics**
Aug 31	1	What is a Map?	
Sept 7	*No Class – Labor Day*		
Sept 14	2	Map Design I	Cartography
Sept 21	3	Map Design II	
Sept 28	4	Color	Evaluating Maps
Oct 5	5	Map Types: Choropleth	Color
Oct 13	6	Projections in Presentation	Choropleth Mapping
Oct 19	7	Exam 1	
Oct 26	8	Text as a Medium	
Nov 2	9	Classification Design Challenges	
Nov 9	10	Map Types: Isarithm	
Nov 16	11	Map Types: Proportional Symbols *Draft Projects Due*	Cartography is Dead!
Nov 23	*No Class - Thanksgiving Break*		
Nov 30	12	Map Types: Dot Density, Dasymetric Infographics	Ethics
Dec 7	13	Summary *Final Projects Due*	Design & Infographics
Dec 14		Final Exam – 1:30	

FACT SHEET

Name _____

Degree Program _____

Birthplace _____

How comfortable are you with:

	No problem	so-so	what's that?
Computers?	¤	¤	¤
Adobe Products?	¤	¤	¤
GIS?	¤	¤	¤
Following Directions?	¤	¤	¤
Maps?	¤	¤	¤

Why did you take this course?

In the space below, tell me one thing that is unique about you. I, for example, can cut the United States out of American cheese slices.

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POP QUIZ

1	11	21
2	12	22
3	13	23
4	14	24
5	15	25
6	16	26
7	17	27
8	18	28
9	19	29
10	20	30