

GGS 551: Thematic Cartography
Spring 2017
Course Syllabus

Class Time:

Th 7:20 – 10pm
Exploratory Hall 2310

Instructor:

Timothy Leslie
Associate Professor
tleslie@gmu.edu

Recommended Text:

Principles of Map Design by Judith Tyner.
Publisher: Guilford Publications,
Inc

Contact:

Office: Exploratory Hall 2405
Phone: 703-993-4336
Office Hours: Th 6-7 or by appt

Course Objectives

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. Through this course, a successful student will:

- Demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of representation forms, map types, and spatial processes that geographers and other researchers model to understand spatial phenomena
- Develop an understanding of the concepts regarding scale, projections, symbolizations, classifications, colors, typography, within the context of effective spatial communication
- In a final project, implement cartographic concepts in such a way as to create two artistic products that use the same source data to communicate entirely separate messages

These objectives will be completed through the objective imparting of knowledge from teacher to student, the development of skills through lab-based practice, and the practice of map critique. 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 a graduate course, and as such I expect preparation and participation. High grades are given not just for completing the assignments, but for completing them *well* – the attention to detail in the ‘last 10%’ is what will differentiate scores.

I also expect you to be able to access the electronic resources of the University. Blackboard will be used for the distribution of lectures and assignments. I will occasionally use e-mail to distribute messages related to class, so you should either regularly check your Mason e-mail, or have it forwarded somewhere you do check. Many lab assignments will require several hours to complete, and you are encouraged to use the departmental computer lab (Exploratory 2102), which is available 24/7 (unless reserved). **PDFs of lectures and assignments will be through the online Blackboard at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.**

Grading

Your grade will be assessed in the following manner:

35%	Lab Modules	25%	Final Exam
30%	Final Project	10%	Map Critiques

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. Lab modules are docked 10% of their maximum value each weekday they are late (all labs are due at the start of Lab). **Important:** Students that do not have a passing grade in the lab portion of class will fail the entire course.

Academic Integrity

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity.

Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) Labs are to be done individually; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, give full credit; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. Plagiarism in the creation of an artistic product is just as serious as in writing. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct, and ignorance is not an excuse.

Software and Supplies

Adobe Illustrator is required for this course – it is used for lab assignments as well as the final project. No prior knowledge of Illustrator is expected. Although maps can be easily created in GIS programs, the majority of professional cartographers turn to graphics programs for more design flexibility.

You will want a flash drive for saving your assignments. Please save frequently while working in the lab (lab2a, lab2b, lab2c, for example) and definitely keep a backup copy of your work. Uploading a copy of finished labs to your GMU Web space (or Dropbox) is another good habit. *Saving your work to a local machine is NOT a reliable method.* There are no second chances for software or hardware glitches.

Diversity

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

Disability Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and *immediately* contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Tentative Schedule

This weekly schedule is subject to change as needed to fit pedagogical needs.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Part 1</i>	<i>Part 2</i>
19-Jan	Defining and Evaluating Maps	Lab 1 - Maps in the Wild
26-Jan	Lab 2 - Basics / Curves	Map Design
2-Feb	Lab 3 - Generalization / Insets	Color
9-Feb	Classification	<i>Intro to Critiques & Final Project</i>
16-Feb	Lab 4 - Classification	Infographics
23-Feb	Choropleth	<i>Map Critiques, Pt 1</i>
2-Mar	Text	Lab 5 - Text
9-Mar	<i>No Class - Spring Break</i>	
16-Mar	Projections	Lab 6 - Projections
23-Mar	Proportional Symbols	Lab 7 - Proportional Symbols
30-Mar	<i>No Class - AAG Week</i>	
6-Apr	Lab 8 - Simple Map	Isarithms
13-Apr	<i>Map Critiques, Pt 2</i>	Wrap-Up
20-Apr	<i>No Class - Break Week</i>	
27-Apr	Final Exam	
4-May	Drafts with Drafts	
11-May	Final Projects Due	