GEOGRAPHY 258: DIGITAL GEOGRAPHIES

SUMMER 2017 – M-TH 1:10-3:20PM (SAVERY 117)

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Office hours: Monday, 3:30-4:30 in Savery 117, or by appointment

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Course Description

The way we know and experience the world around us is increasingly mediated by digital technologies – many of them with geographic or locational capabilities. Global positioning systems in cars, smart phones, buses, card readers and other devices track the location and movements in countless people as they go about their everyday lives. Google's MyMaps and geo-tagged Tweets coordinate pro-democracy and anti-inequality protests around the world. Geo-social 'check-in' apps like FourSquare alert us when a friend is nearby. Citizens send geotagged photos of urban problems to government officials in some cities via smart phone apps. Crisis mappers use mobile spatial technologies to compile and map real-time observations of disaster relief needs or human rights violations around the world. This class will help you engage the societal practices (and problems) arising from these digital spatial technologies in two ways:

1. We explore 3 ways that digital spatial technologies shape (or 'mediate') our lives. Unit 1 asks how digital geographies work as ***spatial practices***? How and why do these digital practices shape what we see, feel, experience, know or do in particular spaces; and to what ends? Unit 2 focuses on how digital geographies work as ***digital practices***. What are the unique properties of digital artifacts and the consequences of coding the world as 'data' and using software to act upon it? Unit 3 asks about the kinds of relationships, interactions and forms of power/control that result from digital spatial practices (e.g. privacy and surveillance, inequality, social justice, inclusion, and empowerment). Here we ask how do digital geographies work in relation to ***power, profit, and politics***? The final week will also include a mini-unit on some other aspect of digital geographies that we'll collaboratively decide on later in the term.

2. We build hands-on skills for creating your own simple interactive multimedia maps and develop important aptitudes you need for ***creating and innovating*** with digital spatial technologies. By the end of the course, you will have learned enough html, css, and javascript to build a simple website portfolio of interactive multimedia maps you create during the quarter. More importantly, our tech activities in the class are intended to help you ***learn to learn*** new digital practices in an ever-changing world of technology. No department or course can teach you every single app, programming language, or software you might use someday, so the most important skill for your future is an ability to teach yourself new skills by exploring unfamiliar softwares, identifying and completing publicly available tutorials, and collaborating with those around you to learn together.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how new spatial technologies produce social and spatial relationships, geographic knowledge, inequality and empowerment, inclusion and exclusion.
- Understand the hardware, software, data and applications that create digital geographies.

- Develop hands-on skills for digital mapping and data management; integrating diverse visual, textual and quantitative data; and working across multiple platforms or web services.
- Expand your aptitudes for learning new technologies (individually and collaboratively) in an environment of rapid technological change.
- Critically assess the societal implications of new spatial technologies, particularly with respect to social, political, and economic inequality from local to global scales.

Digital device policy & hardware/software

Technology in the classroom

Many of our activities in class will involve using geographic applications that run over the Internet. Because we meet in a computer lab, the devices necessary for our activities will be available in the classroom, though you may also use your own devices for these activities if you prefer.

Though technologies offer many potential advantages for our interactive and collaborative learning, they also carry certain risks. Each of you deserves the very best chance to concentrate and learn in this class, and large numbers of former students in this course complain about being distracted by other students' use of technologies during lecture. Further, research demonstrates that taking notes by hand improves your comprehension and memory of class content. Read more here:
http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/
http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/dec/16/cognitive-benefits-handwriting-decline-typing

For this reason, I ask that you only use technologies when you have specifically been asked to do so for an activity. If you are using technologies for other purposes, you can expect me to interrupt lecture and ask you to stop.

Exceptions: 1) if there are substantive reasons that taking notes on a computer will improve your learning in this class, please come to my office hours to discuss an exception; 2) if you are having an emergency and need your phone out one day, please let me know in advance. I don't need to know the details of the emergency, but you do need to notify me.

How to take notes for this class: I will post lecture slides to Canvas by noon each day of class. I advise printing these out and using it to structure notes you take in a notebook or by writing your own notes directly on the slide sheets. Take notes both on the information presented in the lecture and on your own thoughts/questions/reactions to the information.

Digital tools for collaboration

This course will require you to complete three significant digital mapping projects, each of which will be introduced on a Thursday and due on a Tuesday. Each Thursday, we'll have some time to begin working on projects together in class, but you're likely to inevitably run into some challenges when working on the projects over the weekend. To help you trouble-shoot, there will be a discussion board in Canvas for each project. Please use this space to ask (and answer!) questions of your fellow classmates. Because peer-problem solving is an excellent way to learn and because I want to encourage you to engage in this kind of peer-to-peer collaboration, I will chime in with

responses to your questions only sparingly on the message boards. However, I will also have office hours on Mondays to help you solve bigger challenges you might be experiencing.

Hardware & Software

- All necessary hardware and software are in our classroom lab, in the Geography Department's Sherman Lab (Smith 401) and in Odegaard Library. If you want to work also on your own computer, you should download these free software:
- FileZilla or another SFTP client, such as Cyberduck;
- An HTML editor of your choice, such as KomodoEdit (https://www.activestate.com/komodo-ide/downloads/edit - download the free basic version, KomodoEdit, rather than the paid Komodo IDE version) or other text editor specifically for writing code (e.g. a trial version of Sublime: http://www.sublimetext.com/.)

Activities & Grading (due dates in schedule below)

Class activities

Our class meetings will be interactive, and I will frequently ask you to complete an activity, individually or in a small team. A portion of your grade will be determined from these activities, typically on the basis of some sort of product from the activity – a written paragraph, an online submission, etc. For team activities, your output needs to include the name and of all group members who participated. It is the responsibility of each individual to make sure their name is on the final output. Please note: Because I expect you to be in class for all class meetings, *activities cannot be made up after the fact*. Please see me in cases of extended illness or family difficulties that force your absence from multiple classes.

Assignments

- In-Class Activity Responses (daily, 50 points)
- HTML & CSS Tutorial (due July 27 20 points)
- Project 1: Digital Tour Guide (due July 25, 60 points)
- Project 2: Building a Mash-Up with the Google Maps API (due August 1, 60 points)
- Project 3: Building a Mash-Up with Carto (due August 8, 60 points)
- Final Portfolio (due August 15, 50 points)
- Exam (cumulative) (in class, August 17, 100 points)

Final grades for the course will be assigned based upon the following scale:

376 – 400 points = 3.9-4.0	274 – 291 points = 1.9-2.1
356 – 375 points = 3.5-3.8	260 – 273 points = 1.5-1.8
344 – 355 points = 3.2-3.4	248 – 259 points = 1.2-1.4
332 – 343 points = 2.9-3.1	220 – 247 points = 0.9-1.1
308 – 331 points = 2.5-2.8	200 – 219 points = 0.7-0.8
292 – 307 points = 2.2-2.4	Below 200 points = 0.0

Extra Credit – Help crowdsource this class

You can earn up to 10 points of extra credit for contributing current (2015 or newer) resources that will help me strengthen lecture content, in-class activities, or projects. I will award 5 points each for:

- A video clip or visual example that could be used in class to illustrate lecture material
- A meaningful description of how to extend one of the 3 projects with a new activity or element
- An example of a spatial app with description of how it could meaningfully illustrate specific lecture material we have covered
- An example of a spatial app with an idea for how to use it for an in-class activity

Your description should be 3-5 sentences long and include relevant URLs. Email me at ejslager@uw.edu with submissions. All extra credit contributions are due by Friday, August 18 at noon. Note: In Canvas, extra credit points will show up in the column for your final week activity points. If you do extra credit, you will see more than 5 points in this column.

Class Expectations & Academic Conduct

Inclusivity

A robustly inclusively public university is one of the cornerstones of a healthy society – one of the important institutions of a democracy. I strive to make the classroom a place where each of us contributes to this by fostering a climate of inclusiveness that respects all points of view, facilitates constructive dialogue across the full spectrum of community membership, and serves to enhance everyone's learning and understanding. You are a tremendously diverse group of people with respect to race, gender, religion, age, citizenship status, first language, ability, sexuality, socio-economic status, veteran status and much more. Each of you is a welcome and invaluable part of this community.

If you know of any factors in your life that may require me to adapt aspects of the course to help you learn up to your potential, please make an appointment to discuss this with me. If these factors are recognized disabilities under the ADA, please register with Disability Resources for Students (DRS) and bring your letter of accommodation to me as soon as possible so that we develop a plan to accommodate your needs. DRS can be contacted at: 011 Mary Gates Hall; Phone: 206-543-8924 (Voice and relay); E-mail: uwdrs@uw.edu. Full details at: http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/

Student Code of Conduct for Geography Classrooms

The Department of Geography is committed to ensuring a classroom environment that contributes to optimum teaching and learning for all students. Individuals who engage in disruptive behavior that creates a negative or threatening environment for teaching and learning will be asked to leave the classroom by the instructor. These requests are not negotiable. Disruptive behavior includes: verbal or physical aggression toward other students or faculty/TAs, threats of violence, unyielding argument or debate, yelling inside or outside of the classroom, untimely outbursts, violating class policies about technology use or seating, refusing to follow faculty or TA directions, and entering and exiting the classroom in disruptive ways. (from https://geography.washington.edu/student-code-conduct)

Stay connected

Read the syllabus, instructions, class emails carefully. Announcements will go to YourNetID@uw.edu– so check this account or set it up to forward someplace you check regularly. You *will* need to use your UW Google Account for this class (Please note: This is different than personal gmail/Google accounts you may have been using before you came to UW, and it requires you to activate the UW Google apps for your NetID. If you have not done this, or do not understand

what is explained in this paragraph, review this entire page carefully: http://www.washington.edu/itconnect/connect/email/google-apps/getting-started/).

Be professional, build positive community
Treat one another with respect. Ask constructive questions and offer compassionate feedback. Listen to each other. Be a full participant. Be a resource for our collaboration. No vulgarity; no personal attacks; no hostile, discriminatory, or stereotyping remarks about other social groups – race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, housing status, and so on.

Be honest
Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, or submitting academic work that has previously been submitted (without citation or previous permission of instructor) will be penalized. If you have questions about the policy, see me or review details here: https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf. Academic dishonesty will be handled according to the University's Student Conduct Code: http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/WAC/478-120TOC.html.

Complete assignments and exams on time
To be fair to your classmates who do their work in a timely fashion and to the instructor who grades them, unless a documented medical or personal emergency arises, any work turned in late will be penalized 10% of the total score per day that it is late: 10% for 1 day late, 20% for 2 days, etc. Extensions or incompletes will not be granted unless exceptional circumstances require it and prior arrangements have been made. Everyone is expected to take the exams during class time on the day they are scheduled. See me in cases of medical or personal emergency.

Student Care & Safety Resources
It is important that you take care of yourselves inside and outside of class as you work through stress and other obstacles. There are many different support services on campus that can help, such as the Counseling Center, Hall Health, and the IMA. UW's Student Care program can help you connect to these and other resources around campus. You can learn more and contact them directly: http://depts.washington.edu/livewell/student-care/ , livewell@uw.edu , or 206.543.6085. If you are concerned about yourself or a friend who is struggling, SafeCampus is a helpful resource to learn more about how to facilitate access to campus-based support services. Please save the number for SafeCampus, 206.685.7233 in your cell phones.