Historical Geographies: Histories of Cartography

GEOG 4530/8536
& GEOG 8500 (Historical GIS)

294 DSC
Tues/Thurs. 6-9:20pm
Summer 2019

From Erwin Raisz’s Principles of Cartography (1962).

Instructor: Dr. Christina Dando
Office: 271 Durham Science Center
Email: cdando@unomaha.edu
Phone: 402-554-3134 (w/ voicemail)

Office hours: Tues/Thurs 2-4pm
Or by appointment

Historical geography – the geography, physical and human, real, perceived or theoretical, of the past.


... all geography is historical geography ... 

R. L. Jones (1925), D. Whittlesey (1945) & H. Darby (1953)

The historical study of maps may therefore require a knowledge of the real world or of whatever is being mapped; a knowledge of its explorers or observers; a knowledge of the mapmaker in the narrower sense as the originator of the artifact; a knowledge of the map itself as a physical object; and a knowledge of the users (or-more likely-the community of map users).


This course explores the historical geography of North America through the lens of maps and mapping. Maps have been, and continue to be, crucial to understanding the North American landscape. Early maps of North America not only reflected what was known (and unknown) about the continent but also reflected what the colonizers hoped for. After Independence, maps were
important for the new citizens to understand the whole. Maps have been (and are) used to shape public opinion about peoples, places, and issues. Maps continue to shape our understanding of our country, our people, and our place in the world.

Yet . . . . maps can lie . . . they can distort the facts, they can incite the public, they can present a view of the world that is intentionally misleading. They are far more than objective representations of reality. Ultimately, maps are forms of communication that reflect their creator’s intentions and their views. As such, they are revealing windows onto past landscapes.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding
On completion of the course, students should be able to:

➢ Demonstrate an understanding of the basic historical geography of United States
➢ Critically engage with primary source materials, specifically maps
➢ Assess historic maps as documents, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses as sources
➢ Discuss the evolution of cartography over American history, both technologically as well as socially
➢ Identify a variety of map forms as well as identify their components
➢ Explain how maps reflect world-views, can be used to convey arguments, create ideas, shape policies . . .

Skills
On completion of the course, students should be able to:

➢ Critically read scholarly papers
➢ Compose reading journal entries/critical summaries that:
  -- reflect your thought-processes as you read the articles
  -- effectively summarize the article
  -- provide several points of critique
  -- raise discussion questions
➢ Access, evaluate and present data from a wide range of sources
➢ Appraise maps as windows on the past, selective in their vantage points
➢ Construct an ESRI storymap or apply GIS technologies to historic topics

Required:
Readings will be available on Canvas under Course Materials.

Course Content and Structure

Undergraduate grades will be based on:

| Attendsance/participation/discussion | 10% |
| Reading journal                   | 20% |
Graduate grades will be based on:

- Attendance/participation/discussion: 10%
- Reading journal: 20%
- GIS project: 70%

100%

Participation/ leading discussion
In order for you to get the most out of the course and its readings, you must be actively involved in the course.

Attendance: Attendance in class is required. Missing more than one class during the semester will affect your grade.

Discussions: As a seminar-style class, you must be actively participating in class discussion. I realize that some may be shy or intimidated by more vocal members of class. I know it is hard. Make your voice heard. This is your class too. At the same time, try to be good listeners. Be respectful of others and their opinions. Do not interrupt others as they speak. As much of the class will be spent in discussion, it is essential that you are on time and prepared.

Everyone will lead discussion in class once. Undergraduates will be paired with grad student to assist/serve as back-up. Discussion leaders will need to skim the other readings in addition to the readings they do for their journal.

Reading journal OR critical summary
All class members are expected to keep up with the class readings and to either keep a reading journal OR write a critical summary for each class. However, you are allowed one pass during the course when you can opt out of the writing (you ARE expected to keep up with the reading!).

Reading journal – this is a journal where you review and respond analytically to each week’s reading assignments. In these journals you can take notes on the readings, highlight quotes that you think are important or that are bogus, react/respond to the information being presented. It should illustrate clearly what you are thinking about and how you are interacting with the work. It must go beyond – “I disagree.” “Bullshit.” Or “I think the author is a genius.” It should demonstrate in clear notes that you get what the author is writing about and can explain why this work is significant. There should be three parts to each article’s entry:

1. Your reading notes
2. A brief, one-paragraph summary of the article -- emphasizing what you think the author believes is really important about their essay (why they wrote it) and how you evaluate their argument.

3. 2 or 3 discussion questions based on the article

There is no length requirement for the journals, only that you demonstrate that you have read and have a basic comprehension of each reading. As for its form – do what you feel comfortable with. If you like to write a more traditional journal, go ahead. If you’d rather do it on a computer, that’s fine too, as long as you have a printed out copy of all of it with you on class day.

A graduate student, Owen Stuckey, made the above into an outline/structured set of questions that he answered every week. This worked well. The outline/questions are:

− Notes
− Summary
  Main takeaways, what to remember
  What is the author writing about?
  Why is this work significant?
  What does the author believe is important, why did they write this?
  How was their argument?
− Discussion questions

Critical summary – 1-2 pages summarizing and discusses the readings as a whole, including points that you find unclear or that you disagree with, and one or two discussion questions for the group.

It is not necessary to pick one and stick with it. It you want to try both, that is fine. If you want to vary it, that is fine. The important thing is to have the readings done and some form of writing done before class time and have them with you. I WILL collect the journals/summaries in each class!

My intent is multi-fold:

➢ To get you and keep you in the habit of thinking critically about what you are reading.
➢ To encourage you to read all the assigned works for each week and to think about all of them.
➢ To encourage everyone to be prepared for discussion every week – whether or not you are leading it.

Project #1 UNO Archive Map Analysis

For this first project, you will select a map from UNO’s Archive (or from its general collections) and write an in-depth visual analysis. We will visit the Archive on 21st May and look at some possibilities, but you are not limited to the examples we look at. The only requirement is that it is from the UNO Library and should be an actual artifact (but that can mean a map in a book or an atlas – check with me and get it ok’d).

Your analysis should not only describe the actual map, its appearance, its creator/s, and its intended purpose but should also put it into both a historical context and a cartographic context. Don’t be
afraid to critique the map . . . how effective is it? What is left off . . . intentionally and unintentionally and how does this change the map’s message? (Reread Foster, “The Lost Art of Critical Map Reading” and use this a guide!)

Some research will be required to put your map into context. Be sure to cite appropriate references and provide a bibliography, using a single citation style (I’m not picky as long as you are consistent).

Undergraduates should aim for 3-5 pages (not including the map) (double-spaces, 12 pt font, 1 in. margins). Include a copy of the map if you have permission to photography or copy it.

Identify map = 28th May
Due = 4th June

Project #2 Virtual Map Exhibit
For the second project, you will create a small virtual exhibit using ESRI storymaps on an episode/theme in North American history, using 3-5 historic maps. For the exhibit, you will need to:
1. Focus on an episode/theme. Try to keep this narrow (for example, World War II is way too broad . . . easier to focus on a front or a battle or an aspect of the military)
2. Write a 3 page-ish “set-up” essay providing context for your readers/viewers and that pulls together the maps (double-spaces, 12 pt font, 1 in. margins). Be sure to cite appropriate references and provide a bibliography, using a single citation style (be consistent!).
3. For each of your maps, write a paragraph (no more than a page) explaining what is significant about each map. Be sure to include basic reference information about each (source, creator, dimensions, date of creation).

These elements will be used to create your ESRI storymap. In addition, you will hand in a brief (1-2 pages) “behind the scenes” explanation/reflection paper for why you chose those particular images. This is due the last day of class.

You will need to start thinking about this immediately.
Proposal due (couple sentences) = 6th June
Update (oral in class) = 13th June
Presentation in class, completed storymap and explanation due = 20th June.

For what this looks like, see these examples on the Ruderman Conference on Cartography/Stanford University website:
https://exhibits.stanford.edu/blrcc/feature/retracing-colonial-cities

GIS Project
If you are enrolled for GEOG 8500 Historical GIS, you must do a GIS project . . . but I am open to suggestions about what this might look like.
Your exact project will ultimately decide your end output for the class. If you are engaged in a GIS analysis with many hours of work that results in a map, then your written report will be shorter and more reflective. Consult with me regarding your final outputs . . . but everyone will produce at least a short paper reflecting on the process and that should include appropriate citations and a bibliography.

Check out the “GIS Project” folder on Canvas under Course Materials for ideas . . .

Proposal due – 21st May, 300-600 words for the proposal. (If you are inspired by a project or paper, tell me what it is!)
Progress report (oral) – 28th May and 13th June
Final project due – 20th June.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the “taking” or “borrowing” someone else’s words, ideas, or entire works and presenting them as one’s own. Plagiarism includes:

- turning in a paper obtained from another person, a “paper service,” or a Web source
- copying some portion of text from another source without proper acknowledgment
- borrowing specific ideas without proper acknowledgment

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class or at this university. When in doubt about documentation – see me. It is much better to be safe than very, very sorry.

“We write histories, not history.”

Map collections online to explore:

David Rumsey Map Collection  https://www.davidrumsey.com/

History of Cartography – select volumes available in PDF form, free . . .
https://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/HOC/index.html

Library of Congress’ Geography and Map Room  https://www.loc.gov/rr/geogmap/
And . . . https://www.loc.gov/maps/collections/

Osher Map Library, University of Southern Maine https://oshersmaps.org/
### Tentative Course Schedule

**14th May**  
**1st Class**  
Introductions  
Discuss syllabus, projects  
What is historical geography? Wait, what? History of cartography??  
What is a map?  
What goes into a map?

**16th May**  
**Map Primer & North America Settlement beginnings**  
Primer in Map Language  
Map vocabulary  
Types of maps  
Quick overview of the history of cartography  
First migrations, settlement, landscape transformation . . . and maps?

Everyone read:  
- M. Foster, “The Lost Art of Critical Map Reading”  
  [https://www.directionsmag.com/article/1421](https://www.directionsmag.com/article/1421)  

Plus choose one of the following:  

Due: Reading Journal

**21st May**  
**Introduction to the Archive & Peopling the Continent – 1st wave**
Visit to UNO's Archive  [Important!  1st project tied to the archive]

Indigenous mapping traditions
What did the Europeans know before Columbus arrived?

Readings for today:
Plus -- one of the following for undergrads, two for grads:
-   W. Gartner, “An Image to Carry the World Within It: Performance Cartography and the Skidi Star Chart” Early American Cartographies (2011), 169-247. [yes, I know this is super long but it has 14 illustrations, 8 pages of tables, a ton of references . . . so the text is not as long as it appears! It is a fascinating study! Worth the effort!]

Due:  Reading Journal [Grads – proposal for GIS project due!]

23rd May

Peopling the Continent -- Colonization/Postcolonization
Who were the colonizers? What were their realms? How did they “see” the North American landscape? How did this manifest in their maps?
Readings for today:
Plus one of the following for undergrads, two for grads:

Due:  Reading Journal

28th May

Independence & Establishing the Republic
Readings for today:
Plus one of the following:


Due: Reading Journal + have map for 1st project selected & be prepared to discuss. Grads – be prepared to give me an update on your projects.

30th May

Civil War

Readings for today (one of the following for undergrads, two for grads):

Due: Reading Journal

4th June

No class. Project #1 due by 9pm. [CED out.]

6th June

Intro to ESRI Storymaps with Paul Hunt. [CED out.]

Reading for the day: explore the website before class -- https://storymaps.arcgis.com/en/

Due: no journal today! But undergrads email Dando your proposal for your Virtual Exhibit (just a couple sentences explaining your vision . . .)

11th June

Progressive Era 1890-1930

Readings for today (one of the following for undergrads, two for grads):

Due: Reading Journal
13th June  
**Mobility**
Readings for today (one of the following for undergrads, two for grads):

Due:  Reading Journal, be prepared to give an update on your project.

18th June  
**20th Century**
Readings for today (one of the following for undergrads, two for grads):

Due:  Reading Journal

20th June  
**21st Century**
Presentations on Project #2: Mini-exhibit & graduate projects

Readings:

Due:  Reading Journal & Project #2, grad projects