

COURSE OUTLINE

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY GEOG 3253 – CARTOGRAPHY – 2020 Fall (Online COVID version)

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On line Office Hours: TBA

EMAIL POLICY: My email is will@aspencroft.ca With the new teaching environment upon us and our switch to primarily on-line communications through ZOOM and D2L, we will work out a robust communication procedure. We will cover this in class.

Introduction

Welcome to GEOG 3253- Cartography. This is an advanced course that prepares you to be a professional geographer. Cartography is a core discipline within Geography; mapping is a core skill. Indeed, many would say that it is one of “the” two core disciplines, the other being geomorphology. As such, it is vital that you learn how to convey, analyze, and understand geographical data in a graphic manner. My job is to facilitate your movement to this new stage in your geographical career.

As more advanced students, you are also now responsible to maintain a high level of academic standards in this class, i.e., if you find that we are going too slowly, or that some of your colleagues are not performing at an adequate level, it is your responsibility to make me aware of this in a professional way. It is also your responsibility to make your classmates aware of their levels of performance. Finally, if you have any questions at any time make sure you ask! This is not a class where forgiveness will be provided when permission could have been sought.

Aim

By the end of this course, successful students should understand:

1. 1) Basic cartographic techniques and concepts;
2. 2) The several different types of maps and their uses;
3. 3) The concepts of projections and spatial statistics and their uses;
4. 4) The history and use of cartography.

Successful students will emerge from this class with the ability to participate in conversations about cartography at an advanced academic and professional level. This means that you will be familiar with the language, terminology, and theories used by academics and professionals in this field of geography. My goal is to provide you with the same level of instruction that you would receive at one of the top-rated undergraduate universities in Canada. I take this goal seriously; I see no reason that this course should not be experienced at the same level as a similar course at Mount Alison, Ottawa, or Bishop's.

Learning Methods

We have been forced to move to a new learning environment this term. Our learning methods will need to be tested and polished as we move forward. As it stands, Lakehead has arranged for ZOOM to be used for face-to-face communications and we have been allotted timeslots to use. More information about these slots and how to use them are available online. We are also making use of D2L, which should automatically contact you when you register for this course. Finally, someone will also be available for group or individual meetings should they be necessary.

We are also going to be trying to run this course more like a hands-on coop than a regular course. This is to offer some of the experiences you will get as you learn on the job in a few years. So, please note that instead of the terms “labs” and “lectures” we will be using the terms “technical meetings” and “development meetings.” We may make use of our freedom with ZOOM to hold either type of meeting when necessary.

COURSE GENERAL INFORMATION

- This is all going to be very different than what we are all used to. I have tried to maximise flexibility in the course planning to allow for issues coming up. We will need to be patient and work through glitches and find solutions to challenges.
- I have arranged for a leading textbook in cartography to be available for purchase as an ebook through the bookstore. I would encourage you to get it and plan on using it for the next ten years or so of your professional life. I can't force you to do this....I can expect you to have access to some standard cartography textbook that you can refer to for basic techniques and languages, e.g., how to use different line weights to signify different characteristics.
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ASSIGNMENTS

Our whole course is going to be constructed around the creation of an electronically available atlas focused on humanitarian geography in the Darfur region of Africa. We will begin from scratch and as a professional group work on this task together as well as individually according to a map production process. The marking reflects this. Each of the main theme areas below will include some technical skills development. Reg has done great work setting up learning videos and working examples for you to practice on.

30 marks derived from one general task (copy editor, symbol editor, colour maven, Etc) as well as participation in group conceptual work. 10 of these marks will come from your work in Technical Skills Development, which in this case will include the creation of a personal website and several proposed logos. We will each pick a general task to focus on during our first week together.

30 marks will come from the process of producing one OSM (Open Street Map) plate illustrating a town or camp in Darfur. 10 of these marks will be assigned through the submission of practice OSM projects in your local neighbourhood as part of Technical Skills Development. These will be submitted on your personal website.

40 marks will derive from the production of one atlas plate, using a common base map, which will provide a geo-visualization of a topic chosen by the individual mapper in consultation with the group. 10 of these marks will again be derived from Technical Skills Development, e.g. learning or improving on gis software of choice, learning how to use MapBox, etc. For this assignment we will be open to negotiation about what technical skills you can focus on.

Up to 10 extra marks will be derived from an evaluation of the entire atlas as a finished product, by an independent assessor. This will be a group mark that will be added to each individual mark.

MORE THOUGHTS ON THE NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Cartography technical skills development will be delivered primarily through D2L. So, please view the introductory video in the Content section of the D2L course webpage. We will be running **an open Zoom session each Tuesday 12:30 – 2:30 pm**. Please drop by to share your work, ask questions, and provide encouragement and support to your colleagues. This Zoom session provides a place and time for all of you to interact and work on the Atlas. Reg and/or Will will be present to act as a resource. **Attendance and participation will be recorded.** We want you to attend, but the structure will be based on your questions, concerns and initiatives.

There will be an ongoing **Q&A discussion thread on the D2L site**. If you have questions that will be of interest to other people in the class, please post them here and we will try to answer them promptly. Please feel free to email Reg at gdc@lakeheadu.ca with specific questions. He will do his best to answer within 24 hours (may be slightly longer over the weekends).

Not everyone will be able run the software packages that we typically use for cartography on their home systems. Technology Services have provisioned a cloud-based virtual machine (VM) with many of these software tools that will be available to you. In general, this requires a fast, robust internet connection and even then, there is a lag using the software on the VM that makes it less than ideal.

If you need to run software on the VM it can be found here: lakeheadu.ca/labs.

- **No clip art or borrowed images!** – all logos, pictures and maps must be your own creation. Your personal website will start off bare and you will add content as the course progresses and you develop and practice your skills. You can start with a few random photos that you have taken, as placeholders, to see how the theme or template you have chosen looks.
- **A good high resolution image of each Technical Skills Development project.** This may consist of a smaller low resolution image on a project page with a hyperlink to the hi-res image.
- **A clear description of each Technical Skills Development Project.** This should be a paragraph or two and should be *directed to a stranger* visiting your site who would like to know what you are trying to depict.

Some of our evaluative criteria used to evaluate work through the term

The following list provides examples of the evaluative criteria. Remember to review each piece of your work carefully for required parameters and expectations.

- **Map elements** – this includes elements like: title, north arrow, border, neatline, scale bar, legend, etc. Are these elements present, legible and appropriate?
- **Symbols** – abstract symbols intended to show the spatial locations of map features. Are these symbols present, legible, and of appropriate size, colour and shape?
- **Labelling** – is the text used to label different map features: present, legible and appropriate? Does it help a map reader understand what is being presented?
- **Landscape** – are landforms such as hills, mountains, lakes and trees, and landuses such as buildings, agriculture and transportation networks displayed in a way that is legible and useful for a map reader interpreting the map? Is an appropriate colour scheme being used?
- **Composition** – is there a balance to the map elements? (Sometimes looking at a map, drawing or photograph upside-down allows the eye to focus on the overall composition rather than the individual features.)
- **Write up** – a written description of each lab will be required. In most cases this will only be a paragraph or two and these will be marked for: grammar, spelling, and clarity. Does the write up support and illuminate the map image?
- **Assignment parameters** – specific parameters will be assigned for each lab.
- **Illuminates Topic** – are all of the above criteria used in a harmonious way, including: overall legibility, map elements, colour palette, composition, labels and associated written text.
- **Web presentation** - are the assignments presented on the website in a way that is easy to navigate, attractive and professional?

GOOD LUCK TO US ALL!