

Maps don't lie, or do they?

First-Year Seminar: One Credit

GEOG XXXX (1 Credit Hour, A-E)

Day: Biweekly for 7 weeks

Time and Location: TBA

Instructor: Dr. Tammy E. Parece

Department of Geography

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, or by appointment

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Course Description

Maps are an integral part of society, especially since COVID-19 when the CDC and Johns Hopkins University regularly posted disease updates using maps (which were available to the general public). Maps are not only used in geography but many other disciplines. Open access GIS software has granted the ability to create maps to people with no training in cartographic basics. Most people read a map and believe they are 100% accurate (e.g., are telling a true and perfect story). In this course, we will look at cartographic basics, learn how to read/use and critic thematic maps. Student will learn where biases or falsehoods can be introduced into a map to mislead. Students will ultimately learn to read/use and critique a map just as they would a source when writing an essay or a paper for other courses.

Course Objectives

- Describe a map's theme
- Explain errors contained within as specific map, but generally all maps
- Assess a map's accuracy and reliability

Required Materials:

How to Lie with Maps by Mark Monmonier. The University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226435923

We will also be using some additional readings (as identified in the schedule), videos and on-line maps. Links to these additional sources will be provided in Carmen Canvas.

Course Requirements

Class Participation (10%)

- attendance will be taken and is part of your grade
- class discussions on readings and videos
- Class discussions are informal and include questions and answer periods

Quizzes (30%)

- Weekly quizzes (10 points each quiz)

- Quizzes are online in Carmen, covering the materials from the book and weekly lecture topics.
- Quizzes are due by the end of day on Mondays covering the topics from the previous week.
- 6 total quizzes

Map Activities (30%)

- Students will present a map of their choice in class (happens twice on Thursday, weeks 2 – 6)
- Student will choose the two weeks for their presentations
- Student will identify a thematic map from an online source. Upload a link to the map (or the map itself) to the assignment folder the day on Wednesday before presenting in class
- During class, we will display the map on the projection screen and the student will describe the map and its theme, identifying the source of the map and the data, and answer any questions from other students (5 minutes).
- Grading will be based on introductory information, identifying correctly the map’s theme (s) and interacting with other students

Final Project (30%)

- Analyze a thematic map. This will expand on the map activity identified above.
- Student locates a multivariate thematic map.
- Student writes an essay describing the map’s themes, data sources, owner of the map, the purpose of the map and evaluating the errors found within the map (about 500 words). Copy of the map needs to be included in the essay.
- Student should include an explanation on how the map could be improved to eliminate or reduce errors that mislead the map reader.
- 10% of paper grade will include grammar, spelling, punctuation, and references.

Weekly Schedule

	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1	Introduction to Maps and Map Elements Chapter 2 & 3 (pages 5 – 44) and Appendix (pages 209 – 211)	
Week 2	How to read and interpret thematic maps: Chapter 8 (pages 101 – 122), Chapter 11 (pages 153-178). We will be examining maps from Kimerling, et al. Chapters 7 & 8 (PDF link in Canvas)	Thematic Map Discussions
Week 3	The Orange Peel Problem (pages 109 – 11 and 200) Peruse Kimerling, et al. Chapter 3 (PDF link in Canvas)	Thematic Map Discussions
Week 4	Are maps always out of date? Chapter 4 (pages 45 – 59)	Thematic Map Discussions
Week 5	Are online maps better? Chapter 12 (pages 195-202) and pages 151-152 Examine the maps on the websites for Feeding America and the USDA Food Desert Locator	Thematic Map Discussions
Week 6	Does scale matter? Chapter 10 (pages 133 – 150) & Chapter 13 (pages 188 – 194).	Thematic Map Discussions

	Examine the online Neighborhood Atlas from the University of Wisconsin Madison	
Week 7	How to evaluate a map, the data, and the author Final Project Questions. Course wrap up	

Grading scale

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	E
≥93%	90-92%	87-89%	83-86%	80-82%	77-79%	73-76%	70-72%	67-69%	60-66%	<60%

Course Academic integrity policy

See specific assignment descriptions for my guidelines about collaboration and academic integrity in the context of this class. I will not tolerate cheating or plagiarism of any kind.

Ohio State's academic integrity policy

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Disability Services

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.