



NYC iSchool

Cartography

Christina Jenkins / 2011-12

Course Description

Cartography – mapmaking – is a field that is probably more exciting today than it has been since the sixteenth century. Cartography is the way that humans use images to make sense of the space that they occupy. Sometimes, this space is physical; this is challenging for cartographers because it's impossible to accurately translate a three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. Sometimes, the space that cartographers work with is emotional or historical; this is challenging for cartographers because maps of the imagination are imprecise. Mapping is an exercise in math, art and geography all at once. In this course, students will engage with different methods of mapmaking (digital, by hand, GIS, etc) and different purposes for mapmaking (documenting land features, making political statements, art, etc).

Course Objectives

Through this course, students will understand how maps can be used to document places, emotions, time, patterns, events (and more!) through visual representation. Initially, we will focus on mapping physical places as a way of investigating the power of maps to tell stories and present spatial information. Depending on interest, students will engage with personal (or small group) projects that examine one or more of the cartographic methods or purposes mentioned above in greater depth. These might include contributing to the Crisis Camp projects that have emerged from disasters like the earthquake in Haiti, collaborating with HistoryPin (a new project dedicated to mapping historical photos), or developing site-specific “artistic” maps around the iSchool, among others. Students will exercise technical skills in using digital tools for contemporary mapping projects, and will develop a strong understanding of the basics (scale, projection, reference systems, color, land features, etc.)

Required Materials:

In addition to maintaining a dedicated class notebook (preferably one without lines, for easier drawing), students are required to bring to class three maps they have found in the world. These might be transit maps, tourist maps, a map of Afghanistan in the newspaper, a hand-drawn map (as long as it's drawn by someone other than you) – anything is acceptable as long as you believe it qualifies as a map and you haven't made it yourself. We will discuss these throughout the course, in addition to those in my own library. Please bring these in by the beginning of the second week of class.

Student Requirements and Expectations:

Students are expected to care for our shared classroom environment by returning furniture and objects to their established “homes” (as identified with labels), taking care to not waste materials, and contributing to a creative, collaborative and supportive culture in room 402. We will be engaged with activities that may be uncomfortable or unfamiliar at times – like drawing, doing mathematical calculations, and using data sets, among others. Creative thinking can be frustrating



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and difficult, and students are expected to approach these challenges with persistence and open minds.

Course Timeline

| Week | Topic | Major Assignments |
|------|---|--|
| 1 | What is a map? Why is mapping so challenging? | Orange activity, US activity, four-color activity |
| 2 | Mapping by hand: The basics | |
| 3 | Mapping by hand: Applications | Map #1: Mapping the block |
| 4 | Compass-reading, geocaching, and field work | |
| 5 | Digital projects: Google Maps + Mapmaker | |
| 6 | Digital projects: Google Fusion Tables ("GIS") | Map #2: Digital map using data set |
| 7 | Maps as political statement ("Radical cartography") | |
| 8 | Maps as art + narrative | Map #3: Narrative |
| 9 | Final project | |
| 10 | Final project | |
| 11 | Final project | Final project, TBD by student interest with approval |

Grading

[OFFICIAL ISCHOOL GRADING POLICY:

- Work Habits include home work assignments, in class assignments, notes, notebook checks, being prepared for class, organization, supplies, flash cards, etc.
- Contributing Factors includes attendance, participation, lateness to class and turning in late assignments, behavior, effort, etc.

Grading Policy for 9th grade:

Mastery: 60%

Work Habits: 30%

Contributing Factors: 10%

Grading Policy for 10th – 12th grade:

Mastery: 70%

Work Habits: 20%



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Contributing Factors: 10%

Incomplete Grades:

Students who receive below a 65% will receive an incomplete in the class. The student's work habits and contributing factors percentage grades will be locked in place at the end of the course, but a grade can be improved through demonstration of mastery (prior to the end of the following quarter).

For Example: John receives an incomplete in humanities. He had a 9% in contributing factors, a 15% in work habits and a 30% in mastery. During the next quarter John worked and raised his mastery to 60%. Therefore his final grade for the class is $60+9+15 = 84\%$.

Students who receive an incomplete will be required to attend an after school class each week at a time to be determined by student and teacher.

Grading Policy for 9th grade students:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Mastery | 60% |
| <i>Compositions/Scores (including peer evaluations)</i> | |
| Work Habits | 30% |
| <i>Out of class assignments</i> | |
| <i>Daily preparation and performance</i> | |
| Contributing Factors | 10% |
| <i>Participation, punctuality/attendance, effort</i> | |

Grading Policy for 10th–12th grade students:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Mastery | 70% |
| <i>Compositions/Scores (including peer evaluations)</i> | |
| Work Habits | 20% |
| <i>Out of class assignments</i> | |
| <i>Daily preparation and performance</i> | |
| Contributing Factors | 10% |
| <i>Participation, punctuality/attendance, effort</i> | |

Incomplete Grades

Students who receive below a 65% (or higher and chooses this option) will receive an incomplete in any specific class. For module courses, any student who does not complete the final product will automatically receive an "incomplete." The student's work habits and contributing factors percentage grades will be locked in place. The students will then have the next quarter to work towards raising their mastery percentage grade.

Students who receive an incomplete will be required to attend an after school class each week at a time to be determined by student and teacher.

Late Assignments

[OFFICIAL iSCHOOL POLICY: Teachers will accept late assignments 5 school days after the original due date. The assignment must be completed in the presence of the assigning teacher (i.e. during Office Hours, or by appointment). At this time the teacher has the option to assign additional work before deeming the original assignment complete.]



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All coursework is due on the date given at the beginning of the assignment/project. Late work will be accepted up to five days after the due date, with a penalty of 10% off per day late. The assignment must be completed in my presence during my posted Office Hours, or by appointment.

Student Absences

If a student is absent, it is his/her responsibility to come to Office Hours the day he/she returns back to school find out what was missed the day he/she was absent. The student is expected to turn in any assignments due on the day absent on the day immediately following the absence. During an absence, students are expected to continue to check the course website and/or contact a classmate to keep up with course work.

Resources

- Students should get in the habit of checking iSchool email regularly, as teachers will communicate instructions, project feedback, etc. through email.
- Students should check the course Moodle daily, as assignments, templates, and resources will be posted there.
- Additional help is available during Office Hours or by appointment; My office hours are: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, from 3:20 – 4pm.
- If you have additional concerns please e-mail me at: cjenkins@mail.nycischool.org