GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIETY

GEOG 412
Department of Geography
Fall 2015

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Tues. 11:00-12:20, 113 DAV; Thurs, 11:00-12:20, 338 DAV

This course examines the development of geospatial technologies (GT) and their use in the analysis of social, economic, and environmental change. We explore how digital geographic information is created and used, how new geographic technologies like GPS are influencing human behaviors and spatial interactions; critical cartography and participatory GIS; the roles of GT and mapping in land use and resource conflicts; issues of privacy, surveillance and data linkage; and planning and policy making. The focus of course readings and discussions will be on the use of geospatial technologies by a wide range of actors with an emphasis on the production of new spaces of intervention and understanding. Applications in areas such as rural development, environmental justice, indigenous land claims, crime and health will be discussed.

Readings: On the COMPASS web site for the course.

Course Requirements:

Weekly commentaries 40%
Term paper/project 25%
Class presentation of paper 5%
Lead class session 5%
Class participation 10%
Labs 15%
Weekly Commentaries

Each week students are to write a short commentary (1-2 pages) on the assigned readings. These commentaries will be due by 5:00 p.m. on Monday and should be posted to the COMPASS web site for the class. Commentaries should not be a simple summary of the main points of the reading. The strongest commentaries will convey a critical reading of the material and advance our understanding of it. You might discuss an idea, question, or contradiction that emerges from the week’s readings with which you agree, disagree or wish to further explore. You should support your view with evidence from the reading or other readings. As the semester progresses, you should be able to refer to previous course readings to enrich your argument. Each student should read other students’ postings prior to class. These commentaries will serve as a point of departure for our weekly discussions.

Term Paper

Students are to write a term paper, approximately 10-15 pages in length, that examines a Geospatial Technology and Society topic that has emerged from course readings and discussions, or which forms the basis of student thesis work. The term paper will involve examining a geospatial technology product, deployment, or controversy and critiquing it from a GT and Society perspective. More information on content and style will be distributed in class.

Class Discussant

Each student will be responsible for orally presenting the main points of the readings for one week. The goal is to summarize the main research questions and findings of the readings, and to focus class discussion around issues that emerge from the readings.

Class Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (8/25) General Background

Week 2 (9/1): Critical Cartography I


Week 3 (9/8): Critical Cartography II


Week 4 (9/15): GIS Debates and Social Theory


Week 5 (9/22): GIS in Everyday Life


Week 6 (9/29): GIS and Feminism:


Week 7 (10/6): The Nature(s) of Maps


Week 8 (10/13): Counter-Mapping


Week 9 (10/20): Participatory GIS: and Volunteered Geographic Information


Week 10 (10/27): Qualitative GIS


Week 11 (11/3): Analyzing Crime and Health with GIS


**Week 12 (11/10): GIS and Environmental Change Analysis**


**Week 13 (11/17) GIS, Territory, and the State**


**Weeks 14 and 15 (12/1, 12/3 and 12/8) Student presentations**