
DGTHUM 150

Digital Mapping and Critical Geographic Information Systems Course Syllabus

Welcome to DH 150: Digital Mapping and Critical Geographic Information Systems!

Meeting Time & Place

Thursday 2:00 p.m. – 4:50 p.m.

Rolfe 2118

Instructor information

Name: Dr. Ryan Horne

Office Hours: Thursday 1 p.m. @ OARC Sandbox or Zoom

email: rmhorne@ucla.edu

Course Description

In this course, students will study digital mapping techniques used in humanities and social sciences, with an emphasis on equity and social justice issues. Through project-based learning, students will engage about basic geospatial data types, digital gazetteers, and web-based GIS initiatives. Students will work with georeferencing historical maps and sources, visualizing and querying geospatial data, and crafting narratives that use place-based information.

Objectives and Goals

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the basics of GIS systems
- Use QGIS and ESRI StoryMaps
- Differentiate, analyze, and create Vector and Raster data
- Confidently use geospatial tools and analysis
- Apply geospatial tools to historical questions
- Obtain GIS information from various sources
- Create a web-accessible geospatial application

Texts

There are no texts for purchase for the course. Instead texts will be posted or linked to online, and will reflect the interests of the group. Feel free to e-mail the instructor concerning any particular areas of

interest.

Grading

Grading is a points based system, and will be based on your class / laboratory participation, reaction papers, short assignments, and the final project. There are no written exams in the course.

Grades are weighted as follows:

Item	Percentage
Reaction / Discussion Assignments	15
Lab Assignments	15
Participation	10
Presentation (https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/191585/assignments/1670719)	10
Final Project (https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/191585/assignments/1670590)	30
Milestones	20
Total	100

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade
A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92.99
B+	87 – 89.99
B	83 – 86.99
B-	80 – 82.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	73 – 76.99

C-	70 – 72.99
D	60 – 66.99
F	0 – 59.99

Student, Instructor, and Course Expectations

Office Hours / Student Hours

If you plan to join student (office) hours, please email me in advance and let me know when you're coming and what you'd like to work on. While Zoom drop-ins are welcome, this will help me better prepare for your questions.

Finally, I ask that you give me 48 hours to reply to any e-mails / messages and understand that I generally can't respond to messages on evenings and weekends.

Attendance

Attendance is expected and required for all class and labs. However if you have an emergency, are ill, or otherwise have to not attend class let me know and we can make arrangements to cover material / activities that you missed.

AI / ChatGPT / etc

We are entering a very new and interesting world with the proliferation of AI enhanced tools for writing and coding. Much like the appearance of Wikipedia in the early 2000s, academia is struggling with if and how these tools can be used in a classroom setting. For this course, I am interested in what you have to say, what your thoughts are on the topics, and the work that you do for the project. However, I encourage you, if you want to use AI tools, to do so lightly; if they are used, I need a .pdf of the prompt, response, and the edits that you made, for either text or code. It is permissible to use AI for brainstorming ideas, but not to substantively produce content. Be VERY cautious with any sources cited by these tools; they are sometimes fictitious or misleading!

Failure

You will be working with disciplinary content and technology that may be unfamiliar to you, and at times you may struggle with tools or your research material. Often the most valuable learning happens during this time! The key to success with the technical components of this course (both learning-wise and grade-wise) is to make mistakes and fail as frequently as possible. If you're not, then you're simply not trying to push beyond your own limitations. Once you fail at something, we'll get you unstuck and moving forward again. Repeating this often will make the course more rewarding and you'll get a high grade for

your effort. I will score your work in this course primarily on process rather than on the final product. Showing us something that doesn't work quite like you want/expect, and explaining your steps and what your goal is, indicates a level of engagement and curiosity we are all striving towards. You must be able to have fun while totally frustrated, even when everything takes way longer than it should.

Reaction / Discussion Posts

You will be assigned 5 reaction papers. The purpose of these is for you to engage with the material, show how the readings influence your own project, and to discuss how the issues resonate with you personally. These will be turned in on BruinLearn / Canvas as discussions so your colleagues can comment on your observations. As part of each reaction assignment you must leave AT LEAST TWO comments on other papers (i.e. you can leave one comment on one paper and one on another) reacting to what your classmates said in a respectful, constructive manner.

Academic Integrity

As a student and member of the University community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. You are evaluated on your own merits. Be proud of your accomplishments and protect academic integrity at UCLA. As specified by University policy, violations or attempted violations of academic dishonesty include, but are limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, multiple submissions, or facilitating academic dishonesty (See University of California Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations, and Students, 102.01). Violations of the academic integrity policy are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. For more information, please visit the Office of the Dean of Students.

University Resources

Precarity

Your highest priority should be your well-being and the well-being of people you care about. Any student facing housing, food, or health challenges that they believe will affect their performance in this course is urged to contact CAPS for support and accommodation. We operate best only when our basic needs are first met. If you are struggling with food or housing insecurity, please visit the [UCLA Basic Needs \(https://basicneeds.ucla.edu/services\)](https://basicneeds.ucla.edu/services) services page for resources.

One of the best strategies you can have is to tackle issues before they become a crisis: it's OK to ask for assistance! If you can't make a meeting or can't get your work done, do your best to let me know as soon as you can so we can make adjustments.

Mental Health: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

We all face times when life is particularly challenging, and we need someone to talk to or additional support to cope with stress, grief, and other issues that crop up. [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\) \(https://counseling.ucla.edu/\)](https://counseling.ucla.edu/) is here to support your mental health needs as you pursue your academic goals. In addition, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides confidential counseling to all students and can be reached 24/7 at (310) 825-0768.

If you are concerned about a friend, classmate, or other members of the UCLA community, please [let a professional know \(https://counseling.ucla.edu/concerned-about-a-bruin/concerned-about-a-bruin\)](https://counseling.ucla.edu/concerned-about-a-bruin/concerned-about-a-bruin). You may do so anonymously.

Accommodations

To help me better foster your success, please contact the [Center for Accessible Education \(CAE\) \(https://cae.ucla.edu/\)](https://cae.ucla.edu/) if you need—or suspect you may need—accommodations as soon as possible. Regardless of whether you are registered with the CAE, please let me know if you have ideas for cultivating a learning environment more conducive to your success.

Accessibility

Accessibility is crucial. Although I do my best to use accessible materials, please contact the [Center for Accessible Education \(CAE\) \(https://cae.ucla.edu/\)](https://cae.ucla.edu/) if you need—or suspect you may need—additional adjustments as soon as possible. Please call (310) 825-1501, TTY/TTD: (310) 206-6083, or visit the CAE website contact form.

Title IX Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the CARE Advocacy Office for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, 1st Floor Wooden Center West, CAREadvocate@careprogram.ucla.edu, (310) 206-2465. You can also report sexual violence or sexual harassment directly to the University's Title IX Coordinator, 2241 Murphy Hall, titleix@conet.ucla.edu, (310) 206-3417. Reports to law enforcement can be made to UCPD at (310) 825-1491.