GEO 400/600 Spatial Storytelling

Class meetings: Wednesdays 12:45-3:30pm, Eggers 155

Instructors
Dr. Jane M. Read, Eggers 123, jaread@maxwell.syr.edu
Office hours Mondays 12:30-3:30pm, or by appointment in Eggers 123

Dr. Rachel May, CH 323, sumay@syr.edu
Office hours Wednesdays 10:00am-12:00pm noon in CH 323.

Important: when sending email, please put GEO 400 or GEO 600 in the subject line.

Prerequisite / Co-requisite:
None

Audience:
Undergraduate and graduate students

Course Description:
This course will explore techniques and impacts of spatial storytelling through the eyes of spatial science and the humanities. Based in the growing interest in the geohumanities and digital humanities, the course will explore methods in storytelling, taking into account different media, cultures, and ways of conceptualizing space, time, and realities. Through a growing and interdisciplinary literature, we will study and practice storytelling through art, maps, texts, images/photography, video etc. We will investigate how visualization methods and technologies affect the ways we understand spatial relationships and use them to orient or disorient the viewer and to structure plots. At the end of the course, students will be able to think critically about maps and other forms of spatial stories, and about how we experience and understand place.

The class emphasizes research, creativity, and collaboration. It is not a lecture course, and students should come prepared to participate – to collaborate, to be creative in their thinking, and to be ready to discuss the material and concepts. We are hoping to attract students from all colleges to provide a truly interdisciplinary experience.

Credits:
3.0. This course fulfills a social science as part of the Arts & Sciences Core.

Learning Objectives:
After taking this course, students will be able to:
1. identify and explain terms related to geovisualization and spatial stories;
2. discuss and critique ways of telling spatial stories;
3. describe and discuss different methods and media for telling stories;
4. compare and critique the ramifications of different methods and media for how stories are received and interpreted;
5. discuss some of the cultural differences in storytelling;
6. manipulate, create, and analyze spatial data for use in stories;
7. explain in writing concepts of time, space, resolution/levels of granularity;
8. practice storytelling using a variety of methods for representing spatial reference points and movement through space;
9. Appreciate the possibilities and practical limitations of spatial storytelling.

This course partially or wholly fulfills the following geography undergraduate program learning objectives:
1. Explore and critically reflect on geographic issues, concepts, and debates.
2. Identify, locate, evaluate, use, and share information as it pertains to geography.
3. Describe and explain the dynamic relationship between people and places, and among places, over time and across space and scales.
4. Develop and apply basic geographic skills and methods using spatial information, such as map making and map reading, spatial analysis and visualization, and quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Readings:
Readings will be assigned each week. Assigned readings must be completed ahead of class, and students should be ready to discuss the material. Readings will be from the required text as well as additional resources that will be made available in class or via Blackboard. Students will also be expected to read a novel they select from the list provided at the beginning of the semester.

Required text:
HyperCities: Thick Mapping in the Digital Humanities, by Presner, Shepard, Kawano, 2014, Harvard University Press. The text is available for purchase at the SU bookstore. It will also be available on 2-hour reserve in Bird Library.

Requirements:
Course requirements, including class presentations, response papers, labs/skills exercises, final projects, and reflection report are designed to assess student learning of the course objectives. Student grades will be assessed as follows:

- 3 response papers = 15%
- Labs/skills exercises = 40%
- Final project = 35%
- Final reflection report = 10%

Details for assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard regularly.

Participation and collaboration is an important part of the course. Students are expected to come prepared to participate in discussions of readings and other in-class activities/exercises.
Response papers (15%): learning objectives 1-5, 7
Students will be required to submit THREE response papers. A response paper is a brief (500-750 word) report summarizing a discussion topic. Details of topic selection will be provided on Blackboard. The reports are due periodically throughout the semester, and details will be posted on Blackboard. The reports should include a summary of the readings and class discussion, and a thoughtful discussion and conclusion. Papers discussed should be cited correctly. Check Blackboard for guidelines.

Labs/skills exercises (40%): learning objectives 3, 6, 8, 9
Time during class will be set aside for learning skills related to storytelling. Students will be expected to complete assignments outside of class time and submit their work the week following the assignment, unless otherwise instructed. There will be a total of TEN exercises. Details of exercises will be posted on Blackboard. Lab/skills exercises will be held either in the assigned classroom or in the Crouse-Hinds Spatial Dynamics Laboratory, CH 221.

Final project (35%): learning objectives 6-9
Students will work in small groups to conduct a collaborative project to tell a spatial story. Students will be required to submit a short project proposal, write a final project report, and present their findings to the class. Details of the project will be provided on Blackboard. Graduate students may do individual projects, with permission of instructors.

Final reflection report (10%): learning objectives attained will vary depending on focus (1-5, 7-8)
Students will write a final reflection on spatial storytelling and the class. Details of the assignment will be available via Blackboard.

Grading:
Grades will be assigned as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>less than 60</td>
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Course Policies:
Official SU email addresses will be used for all email communications. Course information will be available on Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking their SU email and Blackboard regularly.

Students are required to attend all class sessions. Students are also required to show up and leave on time. More than one unexcused absence from class, and/or frequent late arrival/early departure to/from class, will result in points being deducted from the final grade.
Excuses for class absences for medical reasons will be given only if such absences are advised by a health care provider at the Health Center, based on clinical findings and prescribed treatment recommendations. Excused notes will not be given solely to confirm a visit to the Health Center.

Work must be submitted on time. Unless late submission has been approved beforehand, the grade for the assignment will be reduced 10% for each day or fraction thereof that the submission time is missed. Unless approved in advance, email submissions are not acceptable.

Cell phones should be silenced before coming to class (please leave on vibrate in case of emergency). Use of cell/smart phones, laptops, and tablets are not permitted unless explicitly requested by the instructor.

Talking should be limited to activities in class.

**Academic Integrity**

Syracuse University’s academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university’s academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice. For more information and the complete policy, see [http://academicintegrity.syr.edu](http://academicintegrity.syr.edu).

In this course, complete academic honesty is expected of all students. Course sanctions will include a zero grade for the assignment, and in serious cases (e.g., blatant and/or repeat instances) may result in the student failing the course, in addition to any prescribed University sanctions as specified in the policy. In this course, students are allowed and encouraged to study together, but discussion reports and individual exercises—unless otherwise directed—must represent the work of the individual student.

The Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric establishes recommended guidelines for the determination of grade penalties by faculty and instructors, while also giving them discretion to select the grade penalty they believe most suitable, including course failure,
regardless of violation level. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

**Disability-Related Accommodations**
Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. My goal is to create a learning environments that are useable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, I invite any student to meet with me to discuss additional strategies beyond accommodations that may be helpful to your success.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), [http://disabilityservices.syr.edu](http://disabilityservices.syr.edu), located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call 315.443.4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue “Accommodation Authorization Letters” to students as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

**Religious Observances Policy**
SU’s religious observances policy, found at [http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm](http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm), recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students should have an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors no later than the end of the second week of classes. Student deadlines are posted in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

Any missed assignments due to a religious observance should be made up on a schedule negotiated with the student before the religious event. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor ahead of time.

**Add/drop and withdraw petitions**
It is the policy of the Geography Department that students must obtain FIRST the signature of the instructor and THEN the signature of the department chair if they wish to drop or withdraw from this course. Only one instructor signature is needed.

**Student Academic Work Policy**
- *Educational use of student work*: We intend to use academic work that you complete this semester for educational purposes in this course during this semester. Your registration and continued enrollment constitute your permission.
- *Educational use of student work in subsequent semesters*: Academic work that you complete this semester might well be used in subsequent semesters for educational purposes. Before using your work for that purpose, we will either get your written
permission or render the work anonymous by removing all your personal identification.

Class Schedule
Please see separate class schedule and check Blackboard for details of readings and assignments.

Syllabus subject to change. 4 August, 2017.