

CulturalAtlas

SP19
GEOG
394-02
PRODUCTION

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Learn the design and critique process
- Learn the publishing process
- Develop skills using GIS, design and visualization applications
- Create a beautiful and informative 2 page spread for a cultural atlas
- Publish a cultural atlas digitally and in print

Instructor:

Ashley Nepp
anepp@macalester.edu

Office Hours:
M 3:00-5:00 pm
W 1:00-3:00 pm



Teaching Assistants:

Henry McCarthy
hmccarth@macalester.edu

Maggie Lobbing
mlobbig@macalester.edu

Welcome to Cultural Atlas Production! I have been dreaming of doing a course like this for years, and I am excited to embark on this adventure with all of you! In this course we will attempt to create and publish a cultural atlas in just 14 weeks. As such, this course requires a significant investment of time and creativity, as well as a drive to learn. I will not be handing you prescribed labs detailing how to visualize data with every method, tool and form. I want to help you learn the design process and how to learn new technologies on your own, as needed. These are the skills you will take away from this course. The assignments are structured so you can tailor them to your interests, but they all have a purpose and goal. Sometimes you will be learning a tool, technology, or a process that I am not an expert in, and we will be learning together. It's ok if that scares you -- it is scary for me too. I have never published a book by myself before, and I am nervous and excited.

I want us to create a piece that shows not just where things are in space, or how much of something is in a particular place, but communicates the essence of place. How does a place feel, smell, sound, etc.? What is the human experience in that place, or what happened here that we can no longer see on the landscape. Making the invisible visible and the intangible tangible. During this course I hope to help you cultivate your skills by:

- *Grounding you in the principles of design and cartography*
- *Giving you the freedom and space to learn tools and techniques you want to learn*
- *Creating space to fail, experimentation and failure lead to knowledge and resilience*
- *Cultivating creativity and instilling a passion for lifelong learning*

-- Ashley Nepp

EXPECTATIONS

- In addition to showing up to class, prepared and on time, I expect you to spend at least six hours per week working on your lab assignment/atlas piece outside of class time. In addition, your participation during class discussions, critiques, and demonstrations is absolutely vital for success in this class.
- Respectful and honest feedback coupled with intelligent discussion will push everybody's work in a constructive manner. Some of our assignments involve a collaborative effort. By being present and prepared you are also helping your classmates succeed--we are all in this together.

CLASSROOM/LAB POLICIES

- Always close the door to Carnegie 109. If you need to get into the Carnegie 108 lab during normal hours and your card is not working, call security.
- Food/uncovered beverages are not allowed in either lab.
- This class involves heavy use of the computer—please use the lab computers as a tool for working on class-related projects and refrain from Facebook, Youtube, and other diversions during class time. You may also work on your personal laptops.
- Cell phones should be on silent and kept out of view. If your device happens to buzz, ring, or sing during class it will have a negative impact on your grade. Exceptions: open work time (phones can be used for listening to music & taking photos, etc.).
- It is strongly recommended that you work from a portable hard drive. At the very least, back-up your work daily to Google Drive or the H:/ drive.
- Carnegie 109 is a flexible classroom. However, if you move tables or chairs, please return them to their original location.
- The GIS Lab printer is for assignment use only. Anyone using the printers for personal reasons will be charged appropriately.
- We discuss each other's work in an open, honest, and safe environment. It is important to respect each other as individuals, cartographers, and students with different backgrounds. Use of preferred pronouns, allowing others to speak & ask questions, and being a careful listener are expected in this learning environment.
- Students with disabilities: I am committed to supporting the learning of all students in my class. If you are encountering barriers to your learning that I can mitigate, please bring them to my attention. If you need disability related accommodations please contact the Office of Student Affairs, 651-696-6220 to schedule an appointment and discuss your individual circumstances.
- Be present & ready to work by the beginning of class.

GRADING: CONTRACT FOR A “B”

In lieu of grading individual assignments, I've adopted the “Contract for a ‘B’” method of assessment which privileges growth throughout the semester over small individual success. This means that no letter grades or points will be assigned until you turn in your final atlas piece and progress journal at the end of the semester. However, you will receive lots of feedback throughout the semester--during class, in writing, and in individual meetings. It is your responsibility to retain, process, and choose to integrate this feedback into your work going forward. It is also your responsibility to let me know if you would like more or less feedback.

If you complete the following tasks required by this course (which will require a significant commitment of time and good faith effort on your part), you will be assured a “B”. Exceeding these expectations will result in a higher grade. Breaking the contract will result in a lower grade.

- **Attendance & Participation:** Don't miss more than three class days. Missing a scheduled critique or field trip counts for two missed class days. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to cover the missed information via Moodle or a classmate & make-up any work by the next class session. Attendance includes promptness: not arriving late or leaving early. Two late arrivals or early departures will count as one absence. Missing more than three days will break the contract as will a pattern of lateness (six or more days). Participation means being engaged with course material during the entire class session. You don't need to be the biggest extrovert in the class to have excellent participation--you just need to be focused on and committed to the tasks at hand during class time. Habitually checking your email/working on other coursework, using your phone, and not being prepared for class will break the contract.
- **Integrity & Originality:** Unless specified otherwise, all work turned in for this course should be both original and new, meaning no appropriation and no work created for other courses may be used. Use of stock imagery, and on-line “borrowing” of images are considered plagiarism in this course and are not allowed. Infractions will result in a grade lower than a “B”.
- **Preparation & Thoroughness:** Are you spending time researching your topic, doing your field work, generating drafts, incorporating feedback, and revising over the course of the assignment? Are you coming to class with new work to review regularly? Are you able to discuss the readings and handouts from Moodle for the day? Thoroughness also applies to your attention to detail in the assignments. Are you meeting deadlines and the requirements for each assignment? If so, you are meeting this part of the contract.
- **Intention & Creativity:** Incorporate the principles & elements we are studying into your work, and allow your work to grow over the assignment period. Work that reflects careful study of course material & shows growth will result in a “B”, whereas work that ignores the course topics and plateaus early will result in a broken contract. Growth is privileged over completion.
- **Progress Journal:** You are required to maintain a journal of your progress on this project. Weekly entries are required to record your process on your atlas piece. A complete progress journal at the end of the semester, responding to weekly prompts, and including all stages of your atlas piece, will result in a “B” grade. Partially-complete journals or journals with the majority of the work is rushed and added last-minute will result in a broken contract. You will turn in your progress journal at midterm and a final progress journal at the end of the semester. At each due date, your portfolio should be organized in chronological order and presented as neatly as possible, submitted on-time and complete. Due to insufficient material to calculate a grade at midterm, all students will receive a midterm grade of “B”.

The journal will include your atlas piece proposal, data source list (full citations), sketches, drafts, field work, any critique materials or feedback you receive, as well as significant self-reflection on your piece. This should also include the data views/forms you experimented with – include screenshots and short descriptions of what you tried, what you liked, what failed, etc. In your final progress journal you must also include a short portfolio description that details how you created

your piece and what softwares, platforms and/or apps you used to create it (I will provide an example of this).

- **Critiques:** The most active learning in this class comes from how others view your work, and how you view your classmate's work. Major assignments will be accompanied by either a final or work-in-progress critique. Attendance is mandatory and every student is expected to comment on someone else's work several times during the critique. If you don't speak up meaningfully (i.e. something more than "I like that") during critique, you are breaking the contract.
- **Field Work:** You are required to conduct at least two field work outings in support of your atlas piece. These should be documented in your journal with goals of the outing, pictures (if applicable), field notes, and a reflection on how successful the outing was and how you will incorporate what you experienced into your piece. Incomplete or missing field work outings and reflections will result in a broken contract.
- **Final Atlas Piece:** You will complete a 2-page spread for the final cultural atlas. In addition to this two-page spread, you will take a role in the publishing process. Incomplete or missing final atlas pieces or non-participation in the publishing process will result in a broken contract.
- **Competence:** This does not mean technical mastery of design or cartography. However, to keep the Contract, your work should demonstrate that, through sustained effort, you are making adequate progress toward acquiring some competence, both in methods and accompanying concepts. Did you challenge yourself and push your skills? If your work is otherwise incomplete, careless, rushed, and not incorporating feedback, it will indicate a lack of progress and result in a broken contract.
- **Awareness:** Keep track of whether you are meeting this contract. Schedule a meeting during office hours if you are unaware where you stand in the contract. Re-read the contract to remind yourself of what's required.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Meeting all conditions of the contract will result in a "B" grade--this grade should be accessible to every student, regardless of skill and previous training. Breaking any part of the contract leaves you open to grades of "B-" and lower. Grades higher than a "B" depend on the excellence and quality of your design work in addition to adhering to the contract. Quality work will exhibit evidence of clear and thorough research and field work, integration of design principles, technical precision and sophisticated use of the materials & software and a visually engaging and informative final atlas piece.

I don't expect perfection. I do expect to see you incorporate the principles and processes of design into your work. I expect you to learn from your failures and the feedback you receive from the rest of the class.

The easiest way to earn a grade less than a "B" is by missing classes, not putting in the required time on your projects, showing up to class unprepared and turning in uninvested work. Missing four or more days will result in a grade no better than "C+". You must complete 70% of the coursework in order to earn a passing grade. Feedback and rubrics will keep you aware of whether each assignment meets the requirements for the contract. Every contract has a loophole--if you find yourself in a proverbial sh*t-hitting-the-fan moment, please see me and I'll do my best to make an accommodation--once. In addition to taking advantage of in-class lab & review time, as well as my office hours, there are two required formal meetings where we will review your work--once for your draft layout, and once for your final layout.

PRELIMINARY COURSE SCHEDULE

See Moodle for the most up to date schedule, and for daily assignment details

- Week 1 | Map Poetry ●
- Week 2 | Cultural Atlas Book Report
- Week 3 | Inkscape or Illustrator Layout ●
- Week 4 | Cartographic techniques
- Week 5 | Charts, graphs + data viz
- Week 6 | Field Work 1 ●
- Week 7 | Field Work 2
- Week 8 | Style sheet ●
- Spring Break!! --
- Week 9 | Draft Layout Due + 1st Critique ●
- Week 10 | Discuss Publishing Process
- Week 11 | Final Layout Due + 2nd Critique
- Week 12 | Put Atlas Layout Together ●
- Week 13 | Send to Printer + Publish
- Week 14 | Celebrate + Get the word out ●

Reserve Saturday May 11th - Final Exam Period 10:30-12:30pm