SYLLABUS

Course Title: Geographic Information Systems and Spatial Analysis for Public Policy

Academic Department/Course Number: PUBP 754
Semester/Year: Spring 2018
Building/Room: FH 206
Days/Time: W 7:20 p.m.-10:00 p.m.
Instructor: Edmund J. Zolnik
Office: FH 653
Office Telephone: (703)993-1144
Office Hours: W 10:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.
Electronic Mail: Please use Blackboard to send messages.

Course Objectives: Introduces Geographic Information Systems (GIS), including spatial data tools, to answer applied policy questions.

Learning Outcomes: Students will learn technical skills to complete policy analyses using cartographic and statistical tools.

Course Materials


Course Requirements: Five examinations will be administered throughout the semester and during the scheduled final examination time. Each examination will be problem-based. Five exercises will be assigned throughout the semester. Each exercise will be due one week after it is assigned. Exercises will be based on the lecture material and require students to conduct cartographic and statistical analyses to answer applied policy questions.

Course Grade: Evaluation Weight
Examination 50%
Exercise 50%
Grade Distribution:

For purposes of this course, the grades of A+, A or A− are reserved for sustained excellence and outstanding performance on all aspects of the course. The grades of B+ and B are used to denote mastery of the material and very good performance on all aspects of the course. The grade of B− denotes marginal quality work that is not quite up to graduate level standards. The grade of C denotes work that may be adequate for undergraduate-level performance, but is not acceptable at the graduate level. The grade of F denotes the failure to perform adequately on course assignments.

Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/24</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GIS Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Managing GIS Data</td>
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<td>2/14</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Coordinate Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Mapping GIS Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Presenting GIS Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Examination 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/21</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Attribute Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Examination 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Queries</td>
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<td>4/11</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Examination 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Spatial Joins</td>
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<td>4/25</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Examination 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Map Overlay and Geoprocessing</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Examination 5</td>
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Lecture

Chapter: Introduction
Concepts: What is GIS?
A history of GIS
What can a GIS do?
What do GIS professionals do?
GIS project management
Chapter: GIS Data
Mastering the Concepts: Representing real-world objects on maps
The vector model
Coordinate systems
Map scale
Data quality
Data files in ArcGIS

Mastering the Skills: Adding data to ArcMap
Viewing the map
Viewing attribute tables
Choosing map symbols
Layer files
Working with data frames
Data frame coordinate systems
Using internet map services

Exercises: 4 and 5 (p. 42)

Chapter: Managing GIS Data
Mastering the Concepts: Characteristics of GIS data
Organizing data files
Finding data for a project
Importing and exporting data
About metadata
Using ESRI Data and Maps
Map documents and shared data
Using ArcCatalog to manage files
Using ArcToolbox
Documenting data
Sources for GIS data

Mastering the Skills: Using ArcCatalog
Creating and organizing data
Using the Catalog in ArcMap
Using ArcToolbox
Using ArcMap to export data
Using data from ArcGIS Online and the Internet
Getting data from the Internet
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter:</th>
<th>Coordinate Systems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastering the Concepts:</td>
<td>About coordinate systems</td>
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<td>Geographic coordinate systems</td>
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<td>Map projections</td>
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<td>Common projection systems</td>
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<td>Choosing projections</td>
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<td>Labeling coordinate systems</td>
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<td>On-the-fly projection</td>
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<td>Projecting data</td>
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<td>Troubleshooting coordinate system problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastering the Skills:</td>
<td>Displaying coordinate systems</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Troubleshooting projection problems</td>
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<td>Creating a custom coordinate system</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter:</th>
<th>Mapping GIS Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastering the Concepts:</td>
<td>Mapping features</td>
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<td>Classifying numeric data</td>
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<td>Map documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastering the Skills:</td>
<td>Exploring symbols</td>
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<td>Labeling features</td>
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<td>Creating maps from attributes for points</td>
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<td>Creating maps for attributes of lines</td>
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<td>Creating maps for attributes for polygons</td>
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<td>Classifying data</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter:</th>
<th>Presenting GIS Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastering the Concepts:</td>
<td>Basic elements of map design</td>
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<td>Choosing symbols</td>
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<td>Choosing coordinate systems</td>
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<td>Assigning map scales</td>
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<td>Setting up scale bars</td>
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<td>Labeling, text, and annotation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastering the Skills:</td>
<td>Setting up the map page</td>
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<td>Creating a location map</td>
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<td>Using graphic text on layouts</td>
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<td>Working with dynamic labels and annotation</td>
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<td>Adding a legend to the map</td>
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<td>Placing a scale bar on the map</td>
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<td>Adding other map elements</td>
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<td>Reviewing and editing the layout</td>
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<td>Exporting a layout</td>
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| Exercises: | 1 (p. 172) |
Chapter: Attribute Data
Mastering the Concepts: Overview of tables
Queries on tables
Joining and relating tables
Summarizing tables
Field types
Tables in ArcGIS
Editing and calculating fields
Importing tables
Mastering the Skills: Viewing tables
Using queries and statistics on tables
Joining tables
Summarizing tables
Relating tables
Editing values in tables
Calculating fields in tables
Working with Excel and XY data
Exercises: 2 and 9 (pp. 203-204)

Chapter: Queries
Mastering the Concepts: About queries
Attribute queries
Spatial queries
Processing layers with selections
Interactive selection
Selecting by attributes
Selecting by location
Choosing the selection method
Managing results from queries
The Selection window
Mastering the Skills: Using interactive selection
Selecting by attributes
Selecting by location
Definition queries
Exporting data
Exercises: 10 (p. 258)
**Chapter:** Spatial Joins  
**Mastering the Concepts:**  
- What is a spatial join?  
- Cardinality  
- Types of spatial joins  
- Choosing the join type  
- Setting up a spatial join  
**Mastering the Skills:**  
- Simple inside joins  
- A summarized inside join  
- Simple distance joins  
- Summarized distance joins  
**Exercises:**  
1, 3 and 7 (p. 288)

**Chapter:** Map Overlay and Geoprocessing  
**Mastering the Concepts:**  
- Map Overlay and Geoprocessing  
- Other spatial analysis functions  
**Mastering the Skills:**  
- Preparing to overlay  
- Intersecting polygons  
- Overlay of lines in polygons  
- Clipping layers  
- Working with buffers  
- Investigating relationships with union  
**Exercises:**  
6 and 10 (p. 317)

**Mason Diversity Statement**

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason’s commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving sociocultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the
University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.

**Accommodations**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact Disability Services (DS) at (703)993-2474 or at ods@gmu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through DS.

**Schar School Policy on Plagiarism**

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the Schar School of Policy and Government (Schar School). It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the Schar School takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F”. This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the Schar School policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the Schar School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The Schar School policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

**Updated:** December 20, 2017