

"DYMAXION MAP," Buckminster Fuller, 1954

# CARTOGRAPHIC IMAGINATIONS

## CONSTRUCTING URBAN NARRATIVES

**LA 504 / Regional Landscape Planning Studio (Winter 2016)**

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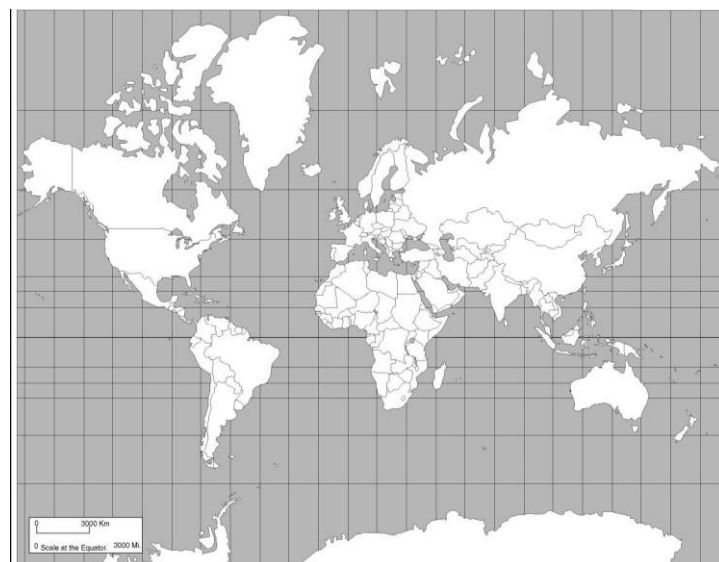
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CANVAS: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1023641>

OFFICE HOURS: Thurs. 12-2 / Fri. 12-1 (<http://larchwp.be.washington.edu/people/office-hours/>)

LOCATION: Gould Hall, Rm 312 (middle bay)

TIME: MW(F) 130-520



MERCATOR MAP PROJECTION

There are more opportunities for resistance and tension, more drafts upon experimentation and invention, and therefore more novelty in action, greater range and depth of insight and increase of poignancy in feeling. ... The designs of the living are widened and enriched. Fulfillment is more massive and more subtly shaded.

John Dewey, *Art as Experience*<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Maps have long been critical for comprehending the spatial qualities of our lives. Whether developed through intuition and familiarity or conventions of scale and direction, they enable orientation and understanding of our surroundings. They reveal a deep engagement with the creator's imagination; a reflection of interest and priority; the idiosyncratic telling of a spatial narrative. Within the field of landscape architecture, maps are commonly used to delineate, scope, and frame the geographic extents of a given project or territorial exploration.

In layman's terms, cartography is commonly understood as "the art, science, and technology of making maps." More officially, it is defined as, "the science and technology of analyzing and interpreting geographic relationships, and communicating the results by means of maps."<sup>2</sup> Noticeably, the second definition does not include art as a primary foundation for map-making. For many, the making of maps has shifted to an entirely analytical enterprise, empirically grounded and devoid of creative license. Yet, this approach, disregards past practice, essentially flattening their history and meaning. In this way, maps are no longer reflections of social construction and cultural influence that relay power and knowledge. Others have challenged this notion, urging the viewer to read between the lines of what is displayed to challenge the 'facts' of the display, so that we can begin to understand how maps, like art, are culturally stratified, a "particular human way....of looking at the world."<sup>3</sup>

Such dialogue breeds fertile ground for those interested in engaging in the dynamic representation of our geographies; for revealing the invisible and intangible relations that serve to comprise and support our understanding of place. Coupled with recent technological advancements critical approaches to cartography have revolutionized the act of mapping extending its potential in creating visualizations that reduce complexity stretching far afield of geographic realities into diagrammatic zones of networking, data-smithing, and interpersonal relations. In this studio we will use the act of mapping to generate spatially-bound diagrammatic explorations of the built environment that explore the complexities, boundaries and perception of place and community in contemporary terms and through time. Engaging with emerging theory in landscape architecture and critical cartography we will work to develop representational processes for moving beyond static representations and understandings of landscape, to engage in the mapping of flows, boundary breaks, and state changes whether social, cultural, ecological, or physical.

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (NY, NY: Perigree Books) 1934, 1<sup>st</sup> printing.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, trans. Martha M. Houle, *Theory and History of Literature* 57 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press) 1988, 169-79.

<sup>3</sup> H.G. Blocker, *Philosophy and Art* (NY, NY: Charles Scribner and Sons) 1979, 43.

## TEACHING + LEARNING

The course will meet every Monday and Wednesday from 130 – 520pm in Gould 312. Fridays, will be predominantly set aside for individual and group work *related to the studio*. In some instances, it may be necessary to meet as a whole class, and it is expected that all students will be available. Faculty will be available during studio time on Friday afternoons.

This course is pedagogically structured as an interdisciplinary research and design studio (description below). It will build on the participation of professional collaborators, who will give insights to the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary practice. Therefore we will all (students and faculty) be exploring and operating in new ways and engage in the culture and approach of our collaborators. As an advanced graduate studio it is the intent of this class to embrace the uncertainty and complexity that presents itself when examining topics that we are not fully familiar with, pursue engaging methodologies to develop a better understanding, and develop products that concisely synthesize and represent our intentions and recommendations.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will have opportunities to:

- (1) conduct historical, contemporary, and future analyses of cultural and ecological processes
- (2) explore emerging concepts in cartographic applications
- (3) build research and design skills for promoting an integrated, systems-based approach for examining complex issues of urban design and planning
- (4) promote opportunities in constructive critique through the development of collaborative strategies and protocols
- (5) work individually and as teams to develop an exhibit and host an opening for the public

### STUDIO

Design studio is a course involving lectures, discussion, problem-solving, independent research, design work, individual and team “desk crits,” informal reviews of student work (“pin-ups”), formal reviews of student work by outside faculty and clients (or client stand-ins), and . . .

- a culture: studio is an intense learning experience with every participant fully committing to the project while working individually or in various team settings. It only works if there is an infectious energy about it – it is unavoidably competitive, but it should also be mutually supportive and, above all, a form of PLAY.
- a place: students will be expected to maintain a clean work space and arrange it to suit their own working habits; drawing tables, computers, discussion area, etc.
- an iterative, dynamic approach to problem-driven learning; each phase of the work is reviewed and discussed by the group or inside/outside reviewers, and presentations at each pin-up or review should be polished, even as they will be revised according to the reviewers’ and instructor’s comments. Most assignments and exercises will follow from the last, and therefore the exact structure of the course cannot be determined in advance; though the main structure is set in the course schedule.

- an exercise in commitment: studio earns more credit and requires more class time than any other course, and students should expect their work and time commitments to reflect this course load.

### COURSE AGREEMENTS

As popularized by don Miguel Ruiz in his book *The Four Agreements*<sup>4</sup> we will strive for this studio to operate through a set of personal agreements when interacting with one another and working on the project:

- **Be Impeccable with Your Word.** Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid speaking in a manner that is not productive for yourself or others. Practice constructive critique.
- **Don't take Anything Personally.** Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own opinion. When you accommodate the opinions and actions of others in a way that strengthens your own thinking and ideas, you won't be the victim.
- **Don't Make Assumptions.** Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings.
- **Always Do Your Best.** Understanding that your best is going to change from moment to moment and under different circumstances, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment and regret.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to participate in class discussions, complete the recommended readings, turn in all exercises by the due date, and be prepared to present their work at a moment's notice.

Graduate studios in the Landscape Architecture Department are not graded on a 4.0 scale like most of your other courses. This course will be evaluated as Pass|Fail, with opportunities for receiving a High Pass commendation. A passing score will be determined based on the level of effort, participation, and insight students bring to the course. Creative exploration and application of the concepts and principles presented in class is strongly encouraged, and to be forthright, expected. While clear communication strategies and the use of a consistent aesthetic is important, the product of each exercise should readily reveal your interests, depth of engagement, and creative capacity.

Students are expected to complete the following:

- **In-Class Exercises.** Throughout the term in-class or short term projects will be assigned. All of these projects will be directed toward generating a greater understanding of the project. These assignments will be completed individually or in small groups.
- **Project Reviews.** Project reviews will be focused on assessing your progress and approach as you explore options and opportunities for developing integrated representational options and prototypes.

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<sup>4</sup> don Miguel Ruiz, *The Four Agreements* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Alan Publishing) 2012, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

- **Final Project.** The Final Project will be a culmination of course activities formally presented to a panel of internal and external reviewers. The project will be a culmination of the term's activities, building upon the work completed in earlier exercises and assignments.
- **Participation.** Active participation in all studio activities is a required component of this course.

Please note that evaluation and assessment of student work will be provided through verbal and written communication with the instructor(s). A final assessment (written and/or verbal) will be provided to each student at the conclusion of the term focusing on student's strengths and weaknesses as well as pathways for improvement.

### COURSE READINGS

As an advanced graduate studio we will not only be building our skills in representation, but more importantly our thinking. Each week for the first half of the term we will have assigned readings that you are expected to do. This is not a practice of skimming to gain general understanding, but is intended for you to delve deeply, to consider thoughtfully, and to form opinions and critique. Each reading will be discussed in a seminar format (many with an outside practitioner), and it is highly recommended that you arrive to these sessions prepared with notes and questions in hand. If you choose not to speak or feel that you cannot form an opinion, you will be called upon and we will help you form one as a class.

See the *Reading* page on the Canvas site. I highly recommend that you print each reading so that you may take notes and develop questions directly on the paper.

### COURSE RESOURCES

While the course topic may be new to you, it does not mean that others have not been thinking about it for a very long time. There are an immense amount of available resources on mapping and cartographic practices available to you. See the *Resources* page on the Canvas site.

**[proposed] COURSE SCHEDULE**

I am a firm believer that much like rules, schedules are made to be broken. The schedule below provides you with a rough guideline for how the course will proceed. This will certainly evolve over the term. Schedule details will be given on a bi-weekly basis.

Week	Date		Topic
Week 1	04-Jan	M	INTRODUCTION   'CITY IMAGE'
	06-Jan	W	CLASS DISCUSSION   WORK DAY
	08-Jan	F	TUTORIAL   'CITY IMAGE – 2'
Week 2	11-Jan	M	CLASS DISCUSSION   WORK DAY
	13-Jan	W	'MAP YOUR CITY' REVIEW   PROJECT SCOPING
	15-Jan	F	WORK DAY
Week 3	18-Jan	M	<i>HOLIDAY – MLK DAY</i>
	20-Jan	W	CLASS DISCUSSION   SCOPING REVIEW
	22-Jan	F	CROSSING SCALES   WORK DAY
Week 4	25-Jan	M	CLASS DISCUSSION   WORK DAY
	27-Jan	W	CROSSING SCALES REVIEW   AREA ASSIGN.
	30-Jan	F	WORK DAY
Week 5	01-Feb	M	CLASS DISCUSSION   WORK DAY
	03-Feb	W	TEMPORAL COMPOSITES
	05-Feb	F	WORK DAY
Week 6	08-Feb	M	CLASS DISCUSSION   WORK DAY
	10-Feb	W	TEMPORAL COMPOSITES REVIEW   MODELING
	12-Feb	F	WORK DAY
Week 7	15-Feb	M	<i>HOLIDAY – PRESIDENTS DAY</i>
	17-Feb	W	MODELING REVIEW   REFINEMENT
	19-Feb	F	WORK DAY
Week 8	22-Feb	M	EXHIBIT PLANNING   MODELING REVIEW
	24-Feb	W	EXHIBIT SCOPING   WORK DAY
	26-Feb	F	WORK DAY
Week 9	29-Feb	M	PROJECT DETAILS   IN-CLASS CRITIQUE
	02-Mar	W	PROJECT [RE]ASSESSMENT   REFINEMENT
	04-Mar	F	WORK DAY
Week 10	07-Mar	M	PROJECT REFINEMENT   IN-CLASS CRITIQUE
	09-Mar	W	WORK DAY
	11-Mar	F	EXHIBIT 'OPENING' (EARLY EVENING)
Week 11	14-Mar	M	COURSE REVIEW

