

**DNA-121**  
**FIRST YEAR SEMINAR: THE POWER OF MAPS**  
Tues/Thurs 12:30-1:45pm, Moyer 106

**INSTRUCTOR** Sharon L. Albert  
**OFFICE** Moyer 208  
**EMAIL** [salbert@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:salbert@muhlenberg.edu)  
**WEBSITE** [sharonalbert.bergbuilds.domains/wp/](http://sharonalbert.bergbuilds.domains/wp/)  
**PHONE** 484-664-3428  
**OFFICE HOURS** As posted on my website, course sites, and office door

*The Writing Assistant (WA) for this course is Hannah Betz. She will be providing information separately about her role in the class and how she will facilitate your learning.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS**

In this course, we will read, think, and write about maps: how we use them, how we make them, and the power they have to inform, to transform, and to shape how we understand our world. Readings will include works on the significance of maps as visual representations of space and the authoritative power they can wield. We will also read texts dealing with the history of cartography, as well as some travel literature and geographies, real and imagined. Our questions will explore the assumptions that underlie the making and using of maps. For instance: What gets included on maps? How are they oriented? What gets left out? Who makes the maps? How do maps sustain structures of power? And how and when can they be instruments of change?

We will apply the theoretical work we read to our own critical analyses of maps, with particular attention to the maps in Trexler Library's Ray R. Brennen Map Collection. We will also think and write analytically about the creation of maps and how maps are used, and develop our own maps using Google MyMaps.

As this is your First Year Seminar, as we undertake the work listed above we will also pay considerable attention to the processes of reading, writing, and thinking critically about the materials we are studying and the issues they raise. This seminar is writing intensive.

Course Goals: Students will strengthen their ability to read maps, and to recognize the underlying assumptions and power dynamics that inform those maps; students will also develop and strengthen their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

**TEXTS & OTHER RESOURCES**

The Canvas course site is integral to the course. Class readings, assignments, collaborative work spaces, announcements, and a variety of resources including texts and links to websites are available there, and students should check the site regularly.

A schedule of class readings and assignments is available on the course site. Please note that while we will usually follow it quite closely, it is subject to change based upon student interests and class progress. ***\*\*Please be sure you bring a printed copy of the assigned reading to each class session, as we will often refer closely to the text as we work.***

Please also acquire the following texts:

Crampton. *Mapping: A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Harmon. *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.

Turchi. *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer*. San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 2004.

### **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

While it is better to come to class late than not to come at all, please respect your fellow students and be in the classroom ready to start class promptly.

Please attend to personal needs before class so that you do not regularly need to leave the classroom during the class session.

Please do not text, surf the web, google, or access other technology not related to the class during class sessions. Please do not text, surf the web, google, or access other technology not related to the class during class sessions. While computers are permitted in class, you are strongly encouraged to consider your own capacity for distraction, and students may be asked to close their computers if they become distracting for the class. Please bring writing implements (pen and paper) to class for use in these circumstances.

This class is one in which we will deal with a number of sensitive issues, as is the case in many Muhlenberg classes. While you are strongly encouraged to take ideas out of our classroom and into your conversations and interactions with others, it is very important that we respect the integrity of the classroom as a site where individuals' contributions will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

As a class we will determine early in the semester etiquette guidelines particular to our needs.

### **EVALUATION**

#### *Engagement – 100 points*

While showing up is obviously important, it is also essential that you prepare for class well and that you fully engage in class sessions.

*Preparation:* As you read, investigate words or ideas that are new to you or being used in unfamiliar ways. Note key concepts and terms, and major themes emerging from the reading. Note and be prepared to point to passages in the readings that you find particularly *important, problematic, and interesting*.

*In-class engagement:* Participation is an important component of engagement. This course is primarily discussion-based, and all students should come to class prepared to talk about the readings. Other components of engagement include listening well, and participating in online activities outside of class time.

[Please note that engagement is evaluated throughout the semester; thus, grades of "Incomplete" will not be granted for failure to fulfill this component of the course.]

Writing Portfolio – 300 points

Your writing portfolio, a core component of the course, is a space where you can compile your writing over the semester (and beyond). We will be doing lots of writing throughout the semester, both in and out of class, including short exercises assigned each week focusing on specific issues in writing. While you will often (though not always) receive informal feedback from your professor, your writing assistant, and your fellow students, these writings will not be formally graded on an individual basis. At the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to organize your work to demonstrate how your writing has developed throughout the course of the semester.

Each student will have their own Writing Portfolio on the College's 'Berg Builds site at. You will continue to have access to this space throughout your time at Muhlenberg, and you will be able to take it with you when you graduate. Thus, while you are asked to post most of the writing you do for class, you are encouraged to post other writing you do, creative or academic, as well.

For this class I expect that you will post 1) regular reflections on class readings; 2) in class writings, as is or revised; 3) weekly writing assignments; and 4) formal paper drafts. You may also choose to post images, links, or just about anything. I like to maintain a glossary of interesting words and a compilation of striking quotations which I might want to reference in the future. You may choose to use the opening page as a table of contents, or you may choose to organize your work in a different way. Feel free to be creative with the site or to save your creativity for your writing. (Because all writing, assigned and academic as well as formally "creative," requires creativity.) You can make this online space both into a venue for showcasing your work and for reflecting on your academic and intellectual development.

You may choose to make your Writing Portfolio world-accessible or private, but you must make your writings accessible to all members of the class and ensure that your site is structured to allow your fellow students to comment on your work. You are also expected to read each other's work, to give feedback to others, and to seek out feedback for your own work.

Formal Papers – 450 points

Students will write three formal academic papers during the course of the semester based on class work, two during class-weeks and at the end of the semester. These papers should follow the norms for academic writing, including standard formatting and citations. Of course, all submitted work should also adhere to Muhlenberg College's Academic Integrity Code.

The First Year Seminar is a Writing Intensive (W) course, and so the process of writing these papers will be as important as the final product, and grading will reflect this emphasis. You will be expected to post drafts of your papers, to read and review drafts of other students' work, and to participate in peer review sessions. Grading will take into account both the reviewing of other students' work and a demonstration of substantive change in the final draft based on reviews received, and improvement across these three papers will also be taken into consideration.

Early paper drafts will be posted to your writing portfolios for review and comment by others in the class. Final drafts should be submitted to the Canvas course site as Word-compatible or PDF files, with proper formatting and citation.

### Events – 50 points

This semester, as in most semesters, a number of exciting, important, and interesting guest lectures and academically-oriented events will take place. Some of these events will connect directly to our class while some will intersect with other aspects of your intellectual experience on campus. A list of events will be available on the Canvas course site. Events will be added throughout the semester, and you are strongly encouraged to suggest for inclusion events that you plan to attend. You are expected to attend at least three designated events, and to post to your Writing Portfolio a brief reflection *within 24 hours* of the event.

### Mapping the Semester – 100 points

Maps, as we will consider throughout the semester, are not simply representations of scientific “facts.” Rather, they tell a story very much informed by who is making the map, who is using or “reading” the map, what the resources are for both maker and reader, and what are their contexts.

For the duration of the course each of you will be “mapping your semester” using Google MyMaps. You may choose to map your own story, or you may want to follow some larger event. Get started by creating a map with MyMaps and embedding it into your course site, as described below. At least once a week throughout the semester, please mark on that map at least three places that are relevant to the map story you are creating. At least one of those places should also have relevance in the week you are mapping. In the description box briefly indicate what is the significance of that place.

As we work through the semester, we will periodically share and work with the maps we are creating.

*PLEASE NOTE: Failure to complete any aspect of evaluation will result in a failing grade. (That is, you can't not hand in the final.)*

A **grading rubric** is available on my website at:

<http://sharonalbert.bergbuilds.domains/wp/gradingrubric/>

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE AND COLLEGE POLICIES**

Essential policies relating to classroom etiquette, academic integrity, accommodation for students with special learning needs, and course unit instruction requirement are available on my website at [sharonalbert.bergbuilds.domains/wp/policies/](http://sharonalbert.bergbuilds.domains/wp/policies/). These policies will be reviewed on the first day of class. Please ensure that you are familiar with, understand, and follow these policies. Your continued enrollment in this course indicates that you have reviewed and agree to abide by these policies.

## READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS

### WEEK 1

Tues 28 Aug:

- Readings: Crampton, chs.1-2
- In class: Videos: Mercator v. Peters (*West Wing*); Holy Land Map (*West Wing*)
- In-class writing: What is a map?

Thurs 30 Aug:

- Readings: Crampton, ch.2, "What is Critique?"
- Please set up your BergBuilds domain, and send me the web address for your WordPress website

*Weekly Writing: Observe and Describe: The Great Allentown Fair, due Sunday, 2 September*

### WEEK 2

Tues 4 Sep: Turchi, ch.1, "Metaphor: Or, the Map"

Thurs 6 Sep: Library Scavenger Hunt: Class meets in Trexler Library

*Weekly Writing: Paraphrasing Crampton and Turchi, due Sunday, 9 September*

### WEEK 3

Tues 11 Sep: Writing portfolio development session

- Bring laptops! Experts will be on hand (in our regular classroom) to help you develop the structure of your writing portfolio and to show you some of the things you can do with it.
- The reading for Thursday's class is fairly long, so you are strongly encouraged to get started by Tuesday's class.

Thurs 13 Sep

- Reading: Turchi, "A Wide Landscape of Snow"
- Please bring Harmon, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination*, to class (along with Turchi)

*Weekly Writing: Summarizing Turchi, due Sunday, 16 September*

### WEEK 4

Tues 18 Sep

- Before Tuesday's class, please browse through others' writing portfolios and comment on at least two posts
- Readings: Crampton, chs.3-4  
\*\* Remember to reflect on your reading

Thurs 20 Sep

- Readings: Harley, "Texts and Contexts in the Interpretation of Early Maps"

*Weekly Writing: Reading with the Grain, due Sunday, 23 September*

### WEEK 5

Tues 25 Sep: Digital Maps Session with Susan Falciano-Maldonado

- Readings: Brückner, "The Artisanal Map, 1750-1815: Workshops and Shopkeepers from Lewis Evans to Samuel Lewis"

Thurs 27 Sep: Mapping, Copyright, (Your) Intellectual Property

- Readings: Zhang, "The Fake Places That Only Exist to Catch Copycat Mapmakers"
- Carefully review Muhlenberg's "Academic Integrity Code"

First formal essay assigned: 'Maps beyond "The Facts",' final draft due Friday, October 5, 5pm

## WEEK 6

Tues 2 Oct: Peer Review Session

- Please come to class with 4 printed copies of your essay draft for the first formal essay, 'Maps beyond "The Facts"'

*Wed 3 Oct, 7-8pm: Writing Workshop with Hannah, Seegers 108*

Thurs 4 Oct

- Reading: Harmon, *Your Are Here*, read pp.10-19, browse maps through p.34

Fri 5 Oct, 5pm: First formal essay, 'Maps Beyond "The Facts",' due

## WEEK 7

Tues 9 Oct: Accessing the Maps! : *Class meets in Trexler Library*

Thurs 11 Oct:

- Reading: Bodenhamer, "The Potential of Spatial Humanities"

Weekly Writing: Getting Creative About Maps, due Sunday, 14 October

## WEEK 8

Tues 16 Oct

- Reading: Borges, "The Library of Babel"
- Explore the New York Public Library map collections. Come to class with some ideas about maps you might like to see.

Thurs 18 Oct

- Denny, "Surveying"
  - As you read this article, think about the questions we have been raising about accuracy, perspective, context, the aim of a map, etc. To what extent does Denny leave space for these kinds of questions?

*Weekly Writing: "Map Headings," due Sunday, October 21*

## WEEK 9

Tues 23 Oct: Chinese Cartography

- Reading: Batchelor, "The Selden Map Rediscovered: A Chinese Map of East Asian Shipping Routes, c.1619"

*Tues 23 Oct, 9:30pm: Close Reading Workshop with Hannah*

Thurs 25 Oct: Writing a conclusion

- Please read Rosenwasser and Stephen on introductions and conclusions; review the articles by Batchelor, Harley, Brückner, and Bodenhamer with particular attention to

the conclusions. Please come to class prepared to talk about what are the components of these conclusions and in what ways they are successful.

*Fri 26 Oct: Formal Essay 1: Optional response papers to Formal Essay 1 due*

## **WEEK 10**

*Weekly Writing: "10 on 1" at the Library, due Tuesday, October 30, 12:00noon*

Tues 30 Oct: FIELD TRIP: Allentown Public Library!

- Please be at the bus pick-up space outside the CA *promptly* at 12:30pm. (We will be back at Muhlenberg by 1:45pm)
- Readings: For our fieldtrip: "Why Libraries?" and for Halloween: Wood, "Two Maps of Boylan Heights" in *You Are Here*, pp.104-107.

Thurs 1 Nov:

- Joint Class: APL Debriefing
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## **WEEK 11**

Tues 6 Nov: Voting and Maps

- Readings: Lai & Navratil, "Pennsylvania, gerrymandered: A guide to Pa.'s congressional map redistricting fight"

Thurs 8 Nov: Mapping the Genome

### **CLASS MEETS IN SEEGER'S 109-110**

We will be meeting with Dr. Amy Hark and students in "BIO-472: Genomes and Gene Evolution," a Biology CUE (Culminating Undergraduate Experience) to talk about genome mapping.

- Readings: Cohen, "The Human Genome, a Decade Later" and "A three-dimensional map of the genome: gene mapping technique promises to unlock the power of proximity to find genes implicated in diseases"
- Dr. Hark's students will be reading the essay we have already read, Hall's "I, Mercator," pp.15-19 of Harmon's *You Are Here*. Please also review this brief reading before class.

**Saturday 10 Nov: FIELD TRIP: New York Public Library**

- Please be on Chew Street in front of the CA by 7:45am so that we can leave promptly by 8:00am.
- We plan to return to campus by 5pm.
- Students in Dr. Robinson's section of the course will be reading Harley's essay, "Texts and Contexts," that we read in September. Please take a few moments to review this essay before Sunday.

## **WEEK 12**

Tues 13 Nov: Thanksgiving's coming...

- Reading: Wood on Indigenous cartography

Thurs 15 Nov:

- Formal Essay 2: Peer Review Session
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## **WEEK 13**

Tues 20 Nov, 4pm: Formal Essay 2 due

Thurs 22 Nov: THANKSGIVING BREAK

**WEEK 14**

Tues 27 Nov: Zadie Smith, "The I Who Is Not Me"

Thurs 29 Nov: Turchi, "Plus Ultra"

*Weekly Writing: Reading Ourselves: Writing Portfolio Review due 5:00pm Sunday, 2 December*

**WEEK 15**

Tues 4 Dec: Writing Portfolio Showcase

Thurs 6 Dec: Harley, "Can There Be a Cartographic Ethics?"

**EXAM WEEK**

Thurs 13 Dec, 12noon: Final Papers due