

experience mapping

22-236 / SPRING 2015 / T&TH 8:00—10:10 / ARTS & COMMUNICATION S218

Maps are pictures.

Maps are self-portraits.

*Maps are manifestations
of perceptions.*

*Maps are portraits of the world in the
manner in which those preparing them
would like the world to be understood.*

Maps are subjective.

Mapping is... an act of power.

Jai Sen, *Other Worlds, Other Maps:
Mapping the Unintended City*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Using a variety of media, we will make maps and information graphics that address the concept of *Sustainability* by illustrating connections between people and place, nature and the built environment, meaning and experience. Rooted in studio art and design practice, this introductory-level course will explore the many ways creative spatial and visualization techniques can address the concept of Place. Developing a Sense of Place is a way of understanding and valuing the unique properties of your surroundings as well as your place in them. We will approach our Signature Question, *How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?* through artmaking, reading, and discussion fortified with a significant amount of local exploration.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE WEIGHTING

50% *Personal Atlas Maps*

25% *Written Reflections*

25% *Community Experience Map*

Each of these assignments will be explained further as the course progresses. You'll be able to locate assignment sheets as needed in the "Assignments" section of the class website.

COURSE WEBSITE

www.experiencemapping.org

INSTRUCTOR

Karina Cutler-Lake
UW Oshkosh Art Department
cutlerlk@uwosh.edu
karinacutlerlake.com
517 A&C / 424-7066
Office hours T&Th 10:30-11:00

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Berry, Jill K. & Linden McNeilly. *Map Art Lab: 52 Exciting Art Explorations in Mapmaking, Imagination, and Travel*. Beverly, Mass.: Quarry Books, 2014.

Northwest Earth Institute. *Discussion Course on Discovering a Sense of Place*. Portland, OR: N.E.I., 2007.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

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

Harzinski, Kris. *From Here to There: A Curious Collection from the Hand Drawn Map Association*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010.

REQUIRED ART SUPPLIES

You will be supplied with a 9 in. x 12 in. Canson XL Mix Media Sketchbook to serve as your process workbook and home base for your Personal Atlas assignments. You will also receive tracing paper, a glue stick, two Prismacolor Ebony pencils, and an

eraser. I will also bring in extra paper and my own art supplies to share.

You will need to bring a few additional supplies, which you might already own. If not, you can find most of this stuff at either the UWO Bookstore or at our local art supply store, Arthaus (426 N. Main, Oshkosh).

Please equip yourself with:

- High-quality color pencil set (tin of 12 or more) and/or good markers (such as Prismacolor).
- Selection of graphite drawing pencils if you'd like to experiment.
- Good pens (such as UniBall).
- Ruler (perhaps a triangle too).
- Scissors.
- X-Acto knife.
- Small cutting mat.
- Pencil Sharpener

*You will also want to seriously consider any other (practical, applicable, safe) art materials that call out to you. **Think about reusing and re-purposing material:** old maps, magazines, leftover craft and sewing supplies, packaging, etc.*

Use of digital means to create and work with imagery is encouraged, but is not required for most projects. We will spend two sessions in a campus computer lab so I can give you a short intro to using Adobe Illustrator CS.

USP

The University Studies Program is your gateway to a 21st century college education at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. This Quest III course is the last in a series of courses you will take to introduce you to the campus and all it has to offer, the vibrant Oshkosh community, and the challenges and opportunities of academic life as you pursue a liberal education. In the first year of your Quest, you addressed two of the three "Signature Questions" that are central to a UW Oshkosh education:

How do people understand and engage in community life?

How do people understand and bridge cultural differences?

In this course, you are addressing your final Signature Question:

How do people understand and create a more sustainable world?

In this course, you will explore the idea of *place* and how it supports and relates to the larger subject of sustainability. Place may be described as the manifestation of a unique local area and the human meaning inherent within it, both social (relationships) and physical (nature, the built environment). Cultivating a *sense of place* is often considered to be an essential part of a sustainable livelihood. In essence, the more you understand a place, the more you are likely to value it, and hopefully work to protect it.

Upon completion of Quest III, you will be ready to enroll in *Connect*, in which you will synthesize the three Signature Questions.

Orientating begins with geography, but it reflects a need of the conscious, self-aware organism for a kind of transcendent orientation that asks not just where am I, but where do I fit in this landscape? Where have I been? Where shall I go, and what values will I pack for the trip? What culture of knowledge allows me to know what I know, which is often another way of knowing where I am? And what pattern, what grid of wisdom, can I impose on my accumulated, idiosyncratic geographies? The coordinates marking this territory are unique to each individual.

*It's easy to dismiss design — to
relegate it to mere ornament, the
prettifying of places and objects
to disguise their banality. But that
is a serious misunderstanding of
what design is and why it matters —
especially now.*

Daniel H. Pink, *A Whole New Mind*

A DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a dynamic process which enables all people to realize their potential and improve their quality of life in ways that simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems.

UK Forum for the Future, 2006.

UW OSHKOSH SUSTAINABILITY LEARNING OUTCOME

Knowledge of sustainability and its applications is the ability to understand local and global earth systems; the qualities of ecological integrity and the means to restore and preserve it; and the interconnection of ecological integrity, social justice and economic well-being.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THIS COURSE

According to anthropology professor and UWO Sustainability Fellow Stephanie Spehar (who you should *really* take a class with), "*Sustainability* is about working towards a future in which all human beings can enjoy decent quality of life—good health, economic security, membership in strong and inclusive communities, the list goes on—while ensuring that we do not endanger the natural resources and environments upon which we depend. At its core, sustainability is about helping us live up to our fullest potential, as individuals and as a society. Making our way towards sustainability will involve addressing some very big and complicated problems—problems that will not have just single answers, or answers generated by single perspectives... *Sustainability* is not about prescription, or about liberal or conservative points of view; it is about thoughtfully questioning, analyzing, and coming up with creative solutions."

I couldn't have put it better myself. By teaching this course, it is my goal to echo and to promote these intentions. As a creative thinker, I am

naturally drawn to the juxtaposition of seemingly disparate ideas and subjects. And we're going to be exploring a lot of them, especially through readings, exploration of maps and information graphics, and the asking of many, many questions. It is my sincere hope that this course of study will give you an opportunity to *make connections* which will ultimately help you to better understand the subject of sustainability which, in my view, has something to do with just about everything. But it is really up to you (yes, you) to form your own conclusions, your own connections.

"Nothing pulls you into the territory between art and science so quickly as design," wrote Katherine McCoy, one of my favorite design educators. "It is the borderline where contradictions and tensions exist between the quantifiable and the poetic. It is the field between desire and necessity... moving between land and water."

This statement gets to the very essence as to why I love being an artist and a designer. Curiosity is an asset here. Connections are made. I get to learn about all kinds of stuff and I get to make beautiful — and hopefully useful — things. *Win.* Please do not despair if you consider yourself non-creative, a non-artist. Why? Because information is inherently beautiful. I'm going to show you how to whip it into shape, so to speak.

And because I am a big believer in starting exactly where you are (because, seriously, where *else* are you going to start?), I'm excited to better understand sustainability alongside you through our exploration of the concept of *Place*. For I am a lifelong student, just like you. Just a few short years ago, I thought that sustainability was mostly just about carpooling and sorting your garbage. And I thought it was limited to the subject of nature.

Turns out that it covers so much more ground than that. Literally. Read on:

A DEFINITION OF PLACE

"Place" indicates a distinctive local area that is infused with human meaning (unlike mere "space"). Developing "a sense of place" is often considered an essential part of realizing oneness with nature and leading a sustainable way of life. The term has become important in environmental philosophy, ecospirituality, ecopsychology, human geography, environmental sociology, and ecological anthropology. It is central to the ideal of "place-based education," where modern society is seen as characterized by "placelessness" and alienation with the natural world one lives in. Closely related to bioregionalism."

These are hauntings of past inhabitation. This anonymous space has a history — it meant something to other people.

Tim Cresswell, *Defining Place*

Glossary of Sustainability: again, Stephanie Spehar, UW Oshkosh Sustainability Fellow

A DEFINITION OF THE "THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY"

Also known as "the triple bottom line," the Three Pillars of Sustainability are usually defined as *ecology, society, and economics*. Much more on this later, some of it in eye-catching Venn diagram form.

So, just what is it that you should be able to do fourteen weeks from now? Let's start with the list below.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CORE ABILITIES

After taking this course, you should:

Be able to explain how the Concept of Place fits into and supports the larger subject of Sustainability.

Be able to identify and describe each of the three Pillars of Sustainability and connect each pillar with our local environment and culture.

Be able to make basic maps and information graphics that illustrate the connections between people and place.

Be able to clearly communicate critical and creative thinking using art and design techniques.

Identify the value of the contribution that diverse populations give to a community over time.

Understand opportunities for lifelong learning developed through real-world challenges and active involvement with diverse communities.

DEFINING A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

Liberal Education is a philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement. These broad goals have endured even as the courses and requirements that comprise a Liberal Education have changed over the years. Characterized by challenging encounters with important and relevant issues today and throughout history, a Liberal Education prepares graduates both for socially valued work and for civic leadership in their society. It usually includes a general education curriculum that provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study in at least one field or area of concentration.

Adapted from Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), "What is a 21st Century Liberal Education?" www.aacu.org/leap

HOW DOES THAT DEFINITION APPLY TO OUR COURSE?

Maps are amazingly interdisciplinary. That means that they are an ideal platform to explore, measure, combine, and document data from all areas of inquiry. Furthermore, creative, idea generation, and visualization techniques learned in this course can be applied to future efforts in school, at home, and in the community.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

In the University Studies Program, we want you to be successful. Please visit this resource page to read about all the campus services available to support your success:

www.uwosh.edu/home/resources

Center for Academic Resources (CAR): CAR provides free, confidential tutoring for students in most classes on campus. CAR is located in the Student Success Center, Suite 102. The Center for Academic Resources also provides support to students through Supplemental Instruction.

Part of what fascinates us when looking at a map is inhabiting the mind of its maker, considering that particular terrain of imagination overlaid with those unique contour lines of experience. If I had mapped that landscape, we ask ourselves, what would I have chosen to show, and how would I have shown it?

Katherine Harmon,
You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination

The Writing Center: All writers benefit from talking with engaged, interested readers about their work. All UW Oshkosh students are eligible for one-on-one conferencing at the Writing Center. Their free, confidential tutoring is designed to help writers work through assignments and gain additional writing skills. Trained peer consultants can assist writers at any stage of the composition process, from brainstorming for topics to fine-tuning a final draft. They help writers with issues like grammar and mechanics by helping them identify their own patterns of error and learning how to avoid those errors. Please check their website for more information about their services: www.uwosh.edu/wcenter. The Writing Center is located in Suite 102 of the Student Success Center.

Polk Library/Information Literacy: Polk Library offers many professional librarians who can help you find library resources for research and design/artistic inspiration. Specifically, Ted Mulvey (mulveyt@uwosh.edu), the Information Literacy Librarian, who is available to assist students as they access, evaluate, and use information in University Studies Program classes. www.uwosh.edu/library

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

In these programs, field-based experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both apply what they are learning in real-world experiences and reflect in a classroom setting in their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

AACU, "High-Impact Educational Practices"
www.aacu.org/leap.hip.cfm

EARLY ALERT GRADING

Early Alert is a program that provides you with an Early Grade Report from faculty. Early Grade Reports will indicate if you have academic performance or attendance issues and specific steps you can take and resources available to help you improve. It is common for students to be unaware of or over-estimate their academic performance in classes so this will help you be aware early on of your progress and provide strategies for success in the classroom. You will receive an email during the 5th week of classes. It is important to read the entire email carefully.

In this course, your Early Alert grade will be based on the Public Space Map assignment, introduced the first week of class.

THE THINGS THAT WE WILL DO (A.K.A. YOUR ASSIGNMENTS)

As mentioned on the first page of this syllabus, you will be expected to create and produce a number of maps and information graphics, generally using (though not limited to!) simple art materials using techniques I will introduce to you. *The Personal Atlas* is comprised of a series of themed maps created in and out of class.

Among other investigations, Personal Atlas will include assignments like *The Annual Report*, an information graphics assignment where you will be required to visualize personal data collected from your own digital footprint—that is, social media sites, GPS-tagged photos, media players, etc. Another investigations, *The Personal Subway Map*, asks you to consider and record your own movement and transportation needs around Oshkosh and the surrounding area. And *The Public Space Map* will require you to look closely at and critique how a local public space functions over the course of an hour.

ASSIGNED READINGS

There are several assigned readings in this course, and each of them will require a short written reflection to be submitted to the D2L dropbox. See "Written Reflections" assignment for more details. Due dates are listed on the course schedule. This is worth 25% of your grade, so don't neglect it.

And the last graded component is (drum roll, please):

OUR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE PROJECT

The goal of our community experience is to develop a deeper *sense of place* for the location you've found yourself spending serious time in: Oshkosh and its environs. We will do this *by interviewing and mapping the life experiences and memories of long-time Oshkosh-area residents*. This assignment, called the

Community Engagement Experience Map (hereafter referred to as the CEE Map, worth the 25% of your grade), will help you to recognize what is truly unique and special about this seemingly average town. Oshkosh may be known worldwide for overalls and air shows, but the real treasures of any city are the lives lived within it. Much has happened here, most of it very quietly. At the conclusion of this project, I guarantee that you will not see this place the same again. The format and size of each map will be determined in direct response to the information collected. In other words, each map will be as unique as its participants!

To accomplish our task, we have the honor of working with our *Community Partners*. Small groups of 2-3 students will be paired with local senior citizens at the following location:

Oshkosh Senior Center

The center is open to the public and targets its services to persons age 50+. The center provides a wide variety of services, activities, and events throughout the year.

www.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/senior_services
200 North Campbell Road
Oshkosh, WI 54902
920-232-5310
GO TRANSIT bus route: 3.

This experience will entail approximately 14-20 hours of work both in and outside of class. Interview/Information Gathering visits will take place during class time. You will arrive at your interviews with a prepared list of questions to start with.

As Eudora Welty said, "As soon as a man stopped wandering and stood still and looked around him, he found a god in that place." That's how I feel. Any place can be home, can be beautiful, if you stop and claim it, if you take the trouble to discover what is available to love.

Mary Pipher, *In Praise of Hometowns*

<p><i>Land use ethics are still governed wholly by economic self-interest, just as social ethics were a century ago.</i></p>	<p>Examples of questions you might ask include:</p> <p><i>How has Oshkosh changed since your earliest memory of it? Can you explain buildings, businesses, schools, roads, parks, or features that are now gone or are drastically different?</i></p> <p><i>Explain in detail a place that is gone.</i></p> <p><i>Are there any local buildings or features that have existed pretty much unchanged since your earliest memory?</i></p> <p><i>What were your favorite local places as a child?</i></p> <p><i>What were your favorite local places as a young adult?</i></p> <p><i>Has living in Oshkosh and Wisconsin helped to shape who you are as a person? If so, in what way?</i></p> <p><i>Please share your experiences and observations about the local neighborhood or area you lived in for a significant amount of time.</i></p> <p><i>How have you experienced natural features – such as parks, lakes, and rivers –in this area?</i></p> <p><i>How would you describe your relationship over time to the Fox River, which bisects Oshkosh? Is it a feature you have enjoyed spending time on/near, or is it just a hurdle (bridge) to drive over to get from one place to another?</i></p> <p><i>Have you fished or hunted? If so, where were the best places to go?</i></p> <p><i>Over your lifetime, what means of transport have you used to get around the city and the state?</i></p> <p><i>Most of us have seen the large landfill on the northern side of town, but were you aware of – or did you ever</i></p>	<p><i>consider – where your garbage was transported to on trash day? Did you ever have to bring it there yourself?</i></p> <p><i>Where did you attend school? How has that place changed since then?</i></p> <p><i>Where have you done most of your shopping over time? What sorts of items (milk, for example) were delivered right to your residence?</i></p> <p><i>Did you ever visit or spend time on local farms or dairies? How were they different then?</i></p> <p><i>How have you seen Main Street/ Downtown Oshkosh change over time?</i></p> <p><i>How have you seen Highway 41 change over time?</i></p> <p><i>How have you seen UW Oshkosh change over time?</i></p>
<p><i>In our mobile society, human artifacts – shopping malls, office towers, restaurants, and supermarkets – arise with no relationship to the environment around them. The result is an increasing number of cities and towns that are similar in appearance and feel.</i></p>	<p><i>The Senior Center is located on GO TRANSIT bus route 3. You are encouraged to use this free service: just flash your UWO I.D.</i></p> <p><i>Please be very aware that our community experience will be guided by the following principles:</i></p> <p><i>Reciprocity:</i> partnerships are meaningful for students and their communities. A major purpose of the CEE Map project is to connect the most awesome students UWO has to offer (that's you, of course!) with some truly amazing longtime Oshkosh-area residents. Be very aware that they will learn from you just as you will learn from them. (See <i>Respect</i>, below.)</p> <p><i>Reflection:</i> Students engage in intentional, systematic contextualization of the Community Experiences. You will be required to turn in a guided written reflection based on the questions "How do you now see Oshkosh differently?" and "How has this project helped you</p>	

Every place deserves an atlas, an atlas is at least implicit in every place, and to say that is to ask first of all what a place is.

Rebecca Solnit, *Infinite City*

to understand firsthand the idea of Place?" during the last week of class, which will be placed alongside a visual file of your CEE Map in your ePortfolio.

Respect: Community Experiences demonstrate value for the voices of the community partners and the students. Just to be clear: we all have something important to say. It's just that some people are just quieter than others. Have patience and always, always be kind.

Results: Outcomes are shared publicly with the campus and community. Maps from our class will be exhibited at both Evergreen and the Oshkosh Seniors Center as well as at the upcoming Celebration of Scholarship in April.

COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE CONDUCT AND PROCESS EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to abide by the UW Oshkosh Student Academic and Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedures during their Quest III Community Experience. All students will be asked to acknowledge in writing that they have been made aware of these policies. Other policies that may be relevant to the Community Experience in this course are described in the online Quest III Handbook.

EPORTFOLIO

As you are moving through your courses at UW Oshkosh, you are archiving your learning in your *ePortfolio*. The *ePortfolio* helps you keep track of papers, speeches, reports, projects, and other assignments in your Quest and Explore courses, so you can see your progress and connect ideas across different classes. In this Quest III course, the Community Experience Map (as well as its written reflection) will be featured as an *ePortfolio* artifact. Further information about this assignment—as well as the specifics of uploading it—will be provided.

ALUMNI MENTORS

UW Oshkosh Alumni care about you and your future and have volunteered to support you in your Quest. Alumni Mentors will be involved as you participate in your Quest III Community Experience.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I keep an eye on attendance. Attendance is mandatory—if you aren't here for the entire class period (this includes studio time), you miss important info as well as essential work time. Three unauthorized absences will result in one lowered final grade, four will result in two lowered grades, and so on. Three late arrivals (or early departures from class) will count as one absence.

E-MAIL

E-Mail is a wonderful invention, and it is very important that you use it. I may send out a few mass e-mails to the class over the semester. I may also use it to communicate with you personally. I check my e-mail a few times a day M-Th, once or twice on F, and prefer it to the telephone (which doesn't ring in my studio!). I promise to get back to you in a timely manner. As with all questions asked both in and out of class—if I don't know the answer, I will do some research and get back to you asap.

MORE SMALL PRINT & GENERAL ADVICE

Studio time is to be used to work on projects assigned in this class only. Silence your cell-phones. If you must make or answer a call, do so in the hallway. Same goes for text messaging. Please keep e-mail, messaging and web activity to a minimum during class. Two minutes checking e-mail/game score/whatever is okay. Twenty minutes is not. Conversation is encouraged, but don't let it get in the way of assignment progress. Music will be played, and I'll do my best to address a wide-range of tastes.

I'll try to respect your work time by keeping interruptions to a minimum during studio, though I will walk around the room to check on progress. If you have any questions (or just need an opinion), please ask me! I am always willing and eager to critique a project individually during studio time if requested. Please do. That's why I'm here.

Anyone with a disability needing attention is encouraged to notify the instructor immediately so modifications and/or special arrangements can be made.

Lastly, take time to enjoy being a student! To be honest, I'm a little envious of you. It might seem like a lot of work right now—and for some of you who consider yourselves *non-creative*, mystifying—but you will likely not have this sort of wide-open opportunity for creative freedom and discovery once you enter the job market, at least during the early years. This is something I hear again and again from my employed graduates. It may sound cliché, but *Carpe diem*. If not now, when?

This is for you. Use it.

*You are a part of a part and the
whole is made of parts, each of
which is whole. You start with the
part you are whole in.*

Gary Snyder