

The Community Engagement Fellows Project provided stimulating conversation and connections with colleagues from other disciplines, insights into ways those colleagues help their students interact with the community, and even the occasional inspiration.

The stimulating conversations frequently helped me to make my own ideas more concrete, moving them from an abstract wish list of ideas I would bring to life to a couple of concrete plans I can turn into course proposals.

The first of those plans will be enacted in the coming academic year thanks to one of the connections. Mr. Tennessen, who proved to be a master of making connections, introduced me to Anna Booker. As a result, she and I will team-teach a course next year. That course will look something like this:

Course objectives:

- To explore the relationship between geography and history.
- To demonstrate how GIS could be applied as a tool to issues and topics in the study of history.
- To explore real world spatial data pertaining to history.
- To discuss and/or demonstrate methods of quantitative analysis of spatial data.
- To discuss and/or demonstrate methods of qualitative analysis of spatial data.

Learning outcomes:

After taking this course students will:

- be able to create basic locational maps using ArcGIS.
- be able to create choropleth maps using ArcGIS.
- be able to digitize key features of historical maps using ArcGIS.
- be able to scan and georeference historical maps using ArcGIS.
- be aware of the many ways GIS enhance the study of history.

Week 1 Maps in History/Historical Maps in GIS

- What Can Historical Maps Tell Us About The Past?
- What Kinds of Information Do Maps Contain?

Weeks 2-3 Issues in GeoRepresentation

- Scale
- Perspective
- Generalization
- Symbology

Week 4 Finding and Evaluating Data

Week 5 Telling Battlefield Stories with GIS

Week 6-8 Mapping Movement and Change

Week 9 Explaining Cause and Effect with GIS

Week 10 Advanced Modeling with GIS

The second plan will be a proposal for an interdisciplinary course on mapping for the social sciences and the humanities designed, in part, to offer students to bring concrete spatial skills to community organizations working to find solutions to a range of social problems. Students would learn to use GIS in the public interest to identify, analyze, and communicate about social problems in relation to place.

Much of the inspiration came from our moderator, Mr. Tennesen, who through his own practices modeled the importance of listening, making connections, and building social capital through education. Additional inspiration came from the number of my colleagues willing to give so much of their time to explore ways in which to benefit the community through their teaching. I came away from the experience re-energized.