

Lessons from History 101: Teaching Digital Humanities at the Community College

...

Jack Norton
Normandale Community College

Challenges to teaching DH at the intro level in a community college:

Fadumo, Joe, Lisa

Open access

High proportion of developmental students

Uneven access to high speed internet or computers

Varied life experiences

Varied expectations

Wildly varied skill levels

Lesson #1: Know your students

40% of Normandale Students live in poverty.

3 year average Success Rate in my courses: 57.8%

3 year average Success Rate of Pell-eligible students in my course: 57.2%

3 year average Success rate of Online only students: 53%

Lesson #2: Create course-design principles first.

Anti-poverty course design principles:

It is local.

It is universal

It's not theory dependent

It is student centered

It is transparent to students

It improves student outcomes

It addresses known problems

It is informed but not dependent on data

Lesson #2: (cont)

What is an anti-poverty course design looks like for a DH course:

1. All course materials are free
2. Half of class time is in a computer lab
3. All lessons have written objectives, step-by-step instructions with screen grabs, and exact grading criteria.
4. Preference given to DH tools with better UI and single sign in for multiple lessons (such as Omeka.)
5. Metacognitive work and support services baked into the course
6. Build lessons on an ICAP framework (Chi, Wylie, 2014)

Orbis Lesson Plan

ORBIS The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World About Tutorial Walter Scheidel Elijah Meeks

Route Network Flow

FROM: Memphis

TO: Melita

DEPARTING: MONTH SEASON

Road Coastal Sea
 River Open Sea
 High Resolution

MODE TRANSFER COST

ROAD: Foot (30km/day) COST: 0

RIVER: Civilian COST: 0

SEA: Slow COST: 0

Calculate Route

DISPLAY

- Terrain
- Sites
- Names
- Paths
- Regions
- All Sites

Select Sites
Reset Map
Cluster
History
Export SVG
Path Coloring

[Tweet](#)

Perspective Duration Distance Donkey Wagon Carriage

The Fastest journey from **Memphis to Melita in July** takes **31.3 days**, covering **3474 kilometers**.

Prices in *denarii*, based on the use of a faster sail ship and a civilian river boat (where applicable), and on these road

Per kilogram of wheat (by donkey): 3.65
Per kilogram of wheat (by wagon): 3.65
Per passenger in a carriage: 920.47

Maps II Lesson

Due: Friday at 8 p.m.

Big question: How does historical GIS help us answer questions about the ancient Roman world?

Learning objectives. By the end of this lesson you will:

1. be familiar with robust historical GIS interfaces.
2. be able to calculate distance and speed using historical GIS.
3. be able to analyze information you learn from historical GIS.
4. be able to evaluate the usefulness of GIS metadata on historical GIS maps.
5. be able to define a self-directed learning goal for this this.

Background Information and Step 1

For this lesson you are going to be using, rather than building, GIS maps. You will use the Orbis map and the Augustan Rome map. Please note that these are interactive maps, so if a map doesn't work at first, please try your secondary browser. The lesson is in two parts. The first part asks you to use Orbis to answer questions about travel from Memphis (Egypt) to Melita (Malta) to Argenterate (France). The second part asks you to evaluate the Augustan Rome map for its use of metadata (information attached to map points).

Please write your answers in a document that you can upload to the D2L dropbox called **Maps II Assignment**.

For this exercise, you are a male merchant, carrying a valuable package of silk from Memphis to Argenterate (current-day Strasbourg, France). You have promised your sister-in-law to stop in Melita (current day Malta) to deliver a letter to her husband. You are have enough money to travel by foot or by oxcart. Although you are willing to sail on a boat, you can only afford a slow boat or a boat that only travels during daylight. It is currently fall, and you must reach Argenterate by Spring in order to sell your silk.



Instructions and questions

Zones of influence

1. Click on the “Network” tab.
2. Center on Argentorate and then Memphis.
3. Click “Calculate Network”
4. Click on “Zones”

Questions:

What are the differences between the Argentorate zones and the Memphis zones? What do these differences tell you about the Roman world?

As a silk merchant, which city do you think is best as your home shop, based on your reading of this Network map? Why do you think this city is best?

The screenshot shows the ORBIS web application interface. The title bar reads "ORBIS The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World" with "About" and "Tutorial" links on the right, and the authors "Walter Scheidel" and "Elijah Meeks" listed below. The main interface has three tabs: "Route", "Network" (which is selected and has a circled "1"), and "Flow". Below the tabs are three input fields: "CENTER: Argentorate" (with a circled "2"), "DIRECTION: From" (selected with a radio button), and "DEPARTING: MONTH SEASON" (with "SEASON" underlined). The central map shows the Roman world with various colored zones of influence. Labels for "Londinium", "Augusta Treverorum", and "Argentorate" are visible. A zoom control with "+" and "-" buttons is on the right side of the map. On the far right, a "DISPLAY" panel contains four checkboxes: "Terrain" (checked with a red X), "Sites" (checked with a red X), "Names" (unchecked), "Paths" (unchecked), and "Regions" (unchecked).

Rubric



Grading Rubric:

1. Student demonstrated competence using Orbis and Augustan Rome maps.
2. Student accurately calculated speed using GIS.
3. Student accurately calculated distance using GIS.
4. Student answered all the questions, fully explaining her or his thinking.
5. Student demonstrated evidence-based analysis in their responses to questions.
6. Student evaluated the usefulness of GIS metadata on historical GIS maps using specific evidence.
7. Evaluation of metadata makes use of standard English usage.

Lesson #3: Advocate and prepare

- Advocate for resources for students: on-campus computer time, laptop carts, bandwidth in classrooms, advocacy for low-cost internet in local communities, access to third-party authenticated resources (such as Gale Virtual Reference Library), LMS integration.
- Prepare for apathy, derision, and pushback, from students and colleagues.
- Look for support from above and away from your campus. # is powerful.
- Focus on DH for all and DH from below.

Lesson #4: Workflow and Reproducibility are Paramount

1.0 Workflow

1. Screen shot
2. Edit screen shot in previewer.
3. Save screen shot as jpg.
4. Insert into Word document.
5. Create lesson in Word.
6. Format word document.
7. Format word document.
8. Format word document.
9. Save as .docx and pdf.
10. Post both files to LMS.

2.0 Workflow

1. Draft lesson plan in Clarify, inserting images and composing at once.
2. Export as Markdown.
3. Edit in Sublime and preview in Marked.
4. Save as txt and HTML.
5. Upload HTML to LMS.

Lesson #4: (cont)

Workflow 1.0

- Google Maps or Arc GIS
- Voyant
- Knightlab Timeline
- Wordpress
- Omeka.net

Workflow 2.0

- Omeka (self hosted) with Neatline, Waypoints, and Text
- Voyant

Lesson #5: Cheerleading matters.

GIS

Statistics

Web publishing

Content management

Digital exhibit creation

Text mining (distant reading)

Audio podcasting

Social media networks

And the entirety of human history from 1 million years ago to the Mongols.