

# 360.420 - Humanities Lab: Making Maps of Mexico

Spring 2024

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9-10:15am

Hodson 315

Professor Casey Lurtz ([lurtz@jhu.edu](mailto:lurtz@jhu.edu))

Office Hours: Mondays 12:00-1:30pm

Gilman 330G or online

Sign up: <https://calendly.com/lurtz/office-hours>

For questions about data, GIS, and maps you can see the library [GIS Guide](#) or reach out to:  
Data Services, <https://dataservices.library.jhu.edu> Email: [dataservices@jhu.edu](mailto:dataservices@jhu.edu)

## Course Description

Making Maps of Mexico is an experiment in collective, collaborative research and learning. This syllabus is a flexible outline for how the semester will progress. The course is designed to help you learn something about Mexican history in the nineteenth century and something about the basics of qualitative data management and map making.

The course is designed around data and maps from Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that Prof. Lurtz has been working to digitize over the past few years. We will use data from Mexican censuses, economic reports, and other historical statistics alongside maps from the same period to think about the history of data, maps, and information, and the potential and the problems inherent in digital humanities.

Your work in this class will contribute to an ongoing digital atlas project that makes these historical data and the maps made from them widely available in an online format. Our conversations and work will help shape that project, and you will all receive credit for your contributions when it is published. We will be designing a web portal to house the work that we complete and provide others with instructions on how to make use of it.

Tuesday classes will center on discussion of weekly readings and Thursday classes will operate as lab days for working with digital humanities tools. **NO EXPERIENCE WITH DATA MANAGEMENT OR MAPPING OR WEB DESIGN IS REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE – we will all be learning together.**

By the end of the term, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate familiarity with major questions of turn-of-the-century Mexican history
- Discuss the potential benefits and difficulties of digital humanities projects
- Conduct primary and secondary research in digital archives and libraries
- Manage and standardize qualitative data in tabular databases
- Create and manage metadata
- Make basic maps and feature layers in ArcGIS using historical data and images
- Create the wireframe for a static website

## Grading:

### Participation (25%)

This class is a collaborative research exercise and participation is the only thing that will make it work. Constructive discussion is a skill in and of itself and one that we will work on in this class. If you are in need of advice on how to gain confidence in asking questions, responding to colleagues, or moving the conversation forward, please reach out.

Participation for this class also entails keeping up with the group activities and documents in Canvas. Weekly assignments indicate where and what to write and read in these spaces.

Above all, this is a space of shared learning. I leave the final word on this to Dr. Miriam Posner of UCLA's Program in Digital Humanities, an expert in the field:



<https://twitter.com/miriamkp/status/1349095892700205057?s=21>

### Datasets and Attendant Process Notes (20%)

#### **Final Cleaned Data due in the Group Data folder in OneDrive on FEB 29, 2023**

- Collaborate with your colleagues to establish norms for transcribing and cleaning our data.
- Select and transcribe comparable datasets for one kind of data.
- Standardize your datasets in accord with our norms.
- Demonstrate understanding of OpenRefine
- Record the steps you take to clean your data in the Process & Ideas Log.
- Produce metadata for your datasets.

## ArcGIS Maps and Attendant Process Notes (20%)

### **Final Standardized Maps due April 4 in ArcGIS Online Group, explanation in Canvas**

- Collaborate with your colleagues to establish norms for mapping our data.
- Demonstrate understanding of analysis and symbology tools in ArcGIS Online.
- Use the municipal and district feature layers to create at least 3 maps in ArcGIS Online.
  - Each map must use symbology or an analysis tool to represent your data.
- Record your steps you take and the decisions you have made in the Process & Ideas Log.
- Provide metadata for your maps in ArcGIS.
- Provide a brief explanation of your maps via Canvas (this can be a copy of the description/summary you write for ArcGIS).

## Website Wireframe Plan (Group Project) (10%)

### **Due April 12 in Group OneDrive**

- Outline of needed elements for project website wireframe.
- Annotated bibliography of primary sources to incorporate into our website. The bibliography should be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style.
- Annotated bibliography of secondary sources to incorporate into our website. The bibliography should be formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style.
- Work plan with assigned tasks for rest of the semester.

## Website Wireframe Elements (25%)

### **Draft due April 23 to Canvas or ArcGIS Group; final due May 6**

- This will look different for each team member depending on how tasks are assigned.
- Each team member's website elements should demonstrate their ability to draw on our datasets, maps, and sources to tell a story, make an argument, or provide instructions regarding the materials we have examined in this class.
- Your final contribution should demonstrate that you can do the following:
  - Communicate effectively using combination of words and text.
  - Incorporate maps and data into a presentation.
  - Properly cite and link to relevant research and source material.

## Policies

The following policies are designed to facilitate an accessible, equitable, collaborative, and productive semester for us all. These are strange times and I ask that we all be as accommodating, patient, and understanding as we can be while still moving forward with the work of this class. Please communicate with me if you need additional time, flexibility, or help.

We will collectively establish values and norms to guide discussion in the first week of class.

A number of our sessions will take place with the support of librarians and data specialists. Some of these sessions require preparatory online workshops. Please be considerate of our guests' time and come to class having completed the suggested seminars. Really, this

consideration goes for your classmates and me as well: this class only works if we all do what we can to show up for each other.

### Email and office hours

I respond to email during regular business hours (9am – 5 pm), Monday thru Friday. Allow 24 hours for a response. Please use proper formatting and address (I am Professor or Dr. Lurtz) when writing your email.

Come to my office hours – it's what they're there for. You do not need to have a specific question or concern, just come chat about how things are going. Sign up if you know you need to chat, but also feel free to just drop by on Mondays.

### Late work and drafts

Extensions are available, but only if requested in advance of the due date. Unexcused late assignments will be docked a grade for each day they are late (e.g., an A becomes an A- becomes a B+). Back up your computer and use and use a cloud storage service like Dropbox, Google Drive, or OneDrive – hard drive crashes do not excuse missing work.

I will read drafts, so long as they are received with ample time for comment and revision before the deadline. Students should plan on attending office hours to talk about drafts.

### Accommodations

Accommodations will be made for those who need them. Please come talk with me early in the semester to discuss your needs. Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class should also obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, [studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu).

### Mental Health

Many students experience anxiety, depression, and other emotional challenges. Please be in touch with me if you need an extension, reschedule, or other adaptation of the course. If you would like to speak to a counselor, please visit the campus Counseling Center. Information is available on the Counseling Center's website: <https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter>

### Academic Integrity

The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student conduct (or designee) by calling the Office of the Dean of Students at 410-516-8208 or via email at [studentconduct@jhu.edu](mailto:studentconduct@jhu.edu). For more information, see the Homewood Student Affairs site on academic ethics: (<https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics/>).

## Course Schedule

### Week 1 – Jan 23 & 25

#### Workshops (in class):

- Create survey, explore survey results, and think what they tell us about data collection
- What is digital humanities?
  - Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0  
([https://www.humanitiesblast.com/manifesto/Manifesto\\_V2.pdf](https://www.humanitiesblast.com/manifesto/Manifesto_V2.pdf); explanation here: <https://www.toddpresner.com/?p=7>)
  - <http://whatisdigitalhumanities.com/>
- Explore successful digital humanities project – [Mapping Inequality](#)
- Create our own values and norms for this class
- Sign up for ArcGIS and join course group

## DATA

### Week 2 – Jan 30 & Feb 1

#### Tuesday Reading:

- Joseph, Gilbert M. and Jürgen Buchenau. “Porfirian Modernization and its Costs.” In *Mexico's Once and Future Revolution*, 15-36. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.
  - If you want more on this, also read Katz, Friedrich. “The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato, 1867–1910.” Chapter. In *Mexico since Independence*, edited by Leslie Bethell, 49–124. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

#### Assignment (by Thurs):

- Group Files (OneDrive):
  - Pick two sets of statistical data that you’d like to work with from the dataset collection
  - Add your selections to the group spreadsheet to claim the datasets
  - Create a folder for your data in the shared drive (name it with your name) and add the pdfs you’ll be working with
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Write a basic profile of the data you’ll be working with (with citations if possible) including a link to the page where you downloaded your data/pdfs. Try to include information about the kind of publication the data is coming from, who generated it, how often, how it was collected, etc., as best as you can find it. Include links to any scholarly publications that might be helpful in understanding your dataset as well.

#### Thursday Workshop (In Class):

- Managing qualitative data
  - Explore our different kinds of data and data structures
  - Find similarities and come up with strategies and norms for transcribing data
  - What problems are we facing as we try to move from data to digital interface?

## Week 3 – Feb 6 & 8

### Tuesday Reading:

- Scott, Joan Wallach. "A Statistical Representation of Work." In *Gender and the Politics of History*, 113-138. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Bouk, Dan. "Error, Uncertainty, and the Shifting Ground of Census Data." *Harvard Data Science Review* 2, no. 2 (May 26, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.962cb309>.

### Assignment (by Thurs):

- Your Data (OneDrive):
  - For one of your chosen datasets, select one subset of the data and transcribe as much of it as you can.
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Keep track of what you have transcribed and the decisions you've made as you've done so. This will help you generate a data dictionary or codebook.
  - Identify major hurdles to making the datasets you have selected ingestible and comparable that you've noticed from a first reading.

### Thursday Workshop:

- Cleaning and standardizing tabular data using Open Refine to prepare data for use 1900 digital atlas of Mexico.

## Week 4 – Feb 13 & 15

### Tuesday Reading:

- Tenorio, Mauricio. "Mexican Statistics, Maps, Patents, and Governance." In *Mexico at the World's Fair*, 125-141. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Lurtz, Casey Marina. "A Confounded Statistic: Turn-of-the-Century Mexican Agriculture in Incommensurable Terms." *The Americas* 80, no. 2 (April 2023): 291–329.

### Assignment (by Thurs):

- Your Data (OneDrive):
  - Start cleaning up your data using the tools from last week.
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Post a summary of what you've done so far and what problems you're facing, especially those based on differences between places.

### Thursday Workshop:

- Problem solving data management – what challenges are we all facing and how should we address them? Are there additional datasets we should look for to help with our demonstration of these tools?

### Thursday Bonus Workshop: Static Websites

2pm Digital Humanities Zoom session for those able to attend

## Week 5 – Feb 20 & 22

### Tuesday Reading:

- Johnson, Jessica Marie. "Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death] Studies at the Digital Crossroads." *Social Text* 36:4 (December 2018): 57–79.

- Drucker, Johanna. "Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 005, no. 1 (March 10, 2011).

#### Assignment: (by Thurs):

- Data (OneDrive):
  - Create a Word file in your folder and write a brief how-to for data transcription that can serve as the basis for a tutorial for our website on preparing data to be mapped.
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Keep track of how writing a tutorial would change your own approach were you to do it again.

#### Thursday Workshop:

- Draft tutorial for transcribing data for use with 1900 digital atlas of Mexico.
- Breakout groups to examine other data visualization projects online.
- Discuss ideas for what kinds of data visualizations we could potentially create with the data we have.

## MAPS

### Week 6 – Feb 27 & 29

#### Tuesday Reading:

- White, Richard. "What is Spatial History?" Stanford Spatial History Lab Website: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29>

#### Tuesday Workshop:

- Primary source scouting – overview of digital map resources with maps librarian Lena Denis.

#### Assignment (by Thurs):

- Your Data (OneDrive):
  - Bring your data into alignment with norms we set previous week, export from OpenRefine as a csv file, and upload csv files for each of your datasets to the Group Data folder in OneDrive. Name them in line with this convention: YourName.Year.DataTitle.Cleaned.csv to distinguish them from the originals.
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Write a narrative of your data normalization process, challenges you faced, decisions you made, and possibilities you think could be pursued. This will be useful for you later when putting together your final contribution to the website.
  - Post any questions you have for the GIS librarians and any thoughts about possibilities of ArcGIS based on the Intro online workshop

#### Workshop prep:

- Intro to ArcGIS Online

#### Thursday Workshop with Data Services Librarians

- Intro to importing, creating, and joining data in ArcGIS

## Week 7 – March 5 & 7

### Tuesday Reading:

- Berry, Mary Elizabeth. “Maps are Strange.” In *Japan in Print*, 54-103. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

### Assignment (by Thurs):

- ArcGIS Online:
  - Import your data to ArcGIS online, attempt to join it to the Mexico in 1900 feature layers, and see what problems pop up as you play around with tools introduced last week.
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Document your progress (i.e. 2024.03.04 – I created a new map and imported my census data. I tried joining it to the Mexico in 1900 municipal layer using the 1900MunState field, but 3 of my 22 municipalities did not appear in the resulting layer. I compared my data and the MunState1900 layer fields, corrected the 3 municipalities that were not spelled the same, and retried the join. All municipalities now appear.)
  - Post ideas for maps to build, problems you’re encountering, etc.

### Thursday Workshop with Data Services Librarians

- Intro to analysis tools in ArcGIS Online, importing web layer, sharing web maps and data; troubleshooting Q&A

## Week 8 – March 12 & 14

### Tuesday Reading:

- Craib, Raymond. “Situated Knowledges: The Geographic Exploration Commission (I)” and “Spatial Progressions: The Geographic Exploration Commission (II).” In *Cartographic Mexico*, 127-192. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

### Assignment (by Thurs):

- ArcGIS Online:
  - Continue working on your feature layers in ArcGIS.
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Keep track of your progress and decisions.
  - Note any hiccups in the joining, importing, or other processes.

### Thursday Workshop:

- Troubleshooting. Share progress on maps and problems you’ve encountered.

### Thursday Bonus Workshop: Static Websites

2pm Digital Humanities Zoom session for those able to attend

## Week 9 – Spring break



## Week 10 – March 26 & 28

Tuesday Reading: (pick two or three to discuss)

- Blevins, Cameron & Richard W. Helbock, “U.S. Post Offices.” <https://cblevins.github.io/us-post-offices/>
- Bonilla, Yarimar and Max Hantel, “Visualizing Sovereignty: Cartographic Queries for the Digital Age.” *Archipelagos* 1 (June 2016). <http://archipelagosjournal.org/issue01/bonilla-visualizing.html>
- Goffe, Tao Leigh. “Unmapping the Caribbean: Toward a Digital Praxis of Archipelagic Sounding.” *Archipelagos* 5 (Dec 2020). <http://archipelagosjournal.org/issue05/goffe-unmapping.html>
- Brown, Elspeth; McKinney, Cait; Guadagnolo, Dan; Mezo Gonzalez, Juan Carlos; Cunningham, Sid; et al. “Transmediation as Radical Pedagogy in Building Queer and Trans Digital Archives.” *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 16: 2 (2022) <http://digitalhumanities.org:8081/dhq/vol/16/2/000610/000610.html>
- Daigle, Michelle and Margaret Marietta Ramírez. “Decolonial Geographies.” In *Keywords in Radical Geography: Antipode at 50*, edited by the *Antipode* Editorial Collective, 78-84. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2019. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781119558071>
- Gieseeking, Jen Jack. “Where Are We? The Method of Mapping with GIS in Digital Humanities.” *American Quarterly* 70: 3 (2018), 641-648. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/704349/summary>

Assignment (by Thurs):

- ArcGIS Group:
  - Have your datasets added to the class group, along with whatever mapping progress you've made.
- Progress & Ideas Log:
  - Keep track of what you're mapping, decision making process, etc. Start working on shared metadata for our maps and feature layers.
- Supplementary Scholarship
  - Bring ideas for the topics, themes, places, people, etc., you might want to write about for your website contribution to make the library session more helpful.

Thursday Workshop:

- Looking for secondary sources (Zoom session with History librarian, Heather Furnas).

## Week 11 – April 2 & 4

No Class April 4

Workshop Tuesday:

- Website planning – what elements make for a good website?

Assignment (by Thursday):

- ArcGIS Group:
  - Maps Due: Bring maps into alignment with class norms and add to class group.
- Assignments in Canvas:

- Brief guide to your maps and how I should navigate them. Narrative of decisions you made and what you were able to do, as well as what you haven't yet figured out to do.
- Progress & Ideas Log (Canvas):
  - Share the links to your final maps and comment on a couple of your classmates'.
  - Any final challenges you're facing or work you'd like to keep doing.

## STORIES

### Week 12 – April 9 & 11

#### Tuesday Reading:

- Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast" *American Historical Review* 121:2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/121.2.377>.

#### Assignment (by end of day Friday 4/12):

- Website (Group OneDrive):
  - Website plan due.

#### Thursday Workshop:

- Website wireframe plan.

### Week 13 – April 16 & 18

#### Reading (for Tues): Poke around and navigate what you can as they're in Spanish

- ["Los negocios y su dimensión espacial: La ciudad de México en el directorio comercial de Jerónimo Figueroa Doménech, 1899."](#)
- [ArchivoMex](#)
- [Visor Toponímico Mexicano \(VTM\)](#)

#### Assignment (by Thurs):

- Progress & Ideas Log:
  - Steps you've taken on your pieces of the wireframe plan.
  - Share anything you're having trouble finding, drafting, etc.

#### Thursday Workshop:

- Drafting website content.

### Week 14 – April 23 & 25

Tues and Thursday are both workshop days for sharing your progress so far.

#### Assignment (by Thurs):

- Group OneDrive
  - Keep building source base.
  - Keep drafting website contributions.
- Progress & Ideas Log:
  - Share website progress.
  - Share anything you're having trouble finding.

Tuesday & Thursday Workshops:

- Share website contributions.
- Make final plans for website additions.

Thursday Bonus Workshop: Static Websites

2pm Digital Humanities Zoom session for those able to attend