

ANTH 460 / 520A

ETHNOGRAPHIC MAPPING AND INDIGENOUS CARTOGRAPHIES

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Brian Thom

Course Description and Objectives

Indigenous communities everywhere have engaged cultural mapping in support of land rights and title, evaluating impacts to their lands, supporting the work of Indigenous governance, revitalizing languages. Anthropologists are often invited to be partners in the work, supporting Indigenous peoples' efforts to mobilize these works in legal discourses, environmental assessment processes, government consultations, land use planning, cultural interpretation, and inter-generational knowledge sharing.

While reviewing a range of ethnographic mapping practices, the crux of the course is centred on the practice of land use and occupancy mapping (also called Traditional Use Studies), which have developed to grapple with the specific problems of demonstrating the nature and scope of Indigenous land resource rights. We will develop hands-on skills in the methods and theory behind these kinds of studies, and flesh out the details of how these are used in regulatory and legal contexts in Canada. Students will engage the social, legal and political dimensions of ethnographic mapping through critical examination of the power of indigenous cartographies, revealing how mapping and 'counter-mapping' have become powerful discursive practices.

Course Format

For Spring 2023, Anth 460/520a will be in person lectures, seminar discussions and skill-building workshops. Students are expected to bring their laptop to class, especially during the skills-development section (the middle third of the course). There will be projects done in small teams, as well as individual projects.

Skills Development

Students will learn employable skills in this burgeoning area for anthropology grads (including spatially ethnographic sources for spatial data, GIS, GPS, ethnographic field mapping, data management, quality control, cartography). Students will be

actively involved in digital resource creation, including learning some basic KML coding and database design and management. Students will also develop a set of reflective conceptual tools to be able to critically engage with discourses of cultural cartography. The assignments are mainly project oriented, allowing student to develop a foundation of skills needed for this kind of work. The final project is substantive, allowing for practice and working through the problems involved in this kind of work.

Graduate students taking this class as 520 will have the opportunity to deeply engage ethnographic source material, work through data management problems, and develop a well-theorized and critical interdisciplinary reading of counter-cartography as it applies in anthropology.

Technology Requirements

Students are required to use an electronic device with Google Earth Pro and Google Chrome browser installed, as well as a code editor like Notepad ++ (PC) or TextMate (Apple), or Atom (all platforms). As we will be using advanced Google Earth Pro features that require a desktop installation, it will not be possible to complete the assignments for this course on an iPad or Android Tablet.