This seminar introduces students to the field of digital geographies, a very dynamic field of study that is very much in the process of defining itself. This seminar is roughly organized around background history (3 weeks), theories of code/space and big data (3 weeks), digital methods (1 week) and manifestations/phenomenon (7 weeks).

- **History of the sub-discipline**: In this seminar I trace it back to approximately the mid-1990s when the commercial internet emerged and geographers began to think about what this meant for space and place. Where was the internet? Can we measure/map it? How do we think about and theorize digital space (or cyberspace if you’re feeling old school)? Fast forward ten years and GPS applications – most notably Google Earth/Maps – appeared alongside social media platforms creating opportunities for user-generated data, maps and applications. Human geography and GIScience coming together in really fascinating ways.

- **Theories of code/space and big data**: How does software (aka code) contribute to the creation and control of space and places? Why is everyone so excited by “big data” and is this excitement warranted? Where does code and big data come from, who controls it and how is it interacting with everyday life and research, social, cultural and business practices?

- **Methods**: How do we study digital geographies? How does it differ (or not) from studying “regular” topics? Is it worth doing? Should some topics, techniques and data sources be avoided?

- **Manifestations/phenomenon**: The second half of the semester is a survey of a range of “hot topics” within digital geographies to give you some sense of what currently is under study. To be sure, this is a partial list. The first three weeks – “Algorithms, Clouds and Risk”, “Privacy and Surveillance” and “Cities” – represent areas in which a fair number of people have worked although with lots of questions still to be asked and answered. The last fours weeks – “Labor, Work and Robots”, “Intimacy”, “Platform Economies, Fintech and Blockchain” and “Resistance, Hacking and the Darknet” – are less well developed.

Most of the readings will be journal articles (accessible via the UK library or pdf from me) but it is worth getting your own copy of Kitchin, Rob, and Martin Dodge. 2011. *Code/Space: Software and Everyday Life*. The MIT Press for week 4. As our discussion evolves over the seminar, so will the set of reading. I am happy to take suggestions for readings (even off topic).

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1 Btw, there are a lot of different names that have been used to label various parts of what this seminar covers: internet geography, cybergeographies, information geography, geographies of telecommunications, cyborg geographies, geoweb, GIS and society, critical GIS, crowd-courcing, etc. etc. etc., At this moment, digital geography is a good catch-all term that has recently been used both within the AAG and RGS/IBG to form specialty groups.
Requirements/Grading

Each week lists Readings (required), Exhibits (things that are worth a quick skim) and Supplementary Readings (related to the topic and really good, but there’s only so much time).

The Grading Scale is 100-90=A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C; <70 =F. Grades are based on:

- Class participation, response drafts, article summaries, and leading discussion (50%)
  - You are expected to do the readings, attend seminar and participate in the discussion.
  - In addition, everyone will submit (1) a short weekly response (2 paragraphs) that highlights disagreements/tensions within and between the readings and questions/critiques that arise during the reading. These are due by Monday evening before seminar. Note: earlier submissions will help your fellow participants with leading discussion.
  - Each participant will take the lead with discussion for two class meetings (usually with one other person). On your week that you should review the responses and summaries of your classmates and prepare an activity or set of questions to structure the seminar.
- Writing project (50%) A paper on related theme to the focus of this class. I’m happy with a range of different formats including (1) a literature review to be used as part of a thesis proposal or exam; (2) a regular seminar research paper; or (3) something more ambitious including some primary research with the ultimate goal of publishing. We will discuss in more details later in the semester. These will be due around December 12th.

1. Introduction (Aug 29)

2. Studying/Theorizing/Mapping information/cyberspace (Sept 5)

Readings (suggested order)


Supplementary Readings

3. **Enter Google Maps, VGI, Crowdsourcing and the Geoweb (Sept 12)**

*Readings (suggested order)*

Elwood, Sarah. Geographic information science: emerging research on the societal implications of the geospatial web. Progress in Human Geography, June 2010; vol. 34, 3: pp. 349-357

*Supplementary Readings*


Wilson, Matthew W. "Location-based services, conspicuous mobility, and the location-aware future." GeoForum 43.6 (2012): 1266-1275.


4. Making the field of 'digital geography'? (Sept 19)

Readings (suggested order)


Exhibits


5. Code/Space (Sept 26)

Readings

6. Big Data – Part I (Oct 3)

Readings (suggested order)


http://bds.sagepub.com/content/1/1/2053951714540280.full.pdf+html

http://bds.sagepub.com/content/1/1/2053951714528481


Exhibits of Uncritical Boosterism of Big Data


Supplementary Readings

Rob Kitchin. 2014. The Data Revolution: Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures and Their Consequences


7. Big Data – Part II (Oct 10)

Readings (suggested order)


Trevor J Barnes. Big data, little history. Dialogues in Human Geography November 2013 3: 297-302,


**Supplementary Readings**

Special issue on Dialogues in Human Geography (and other early Geography takes on Big data)


Evelyn Ruppert. Rethinking empirical social sciences. Dialogues in Human Geography November 2013 3: 268-273,

Michael Batty. Big data, smart cities and city planning. Dialogues in Human Geography November 2013 3: 274-279

Michael F Goodchild. The quality of big (geo)data Dialogues in Human Geography November 2013 3: 280-284,

Sean P Gorman. The danger of a big data episteme and the need to evolve geographic information systems Dialogues in Human Geography November 2013 3: 285-291,


8. **Digital research methods (Oct 17)**

*Readings (suggested order)*


Supplementary Readings


BD&S society paper, Algorithmic Governance: Developing a Research Agenda through the Power of Collective Intelligence


Readings (suggested order)


Supplementary Readings

Special issue on the social power of algorithms in Information, Communication & Society (July 2017) http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rics20/20/1

Supplementary Readings in the related topic of infrastructure


10. Privacy and Surveillance (Oct 31)

Readings (suggested order)


http://bds.sagepub.com/content/1/2/2053951714541861.full.pdf+html


Exhibits

Special Issue on “Surveillance and the Global Turn to Authoritarianism” in Surveillance and Society https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/issue/view/authority

Supplementary Readings


11. Cities (Nov 7)

Readings (suggested order)


Supplementary Readings


http://bds.sagepub.com/content/1/1/2053951714532241.full.pdf+html


12. Labor, Work and Robots (Nov 14)

Readings (suggested order)


Exhibits


Supplementary Readings


13. Intimacy (Nov 21)

Readings (suggested order)


**Supplementary Readings**


**14. Platform Economies, Fintech and BlockChain (Nov 28)**

*Readings (suggested order)*


*Exhibits*

When the Cookie meets the Blockchain - https://freedom-to-tinker.com/2017/08/17/when-the-cookie-meets-the-blockchain/

Stephen Mason. Consultation on Making a Will
http://stephenmason.co.uk/homepage/consultation-on-ewills

**Supplementary Readings**

**15. Resistance, Hacking and the Darknet (Dec 5)**

*Readings (suggested order)*
John Perry Barlow, A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace.
https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html


Supplementary Readings


