I. COURSE

A. Description
Provides an introduction to “spatially-informed” social work practice and research; and practical skills in using geographic information systems (GIS) to map and understand individuals, organizations, and communities.

B. Purpose
This course examines the role of geography on human behavior, applying a spatial perspective to understand the social problems affecting individuals and communities. Students will be introduced to GIS technologies and their potential applications in social work practice settings, as well as social work research. Students will gain skills in using GIS software and spatial and non-spatial data (e.g. Census, administrative, etc.) in order to create multi-layered maps and conduct basic spatial analysis that can help to inform and further social work practice and research.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Assess the role of geography as an important aspect of the social environment and its impact on human behavior and social work practice (EPAS 2.1.7 and 2.1.9).
2. Identify the potential applications of GIS and mapping in advancing social work practice and research (EPAS 2.1.6).
3. Utilize GIS as a tool for engaging, assessing, and evaluating the strengths and needs of individuals, organizations, and communities (EPAS 2.1.10).
4. Integrate knowledge from various data sources with the use of GIS in order to better understand problems, make informed decisions, and promote effective social service delivery (EPAS 2.1.3 and 2.1.6).
5. Conduct GIS and spatial analyses to inform program and policy development (EPAS 2.1.8 and 2.1.10).
6. Develop skills in working with GIS technology and mapping and analyzing spatial and non-spatial data in order to inform social service delivery (EPAS 2.1.1 and 2.1.9).
7. Communicate findings effectively through the development and presentation of multi-layered maps (EPAS 2.1.6).
III. COURSE CONTENT

This course will include the following content areas:

1. Basic geographic/spatial concepts
2. Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
3. Mapmaking basics
4. Spatial data management and analysis
5. Applications of GIS for social work practice and research

IV. COURSE STRUCTURE

Each class session (Mondays and Wednesday) will be divided into two parts: 1) lecture and discussion; and 2) lab section. Students should bring their laptops (if available) to every session.

The course will also utilize ArcGIS.com—an online-based data sharing application—to allow students to share and provide feedback on data and maps. The professor reserves the right to alter readings, course topics, and assignments as needed during the course of the semester to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints.

V. TEXTBOOKS

- Other assigned readings will be posted on the course Blackboard.

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The final grade for this course will be based on the following assignments:

- Class Attendance: 10%
- Weekly Lab Assignments (from GIS Tutorial book) (4 total): 40%
- Final Mapping Project: 50%

All assignments should be uploaded to the course blackboard by the deadlines specified below. Late submissions will be accepted for all assignments, however, *the grade value will be reduced by 10% for each day late.*

VII. EVALUATION AND GRADING

The following standard grading scale has been adopted for all courses taught in the College:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96% to 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92% to 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88% to 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84% to 87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% to 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76% to 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72% to 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>68% to 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64 to 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 64%</td>
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</table>
VIII. POLICY ON INCOMPLETES

A grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either: (a) passing a course; or (b) still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an "I" grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should not re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work complete in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of W.

IX. POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author(s), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person’s work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to): using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.
### X. COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Primary Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>6/2</td>
<td>Course overview/syllabus&lt;br&gt;Intro to GIS &amp; social work&lt;br&gt;Set-up laptops/software</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 1</td>
<td><strong>Lab Assignment 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;(due Friday, 6/6, midnight)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>Basic spatial and GIS concepts&lt;br&gt;Intro to ArcGIS</td>
<td>Steinberg &amp; Steinberg (2006), Chapters 1 and 2.</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 2</td>
<td>Select and complete one of the assignments from <strong>Ch. 2</strong> (p. 107-110).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>Intro to spatial data&lt;br&gt;Designing maps&lt;br&gt;Symbolizing features</td>
<td>Hillier (2007)&lt;br&gt;Esri (2011), pp. 1-10</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 3</td>
<td><strong>Lab Assignment 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;(due Friday, 6/13, midnight)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/11</td>
<td>Intro to spatial data (cont.)&lt;br&gt;Projections&lt;br&gt;Excel 101</td>
<td>Queralt &amp; Witte (1998)&lt;br&gt;Foltz (2007)</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 4</td>
<td>Select and complete one of the assignments from <strong>Ch. 3</strong> (p. 150-155) or <strong>Ch. 4</strong> (p. 205-211)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>6/16</td>
<td>Working with spatial data (cont.)&lt;br&gt;Census data&lt;br&gt;Joining tables</td>
<td>Hirshorn &amp; Stewart (2003)&lt;br&gt;Gambir et al. (2009), pp. 1-12</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 5</td>
<td><strong>Lab Assignment 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;(due Friday, 6/20, midnight)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/18</td>
<td>Working with spatial data (cont.)&lt;br&gt;Geocoding</td>
<td>Payne &amp; Gainey (2009)&lt;br&gt;McLafferty (2003)</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 6</td>
<td>Select and complete one of the assignments from <strong>Ch. 6</strong> (p. 286-290)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>6/23</td>
<td>Basic spatial analysis tools&lt;br&gt;Final project consultations</td>
<td>Wong &amp; Hillier (2001)&lt;br&gt;Naphtali et al. (2008)</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 7</td>
<td><strong>Lab assignment 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;(due Friday, 6/27, midnight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/25</td>
<td>Putting it all together&lt;br&gt;Creating effective maps&lt;br&gt;Final project consultations</td>
<td>Rine et al. (2012)&lt;br&gt;Monmonier (2005)</td>
<td>GIS Tutorial, Ch. 10</td>
<td>Select and complete one of the assignments from <strong>Ch. 7</strong> (p. 328-333).</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Work and complete final projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Final Project Proposal</strong>&lt;br&gt;(due Monday, 6/30, midnight)</td>
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</table>

**Final Project Paper**<br>(due Friday, 7/18, midnight)
XI. REFERENCES


*Updated May 27, 2014*