

**GE 325**  
**Cartography**  
**Map Critique Project 1**  
**Due Date: See Canvas**  
**Point Value: 100pts**

For this project, you should search the internet to find **five (5)** published thematic maps (preferably from a media outlet or governmental agency). Maps should cover a range of scales, styles, and purposes. Each map should have a unique combination of characteristics. For example, you should not have more than one small scale choropleth map. I don't expect you to pick maps you consider "perfect." You should include at least a few maps that have obvious defects (using the map design knowledge you have learned so far). You should download/copy each map to include in your report.

For each map, you should write a one page review to explain the purpose of the map, your critique (see guidelines below), and a rating (1-10). The write-up should sufficiently justify your rating. Each critique is worth 20pts (total of 100 pts.) per map. You should combine your critiques into ONE document (final report) to submit on canvas. The final report should have a cover page, be organized, and look professional.

**Criteria for map critiques**

Below are some questions that might be helpful in critiquing maps that you, your colleagues and professionals make. You don't need to cover all of these in every critique, but cover the most relevant questions. Additional questions may be appropriate for specific maps. In every critique find both strengths and weaknesses and decide how the map might be improved.

**General**

- At what distance is the map meant to be read? One or many?
- Is the medium appropriate to the use? For instance, should the map be larger/smaller? Electronic rather than on paper? Interactive?
- Can you readily understand the overall purpose of the map and how it is to be read?
- What is its intended use? Does it have one?
- Stand back from the map. Does your eye fall on important elements or an oversized or overly bright unimportant element?
- Are all necessary elements included? Are all unnecessary elements excluded? Are these choices appropriate?
- Did the mapmaker have any inappropriate assumptions or did they have something to hide?
- What kinds of compromises did the mapmaker have to make due to data, medium, printing, or other constraints?

**Color**

- Do the colors clash or clutter?
- Are there too many (most common) or too few colors?
- Do they add emphasis in appropriate places/ways?
- Do they cause vibrating or rising/receding effects? If so, is that appropriate?

- Do the colors help or hinder the reader in interpreting the map?
- Are any colors too close or too different in hue, value and saturation?
- Are the colors meant to be intuitive or conventional?

### **Symbology**

- Is the symbology appropriate to the use of the map?
- What was the main motivation in choosing the symbols?
- Do the classifications or color values make sense for different feature types?
- Does the map make appropriate use of conventional or intuitive symbology?

### **Data**

- Are the data appropriate to the use and/or intended message of the map?
- Is the scale of the map appropriate to its intended use?
- Does the data in the map match the scale? In other words, do the features have too little detail (they look blocky) or too much (their boundaries are too convoluted)?

### **Text**

- Does the layout have too many fonts? Fewer fonts and font styles make for cleaner layouts.
- Is the choice of font appropriate to the map's use and to the feel of the layout?
- Are the labels, titles, legend labels, etc. in an appropriate size, location, and/or color?
- Are all necessary textual elements in the layout?
- Are there any unnecessary elements?

### **Layout**

- Are the elements in the layout distributed in a balanced or appropriate way?
- Are the sizes of the elements appropriate and balanced?
- Does the layout have enough or too much negative space?

### **Meta Information**

- Does the mapmaker credit appropriate sources?
- Do you have all the information you will need to interpret the map appropriately?