In the space below provide your thoughts about the introduction of GIS to the class. Include any suggestions on how to improve the content. Removing the technical difficulties, what did you learn about GIS?

I noticed that ARCGIS was very similar to Tableau map-wise. Because we weren’t able to work with the actual data and format it in ARCGIS itself, like we can do in Tableau, I wouldn’t know if ARCGIS is easier to use or better in anyway than Tableau, or Excel. Personally, I think we could have learned the same material in Excel, which is free and more commonly used, than ARCGIS, because while the visualizations look cleaner and are easier to interpret in ARCGIS, the chances of people using it in the future are low due to how expensive it is. From the homelessness mapping assignment we had to do, I found it very similar to Excel and Tableau in the sense that we had to write some formulas in order to focus on the data that we needed, but I believe that it would have been more useful for us to be given the dataset to work with (mine, parse, filter, etc.), like we have learned to do in most of the other assignments, rather than to just be able to visualize the data. Going forward, I would recommend using a variety of software to give students a feel of which visualization tool works best for them, and to let them go through the dataset themselves instead of just being handed the cleaned-up version, because that would be more reflective of a real work environment. That being said, I enjoyed this introduction to GIS because I felt that it highlighted real world uses extremely well and gave us meaningful insights into a new branch of data visualization. Before the lab, I had never even heard of GIS, and now I have a solid idea of what it is, where it is used, and how to use GIS software. I think this intro did a good job of opening the door to the world of GIS, but it could be made better with more variety of GIS software, and giving students a basic, but full, experience into mapping through the exposure of working with the actual datasets, as well as visualizing the data.