Syllabus

Introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

GISC 2301.001, 2001.020/GEOG 2320.001, 2321.001

(Fall 2023)

Instructor: Dr. Yanli Zhang
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Office: Forestry 121
Phone: (936) 468-2157

Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30am – 10:20 am at Forestry 208

Lab: Thursday, 10:30am – 1:00pm Forestry 102

Office hours: Tuesday 1:00pm – 4:00pm, Wednesday 9am – 11am, appointment preferred

Class News/Notices, Lecture Handouts, Labs, and Grades: All lecture handouts, lab instructions and assignments are available at D2L (or Brightspace) (https://d2l.sfasu.edu/). It is students’ responsibility to check D2L for detailed course requirements. Grades for quizzes, labs, and exams are all available at D2L as well. Please check D2L for course related news and announcements.

Course Description: 3 semester hours. Overview of Geographic Information System (GIS) concepts and components. Both theoretical and applied realms of GIS are emphasized in this course. Topics include ArcGIS software, spatial data and corresponding attribute information, and spatial data manipulation and analysis, and map design.

Program Learning Outcomes:
A. Demonstrate understanding and competency of GIS theory;
B. Demonstrate understanding and competency of spatial data collection, format, storage, and editing;
C. Demonstrate understanding and competency of spatial analysis;
D. Demonstrate understanding and competency of map design;
E. Demonstrate the ability to use GIS software.

Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of the course, the student will:
A. Understand basic GIS theory and principles (PLO A);
B. Be familiar with GIS components (data collection, data management, spatial analysis, and map design) (PLO B C D);
C. Be able to use ArcGIS software for basic GIS project (PLO E);
D. Have demonstrated competency in oral and written communication skills.

Textbook
Tentative Course Calendar

<table>
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<tr>
<th>week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Lab</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.29.2023</td>
<td>Syllabus and course overview</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8.31.2023</td>
<td>GIS career</td>
<td>1. GIS basic knowledge</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9.5.2023</td>
<td>Introduction to GIS</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9.7.2023</td>
<td>ArcGIS Pro</td>
<td>2. ArcGIS Pro intro</td>
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<td>Projection 1</td>
<td>Ch. 3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9.19.2023</td>
<td>Data format: vector</td>
<td>Ch. 2, 4</td>
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<td>Data format: raster</td>
<td>4. Data entry</td>
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<td>9.26.2023</td>
<td>GIS cartography 1</td>
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<td>9.28.2023</td>
<td>GIS cartography 2</td>
<td>5. Map making</td>
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<td>10.3.2023</td>
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<td>Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Relational database 2</td>
<td>6. Query</td>
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<td>GNSS 1</td>
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<td>10.12.2023</td>
<td>GNSS 2</td>
<td>Prepare for exam</td>
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<td>10.24.2023</td>
<td>Vector analysis 1</td>
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<td>10.26.2023</td>
<td>Vector analysis 2</td>
<td>7. GNSS lab</td>
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<td>10.31.2023</td>
<td>Raster analysis</td>
<td>Ch. 9, 10</td>
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<td>11.2.2023</td>
<td>term project requirements</td>
<td>8. Vector analysis</td>
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<td>11.7.2023</td>
<td>Surface data</td>
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<td>terrain analysis</td>
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<td>11.14.2023</td>
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<td>12.7.2023</td>
<td>Project poster presentation on D2L</td>
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Software:

ESRI ArcGIS Pro and there are 3 options accessing the software:

A. GIS labs in the Forestry building (lab session hours or other labs when there is not class in session);
B. [https://view.sfasu.edu/](https://view.sfasu.edu/). Your mySFA credential is needed to log in the VMware Horizon virtual machine. Select Forestry which has the same configuration as GIS labs in the Forestry building.
Course Requirements:
GISC 2301/GEOG 2320 utilizes a lot of hands-on learning in the GIS lab. At a minimum, students are expected to possess basic computer skills such as but not limited to file organization, zip file, MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.
There will be one midterm exam, five quizzes, eight lab assignments, and one term project. Students are required to work on a term project and submit a poster.
Asynchronous instruction: students need to spend 150 minutes to study GIS job market and requirements (for example: Indeed.com search for GIS) and to read peer-reviewed research articles in the area of GIS (for example: Google Scholar search for GIS) throughout the semester.

Term Project:
The project is intended to provide a deeper understanding of a GIS application through experience. Students will work individually or in groups of 2 on projects. The project should investigate a particular research problem using ArcGIS Pro. The project must be an original piece of work developed for this course. The project will be marked by a set of milestones from data collection, data management, data preprocessing, analysis and modeling, and final poster. More detailed guidelines and requirements on class projects will be provided in class. Students are encouraged to freely discuss their project ideas with the instructor. The poster should cover:

1. Title
2. Introduction: a brief description of the purpose(s), why the project is needed, the major problem it resolves, and the expected users and benefits.
3. Methods: data collection and what GIS techniques have been used
4. Output map(s).

Peer Project Review:
Students are required to comment on at least 4 term project posters (instructor will put all the project posters on D2L – Content after project submission). Please describe the Pros and Cons for each project. It will be graded based on how well professional knowledges are used to check other people’s work.

Grading Policy

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<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>EXAM</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUizzes (20 x 5)</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>TERM PROJECT</td>
<td>280</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAB ASSIGNMENTS (40 x 8)</td>
<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL POINTS</td>
<td>1000</td>
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Grading Scale:

- A: 900 – 1000
- B: 800 – 899
- C: 700 – 799
- D: 600 – 699
- F: 599 or less

Questions regarding lab/homework/quiz/exam grading must be asked within one week after the grade is published on D2L.
A class average will be computed and if warranted, a curve will be applied if the curve will result in a higher grade.

Class Policy
1. Attendance and class participation are required throughout the semester and it is taken randomly. Negative 20 points will be given for every missing lecture/lab without university acceptable reason.

2. Complete all lab assignments on specified dates. Late assignment will lose 20% of the credit each day late.

3. All students submitting identical lab assignments (in whole or in part) will receive a grade of zero for that lab.

4. All digitally submitted files should be named with your full name, take the instructor as the example, file names should be like “lab1_YourFullName”. If it is team work for the project, only one copy is needed and put both names in the file name.

5. Complete term project poster (PowerPoint file, NOT PDF) on time. No credit for late work as it is the end of the semester.

6. Quizzes are to be taken during required time. No make-up quizzes unless there is a valid university excuse (consult student handbook for guidelines).

7. Exams are to be taken during scheduled times. Make-up exams will be given to students with a valid university excuse (consult student handbook for guidelines).

8. There is no exception for the grading policy and the grading scale.

D2L

For D2L technical support, contact student support at d2l@sfasu.edu or 936-468-1919. Please visit https://www.sfasu.edu/d2lsupport/students for more information.

Academic Integrity (4.1)

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of
obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (5.5)**

Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the coursework because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to [https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf](https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf).

**Students with Disabilities**

To obtain disability-related accommodations, alternate formats, and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Responsible Use of Technology**

It is expected that all students will only use cell phones, PDAs, laptop computers, MP3 players and other technology outside of class time or when appropriate in class. Answering a cell phone, texting, listening to music or using a laptop computer for matters unrelated to the course may be grounds for dismissal from class or other penalties.

**Student Wellness and Well-Being**

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**

**The Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
- [www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)
- 936.468.7249
- dos@sfasu.edu

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic** Human Services, Room 202
- [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
- 936.468.1041

**The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.
To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
- Wellness Coaching
- Alcohol and Other Drug Education

[www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

**Crisis Resources:**

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**Syllabus Changes:**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary to this syllabus.