LRS GATEWAY
Fall 2006

GEOGRAPHY EXERCISE

A note about technology: This assignment requires that you visit a number of websites in order to learn about map projections. Depending on the type of computer, internet connection, internet browser, and security software you have, you might find it difficult to open some of these sites from your home computer. All of them can be accessed from the computers on campus. Therefore, if you encounter any technological problems, we strongly suggest you go to one of the computer labs on campus to complete the assignment. There are many open labs on campus; LRS Gateway in particular suggests its students use the computers in the Barbara Ann Ward Language Center, located on the third floor of Jerome Ritchfield Hall, in Room 316.

Your Task: You have been appointed to a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization committee charged with choosing a new world map for use by the agency (If you want to learn more about what UNESCO is and what it does, you can go to their website [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=29008&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html]
or download the brochure, *UNESCO: What it is, What it Does*
[http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001315/131585e.pdf].

Map choices involve complex decisions; you need to think about what the map will be used for, what kind(s) of information you must communicate, the compromises you are willing to make (since no map is completely "accurate"), the aesthetics of the map (since it will be displayed prominently in buildings, on websites, in reports, and other media), and the psychology of the map (because you want to make sure that people respond favorably to your map and pick up the intended information).

Completing this assignment will require individual online investigation, group collaboration (face-to-face or virtual), and a classroom presentation.

1. Each member of the group should visit one or more of these websites to learn more about how maps are made, how maps are used, and the general strengths and weaknesses of different map projections:

These two National Geographic sites together provide a basic introduction to map projections:
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/hall/index.html?node=20
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/features/2000/exploration/projections/index.html

This US Geological Survey website has a more detailed discussion of various map projections and what they are used for (it also has a glossary at the end, which might help you with some of the specialized vocabulary):
http://erg.usgs.gov/isb/pubs/MapProjections/projections.html

This site has lots of DETAIL on map properties (which are important in fitting your map to your purpose), the mathematics of cartography, different map projections, and map history.
http://www.progonos.com/furuti/MapProj/Normal/TOC/cartTOC.html

This site has a detailed discussion of the uses and functions of maps:
http://lilt.ilstu.edu/jrcarter/icamuc/mapuses.html

If you get REALLY excited and curious about maps, this site provides some historical background on cartography and map-making:
http://www.geography.hunter.cuny.edu/mp/mpbasics.html

2. Groups should then meet (face- to- face or in virtual space) in order to discuss their map selection and prepare their presentation. To do this:

2A. As a group, define the use(s) for your map

2B. As a group, choose a map projection based on how it will be used. In addition to the websites given above, these websites have large numbers of examples of map projections:

This site has the most discussion of the various projections, but it has the smallest selection:
http://www.colorado.edu/geography/gcraft/notes/mapproj/mapproj_f.html

The maps themselves on this site are easy to look at, but they include the associated mathematical formulas, which can make them daunting:
http://mathworld.wolfram.com/topics/MapProjections.html

This site has LOTS of maps, but it doesn't have a lot of discussion AND there are a lot of pop-ups:
http://www.staff.amu.edu.pl/~zbzw/glob/glob1.htm

2C. Develop a brief presentation that includes an example of the map projection chosen, an overview of the decision-making process (i.e., how the group applied the critical thinking strategies discussed at the beginning of the semester and during other subject matter discussions) and an explanation of why the properties of the chosen map projection are most appropriate for the articulated uses)

3. Presentations will be made to the rest of the class on the day indicated in your syllabus