

Humanities 101 (Hum101)
Winter 2011

Wednesdays, 10am to 12 noon
February 2 – April 13
The Learning Centre Literacy Association
at The Boyle Street Community Services Centre (10116 105 Ave.)

Exploring Edmonton: Introducing Geocaching for Storytelling

Course Instructors and Contacts

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Please feel free to contact Joanne with any questions or comments related to the course or to the Hum101 program.

Co-instructors:

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Course Description

What is Geocaching?

Geocaching (pronounced geo-caching) is a relatively new but popular outdoor activity that might best be described as a high-tech treasure hunt. Geocaching involves two separate parties, which are composed either of individuals or groups. One party hides a cache anywhere in the world and records the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates using a portable GPS (Global Positioning System) device. The cache is usually composed of a small plastic container that houses some small items such as toys or coins. The coordinates and related information regarding the location of the hidden cache are publicized, usually on internet sites such as geocaching.com. Geocachers search for these hidden caches using their own portable GPS devices, which we'll provide in the course, in conjunction with maps and clues, which we'll produce in the course. When they finally discover the cache, they may take a few of the items and leave a few different ones for future geocachers.

Essentially, people tell stories through geocaching. Geocaching is one way to tell a story and to show people something that is significant to you. As a geocacher, you make decisions about where you want to lead people, what you want to show them about a certain place or space, and what artifacts might represent that place or space.

This course will build on other Hum101 courses in which we asked questions about

Edmonton and how we find our places in the city. We all come to this city with different goals, histories, experiences, and perspectives that influence the way we experience Edmonton on a daily basis. What's your story of the city? What landmarks, parks, stores, restaurants, buildings, spaces, and activities define your experiences of Edmonton?

Course Objectives

In this course, our main goal is to build a geocache that conveys a meaningful story about some place or experience in the city. We will also work to find one another's cache using basic mapping and orienteering skills.

By the end of the course you will have:

- written a story about your experiences
- learned how to use a GPS device
- learned some basic mapping skills
- learned some basic orienteering skills
- developed a way to tell other people about geocaching
- practiced critical thinking and writing skills

Course Schedule

Please note, there may be minor changes made to the schedule throughout the term. You will be made aware of all changes.

The course divided into three modules:

- (A) Geocaching as Storytelling
- (B) Introduction to Mapping and Orienteering
- (C) Culminating Event (hiding and finding geocaches)

Week One	Module A: Geocaching as Storytelling
February 2	Introduction to Geocaching

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- Introduction to the course and to each other
- Introduction to geocaching
 - o What is geocaching? How do we do it? Why do people do this? Why would we do it?
 - o Why is a good idea for a course like this? Where did geocaching come from?
- Understanding the concept, the practice, the community, the history
- What kinds of stories we might tell through geocaching?
- Guest Speaker: Goldwin McEwen

Week Two
February 9 Storytelling

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- How are storytelling and geocaching linked?
- How do we tell stories through geocaching?
- What is the significance of what goes in the cache (the artifacts) to storytelling and location?
- How are stories expressed through artifacts?
- What will our geographical parameters be for the geocache?

- Writing and sharing our stories
- Moving toward consensus about our geographical parameters and the kinds of story or stories we'll tell (collective story, i.e., history of Boyle Street vs. individual stories)
- Decide on what kind of map we'll need for Week 3 and body storming exercise

Week 3
February 16 Storytelling Through Maps

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- Continue to develop story
- Body storming exercise
- Introduce/continue discussion of artifacts in preparation for Week 4

No Class February 23

Week 4
March 2 Artifacts for the Geocache

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- Talk about what could represent the story and location
- Brainstorm/compile a list of what's going to go into the geocaches
- Share and discuss list of artifacts

Week 5 Gathering Artifacts & Building the Cache
March 9

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- Acquire the artifacts
- Share and discuss the artifacts
- Build the geocaches
- By the end of this class, we should have the caches built!

Week 6	Module B: Introduction to Mapping & Orienteering
March 16	Introduction to Mapping

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- Introduce mapping, concept of power in map making, history of maps, kinds of maps, possibly demonstrate Hum101 Community Map on Google Earth
- Open Street Map as educational resource
- Possible exercise: map our daily routes, map an experience of the city
- In preparation for next week: possibly plant a geocache

Week 7	
March 23	Introduction to Orienteering

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- Learn basic wayfinding and map reading
- Practice using GPS unit and finding a geocache
- In preparation for next week: Brainstorm places to hide our caches
- Discuss final event: how should we involve the public?

Week 8	
March 30	Scout Locations for Geocache & Hide the Cache

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- We'll be outside for this class, actually scouting out locations to hide our geocaches and hiding them
- Possibly list the geocaches online (geocaching.com)
- Reminder about promoting the final event: bring friends and family!

Week 9	Module C: Culminating Event
April 6	Searching for the Geocaches

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- We'll be outside for this class too, searching for each other's geocaches

Week 10	
April 13	Wrapping Up & Reflecting

Activities, Themes, Key Questions

- Debrief and discussion with students, course evaluations and reflection
- What did you learn? What were the most valuable aspects of the course?