Project Guidelines

1. Remember that the point of your project is analysis and not just making a map!

2. Define the problem / question. Being graduate students, you are expected to pick an issue of some significance. Why is GIS an appropriate tool for approaching this issue?

3. What data did you use to answer the question? Why did you choose this data? Why did you think this data was important or relevant to the question?

4. Where did you get the data? (Must be more than one data layer!) What format was it in? Did you have to do any processing to make it usable? Are there any limitations to the data?

5. How did you combine the data? Why? If you do anything complex, think about adding a printout from Model Builder to illustrate. You do not, however, have to do anything complex! Just show us that you know how to combine 2+ layers of data.

6. You can include a data summary table, but you must also discuss what data you selected, WHY you selected it, any limitations of your data, and how you processed and/or combined the data. Do not use tables instead of discussing your choices and uses of data.

7. Do not misspell these words: "shapefile", "ArcGIS", "ArcGIS Online", "Excel"

8. If you use acronyms, by clear about what they mean. Don't assume that we know what "NPDES" means (although we do know that one).

9. Please use the words "buffer," "clip," "geocode," "intersect," and "join" if you used those techniques. It's distracting to read through a description of those techniques to try to figure out exactly what you did. You can still describe them, but make sure that you also use the appropriate GIS terms.

10.   Be careful with phrases like, "As can clearly be seen…" or "It is obvious…". Don't overstate the confidence of your conclusions.

11.   Include tables only if they summarize your data. Do not include tables that simply list your data records.

12.   How did any data limitations impact your analysis? If you could do this project with no resource limitations, what would you do differently? Why? What were the impacts of the accuracy of your data? This section is very important.

13.   Conclusion. What is the answer to your original problem/ question? Did you find what you expected to find? Or something quite the opposite? Finding out that you were wrong is perfectly okay! Your conclusion should be supported by a MAP. Include more than one if it helps you to illustrate your conclusion. Please include an electronic copy of your map (JPEG or PDF are fine).

14.   Conclusions section should be at least as long as your Intro section (minimum one page). Discuss what your map shows. Also, what are the implications of your conclusions? What you write at the end of your paper should be as strong as what you write at the beginning.

15.   Have someone proofread your paper to ensure that your reader understands what you are intending to say. THIS IS REQUIRED. Include the name of your proofreader.

16.   Last, but far from least, check out the map tips page.

* Writing more pages of text or doing more than one map does not necessarily make your project better!!! We're looking for QUALITY, not quantity. Write and map only as much as you need to present your problem and conclusion _well_. Show us that you "get" what we've been talking about and what you've been doing in the tutorials. **Your written paper should be no more than ten pages. Less is fine as long as you have covered everything appropriately**.