

M.E. JOHN SEMINAR SERIES



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The Primordial Ooze of Interpersonal Geography

Dr. Clio Andris joined Penn State as an Assistant Professor of Geography in 2014. Her research interests include geographic information systems (GIS), social networks, telecommunications, institutions, and urban planning. Her informal research interests include robots and romance. She is the director of the Friendly Cities Lab, under the GeoVISTA Center, and has been sponsored by The Hershey Company and The Knight Foundation. Before joining Penn State, she was at Los Alamos National Laboratory, The Santa Fe Institute, and the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART). She holds a PhD in Urban Information Systems from MIT, where she was a National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NDSEG) Fellow and a member of the *Senseable* City Lab.

Abstract: Relationships and social networks are tied to urban and rural geographic space: friends need places to meet, extended families may move to a new location together, and information flows through masses of e-mail between cities via professional contacts. Yet, our geographic models often lack relationship data, leaving us without a clear understanding of their interdependence. For instance, social capital indicators are not typically collected as part of our Census—despite repeated evidence that relationships are a sign of resilience, support and community sustainability. In addition, the locations of personal relationships are not used in urban planning models—although the placement of transportation infrastructure and institutions affects social health and well-being.

This talk will present a scaling framework for studying interpersonal geography with the goal of amassing data to answer theoretical and policy questions for 21st century problems. It outlines some promising research in the domain of modeling geospatial relationships and introduces case studies that expand our view of how relationships and geographic space/place are intertwined. These case studies will show how different types of romantic relationships, sourced via Yelp and surveys, use the built environment; how Big Brothers Big Sisters mentorship data provide a new perspective on Millennials, urbanization and segregation; and early results from the Neighborhood Connectivity Survey, which distinguishes how residents of small towns vs. urban areas cultivate local and distant social support.



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Friday February 2, 2018
2:30–3:30 pm
5 Ferguson Building