This second special-theme newsletter (which fills the space of the March 2019 edition) features all of my teaching work related to maps since Christmas. *PS499 Transit Maps: Past, Present & Future* ran again at the University of Essex, and there was also a week of teaching in Austria …

### Teaching & Web Page News

- *Transit Maps: Past, Present & Future* has now completed its third run: I always say that a new module needs three presentations before it settles down and runs smoothly. With all the recent developments in usability testing, this topic has now been expanded to a double-lecture, and is working much more comfortably. There is also a completely new lecture: *Design as Research*, which investigates how the creation of maps themselves can contribute to our understanding of usability. The full set of updated lectures is online on my website. The course will be taking a break for 2019/2020 but should be running again in the academic year 2020/2021.

- Straight after the end of term, I headed for the New Design University (NDU) at St Pölten in Austria, where I had been invited by Enrico Bravi to co-present a four-day workshop on schematic maps to twenty-one students on the Information Design program. This was a new departure for me, and an intensive few days for everyone.

### Maps of the Month: Visions of Vienna

The Vienna U-Bahn network is a favourite test-bench for researchers into automated schematic map design, and has featured as Map of the Month in my very first newsletter (back in November 2013) as well as Newsletter 30 and Newsletter 42. It is a relatively small network, but with an interesting shape, and mapping it is therefore an ideal student project when time is short, especially when the city of Vienna is right next door.

The workshop started in the first morning with preliminary lectures, and then students were given their brief: to produce a map of the Vienna U-Bahn network, being as creative with the design rules as they liked, but aiming for a map that they believed would be easy to use. To make this more interesting, future extensions still under discussion were to be included (but the S-Bahn commuter lines would have added too much complexity for so short a time, and so they were left out). Students were each given a topographical map of the Vienna network, an Illustrator file containing the station names, and two-and-a-half days in the classroom to complete the task. The time was divided into a day of prototype sketching – using
computer software often channels people into implementing maps in certain ways; hand-sketching gets away from this – the remaining time for implementing a computer version of the chosen prototype. Rising to the challenge, the result was a splendid array of diverse solutions. With the 2nd Schematic Mapping workshop taking place a few miles away the very next week, students were invited to vote for three maps to showcase their skills at the exhibition there. The designs that they chose are the Maps of the Month here.

Not surprisingly, several students created well-executed octolinear maps. The one created by Lena Kralicek (previous page) is nicely softened with rounded station marks and ends to the Dunube waterways, which might have helped it to stand out from the rest. Madita Ullmann was the only student to attempt a hexalinear map (above), and at one point she almost gave up and started again with an octolinear version. I’m glad she persevered, because the result is a very distinctive, clever, well-balanced design. Finally, the winning map was another unique concept. Vanessa Sikora used only circular arcs for her design (below), and the parallel curves of U1 and U6 are rather lovely. The students began the workshop skeptical of curvilinear maps, and voted for this design on the basis she had managed to convince them that such maps might be viable after all.

If any readers teach at design school and might be interested in holding a similar workshop, then do get in touch. Thanks to NDU and Enrico Bravi for inviting and hosting me for, what proved to be, and illuminating and enjoyable week. And, of course, thanks to the students, who worked so conscientiously for the short time we were together. With so many other interesting designs created at the workshop, I could have easily taken the lazy way out, with Vienna featuring as Map of the Month all the way to autumn!

The third special-edition newsletter reports on the Schematic Mapping Workshop at TU Wien. To receive this and future monthly mailings, subscribe www.tubemapcentral.com

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