

PO 397: Crisis Mapping, New Media & Politics  
Sample Questions for Group Discussion  
(Based on the readings from Week 3 & 4 in my **course syllabus**)  
By Jen Ziemke, February 2011.

I. Let's talk about Participation and Participatory Culture.

\*How much do you feel you participate in a local dialogue/community action now? In what ways do you participate (bring your voice, vote, advocate, offer assistance)?

\*Now answer the question: How much do you feel you participate in a global kind of dialogue/community action?

\*What might enhance your participation, or encourage you to do so if you don't already feel you "participate"?

\*Do you feel anything has changed even in your life time with respect to how you can "participate" in a global or local dialogue?

\*What is the role of technology and new media in enhancing or restricting your participation as part of a community?

\*Do you think Crisis Mapping offers a way for people to "participate" or share their views? How deep is this kind of participation?

\*Do you think the creation of global participatory cultures will deepen existing democratic values or even help create new democracies? Is global, participatory culture that is networked potentially revolutionary?

\*Brainstorm: Does the traditional "top-down" education model need to be changed for this class in particular? How might I make the class more participatory?

\*Networks of diasporas feel especially connected with folks "back home" especially during a crisis. How might we engage diaspora communities to help in crisis response during a disaster? What moral or ethical implications might arise for doing so?

II. Let's watch a video by RSA Animate-Drive

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc&feature=youtube\\_gdata\\_player](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6XAPnuFjJc&feature=youtube_gdata_player). While you watch it, think about why you do what you do and what motivates you.

\*What motivates your actions on a daily basis? How well does the video explain your own personal motivations in life?

\*What does the video say is the traditional (incorrect) assumption about what motivates individual behavior?

\*And what is the "surprising truth" that they assert explains human motivation? How are people actually motivated?

\*Applying the theory, would you suggest to the Crisis Mappers Standby Task Force Team that they don't need to find funding to pay their volunteers? Why or why not? Should money be used as a motivator in this case?

\*Reflect on your ideal job/work after you graduate. Would you want your work to be "self-directed" most of the time, much of the time, almost never, or never...? Why?

\* How can we make this class more "self-directed" and "purpose driven" yet still retain some kind of coherence and an inner core?

III. Discuss: what do you think Clay Shirky really means by the term "cognitive surplus?" Do you think his explanation better explains why people are "doing things for someone else for free?"

IV. \*How would you define crowdsourcing? (a new word)  
(\*What is a crowd?)

\* How would you define Crowdfunding? (an even newer word)

\* What is meant by the term “Curation” or “curating crisis map data?” Why do we need a curator of this content?

\* “Who” should be the one to curate Crisis Map data? Why?

\* Is “curation” the same thing as “verification” or different? Why?

\* How might we verify information coming in from a crowd?

\* What is meant by the term “socially distributed curation?”

(View Clay Shirky on Institutions vs Networks) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPQViNNOAkW>

\*Clay Shirky says that if we want something to happen that requires people to work together, our default stance is to organize a formal committee, council, organization, or institution to do the job. What does he say is the problem with these kinds of hierarchically organized models?

\*What does he mean when he says “tagging” photos is a “cooperative infrastructure” that works remarkably well? How did that practice emerge?

\*How did the practice of tagging and using hashtags emerge? What does this process of “emergent behavior” look like?

\* If you wanted to get a task done and needed coordinated action, assuming Shirky’s assertions are true, what would you need to do in order to get the “cooperative behavior” to happen? How would you encourage it?