

Geography 766

Geographical Inquiry and Analysis

Spring 2016

Fridays 1:15-3:15pm

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Office Hours: T 11am-12 p.m. R 1-2pm,
or by appointment

Course Description

This course is open to first-year Masters students in Geography and undergraduate majors with junior standing pursuing the “Honors in the Major” designation. The course is designed to assist participants in developing their research proposals (for Masters or Honors Theses). Course activities will include a mix of discussions, in-class presentations, and written assignments. Together these activities will provide participants with guidance and feedback on the steps leading to a final thesis proposal. Topics covered include the development of research questions; research ethics; research design and methodologies; proposal format and preparation; and research planning. While research design and methodology issues are considered in this class, their treatment is necessarily broad and general, focusing on overall research design issues to ensure that the mix of methodologies utilized will sufficiently address the research problem. To learn about more specific research methodologies, students are urged to work with advisor(s) and take relevant methods courses. Materials to be examined in the course include previously completed master’s theses, previous proposals for thesis research, and relevant scholarly publications and resources in geography.

While the primary goal of the semester is the development of strong M.S. and Honors Thesis proposals, the skills you develop in this course will benefit you throughout a range of career trajectories.

My Role as Instructor

My goal is to assist, along with your advisor, with the development of your research ideas into an interesting and achievable design to the best of my ability. I bring to the course a passion for supporting you all in this endeavor and considerable experience as a “people-and-environment” geographer with application experience in Cart/GIS. As such, I know enough about each of your fields to ask informed, nonspecialist questions. I will do so in the spirit that all successful proposals should be understandable and persuasive to geographers outside of your specialty area (e.g. NSF review panels). This said, the advising responsibility for your proposal rests with your advisor (and committee members). If suggestions that I happen to deviate from those of your advisor, please let me know.

Course Requirements

The primary requirement is the completion of an advisor-approved proposal for thesis research. The following written work building toward a final proposal will include: a 2-5 page literature review plan (updated from 765 assignment and due January 29); a 6-8 page preliminary proposal (due February 26), 2-3 page research questions-to-design essay (due March 18); a full-length draft proposal for the seminar (due April 22), and a final, advisor-approved proposal (due May 14). Students are also required to give an oral presentation of the proposal and are expected to participate fully in each of the weekly seminars. Readings and short writing assignments are scheduled for most weeks. Several readings are chosen according to student interests. Undergraduate honor’s thesis students are expected to prepare a seven-page, advisor-approved proposal by May 14.

Course schedule by week (some details might change for Weeks 9-12)

Week	Date	Topic	Required reading	Assignment due (by start of class)
1	Jan 22	Introduction. Tips on finding and organizing references, Tom Tews, Head Librarian, Geography Library	None.	Come prepared to give your 'elevator' speech, that is 2-3 min. about your academic background, professional interests & semester goals.
2	Jan 29	Choosing research topic and conceptual framework(s)	Honors students: Booth, W.C., G.G. Colomb, and J.M. Williams. 2008. Chapters 3-5 in <i>The Craft of Research</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 3 rd Edition M.S. students: The Thesis Whisperer, 2010. 5 ways to tame the literature dragon. The Thesis Whisperer, 2011. The literature review: Knowing where to stop.	M.S. students: upload literature review plan into dropbox. Honors students: upload questionnaire into dropbox <i>Optional</i> : Proposal for Graduate School's Research Travel Award due on January 31 st (also April 30 th – see below)
3	Feb 5	Reflections on prior thesis.	M.S. students: Review 3 theses, 1 in depth Honors students: Review one thesis in depth. All come prepared to share thoughtful reflections on 1. All upload into dropbox one page of key points & questions about 1 thesis.	
4	Feb 12	Research ethics – HSP submission.		Complete CITI human subjects training (forward MT proof of completion). If appropriate, set target date for human subjects protocol review.
5	Feb 19	Insights from prior proposals	M.S. students: Review 3 prior M.S. thesis proposals, 1 in depth Honors students: Review one honors thesis proposal in depth Upload into dropbox one page of key points &/or questions about your in-depth review of one proposal.	
6	Feb 26	Insights from prior proposals (cont)		M.S. students: Write a 6-8 page preliminary proposal (all but Methods section). Upload into dropbox Honors students: TBA
7	March 4	Discussion and peer feedback on preliminary proposals.	M.S. students: Read and provide feedback on a peer's preliminary proposal. Honors students: TBA <i>Optional</i> : 500-word proposal for Trewartha Graduate Research Award due on March 7 th	
8	March 11	Qualitative, quantitative & mixed method approaches.	Peer's preliminary proposal (cont).	M.S. students: Provide peer (classmate) feedback on preliminary proposal (cont)
9	March 18	Choosing methods for your research.	TBA	M.S. students: Write a questions-to-design essay. Honors students: Write a 4-6 page preliminary proposal (all but Methods section). Both upload to dropbox

10	March 25	SPRING BREAK – No Class		
11	April 1	AAG MEETINGS – No Class		
12	April 8	Discussion and peer feedback on research design. Planning your research activities. Tips from other grads.	TBA (Methods modules)	
13	April 15	Planning your research activities	TBA (Methods modules)	
14	April 22	Oral presentations (if necessary)		M.S. Students: Write a full-length DRAFT proposal. Upload into dropbox
15	April 29	Oral presentations.		Honors students: Write a full-length DRAFT proposal. Upload into dropbox Present proposal in class (25 minutes including time for questions). <i>Optional:</i> Proposal for Graduate School's Research Travel Award due on January 31 st (also April 30 th – see below)
16	May 6	Oral presentations		Present proposal in class (25 minutes including time for questions)
	May 13	FINALS - No Class.		Submit advisor-approved proposal by 5/14.

Grading policy:

You'll be graded on 210-220 points (M.S. students) or 200-210 points (Honor students).

55 pts for 'participation' Basically...*How much did you enrich the learning experience of your fellow 766-ers?*

25 pts for attendance. (You can't enhance your peers' learning experience if you are not present!) One absence during course of semester is ok (you can still get full 25 pts). >1 absence: -5 pts per session missed. Come talk to me asap if you anticipate >1 absence.

30 pts for quality of engagement in discussions. Guide (approx.): **30 pts** for insightful comments, suggestions and/or good questions at every session, student demonstrates s/he has read assignment material and thought about it. **25 pts** insightful comments, suggestions or good questions at more than half of every session. **20 pts** (same as above at half of sessions). **15 pts** insightful comments or good questions at fewer than half of sessions. Come talk to me asap if you are concerned about engaging in group discussions.

70-80 (Honors students) or 80-90 (M.S. students) points for individual work.

Pass/fail 10 pts for each of these assignments (or alternate Honors assignment, as appropriate)

- a. literature review plan (M.S. students)/research topic questionnaire (Honors students)
- b. review 3 Geography thesis projects, discuss 1 in class & upload 1 page of key points

- c. complete CITI human subjects training (not required for those absolutely sure they will not engage with human subjects!, these individuals will be graded on 10 pts less)
- d. review 3 Geography proposals, discuss 1 in class & upload 1 page of key points
- e. write a preliminary proposal (all but Methods section)
- f. Review a classmate's preliminary proposal or (alternate assignment) in writing and orally in seminar (email your feedback to your classmate and cc me)
- g. write a 2-3 page research questions-to-design essay (M.S. students)
- h. write a full-length draft proposal
- i. present proposal or research report in class (15 minute presentation, 10 minute Q&A)

75 points for the final proposal (in consultation with thesis advisor)

Late policy: for all assignments, 2 pt per day deducted if turned in late w/o my prior approval. Exception: no late penalty if your advisor is late providing his/her approval on your final proposal. However, I can't give you credit for seminar until your advisor signals his/her approval.

Recommended Texts (Not Required)

- Becker, Howard. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **(ON HARDCOPY RESERVE)**
- Booth, W.C., G.G. Colomb, and J.M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 3rd Edition **(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)**
- Castree, N., D. Demeritt, D. Liverman & B. Rhoads (Eds.), 2009. *A Companion to Environmental Geography*. Chichester, West Sussex (United Kingdom): Wiley-Blackwell. **(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)**
- Cronon, W. et al. 2009. *Learning to do Historical Research. A Primer for Environmental Historians and Others*. **(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)**
- Castree, N.; Kitchin, R. and A. Rogers. 2013 *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers. **(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)**
- Locke, Lawrence F., Waneen Wyrck Spirduso, and Stephen J. Silverman. 2007. Fifth Edition. *Proposals that Work*. Newbury Park: Sage. **(available at College and Memorial Libraries)**
- Schimmel, J. 2012. *Writing Science. How to Write Papers that Get Cited and Proposals that get Funded*. Oxford: Oxford University Press **(in Limnology Library)**
- Thomas, David S. G., and Andrew Goudie. 2009. *The Dictionary of Physical Geography*. 3rd ed. Oxford ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers. **(ON ELECTRONIC RESERVE)**
- Turabian, Kate L. 1996. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th ed. U. Chicago. **(ON HARDCOPY RESERVE, 7th Edition available at College and Memorial Libraries)**

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Books and Materials in the Regular Collection of the Geography Library (unless otherwise noted)

- Abler, Ronald F., Marcus, Melvin G., and Judy M. Olson. 1992. Geography's inner worlds: Pervasive themes in contemporary American geography. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Brewer, James G. 1978. The literature of geography: A guide to its organization and use. London: Clive Bailey.
- Browning, Clyde E. 1970. Bibliography of dissertations in geography; American and Canadian Universities. University of North Carolina, Department of Geography, 1901-1969. (Studies in geography; 1, 1970). 1969-1982. (Studies in geography; 18, 1983).
- Cloke, Paul, Chris Philo, and David Sadler. 1991. Approaching human geography: An introduction to contemporary theoretical debates. New York: Guilford Press.
- Cook, Ian, and Mike Crang. 1995. Doing ethnographies. Institute of British Geographers.
- Creswell, J.W. 2003. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks. (College H62C6963 2003)
- Dahlberg, Kenneth A., and John W. Bennett, eds. 1986. Natural resources and people: Conceptual issues in interdisciplinary research. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Douglas, Ian, and Richard Huggett. 1996. Companion encyclopedia of geography: the environment and humankind. London: Routledge.
- DeLyser, Dydia, and Paul F. Starrs. 2001. Doing Fieldwork. Special Issues of The Geographical Review (91:1-2).
- Earle, Carville, Kent Mathewson, and Martin S. Kenzer. 1996. Concepts in human geography. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Egan, Dave, and Evelyn Howell. 2001. The historical ecology handbook: A restorationists' guide to reference ecosystems. Washington: Island Press.
- Flowerdew, R. and D. Martin, Eds. (2005). Methods in Human Geography. London, Longman.
- Fotheringham, A. Stewart, Chris Brunsdon, and Martin Charlton. 2000. Quantitative geography: perspectives on spatial data analysis. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications,.
- Gaile, Gary L, and Cort J. Willmott. 1989. Geography in America. Columbus: Merrill Publishing.
- Geography Library (UW—Madison). 1999. Guide to geographical resources. Electronic database at the Web Site of the Geography Library.
- Harris, Chauncey D. 1985. Geographical bibliography for American libraries. Washington, D. C.: American Association of Geographers.
- Hart, C. 1998. Doing a Literature Review. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks. (Mem H62 H2566 1998)
- Hay, I. Ed. 2005 Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Johnston, R. J., Derek Gregory, and David M. Smith. 1994. Dictionary of human geography, 3rd. ed. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Reference.
- Kenzer, Martin S., ed. 1989. On becoming a professional geographer. Columbus: Merrill.
- Kitchin, R. and N. Tate 2000. Conducting Research in Human Geography. London, Prentice Hall.
- Lindsay, James M. 1997. Techniques in human geography. London: Routledge.
- Martin, Geoffrey J., and Preston E. James. 1993. All possible worlds: a history of geographical ideas, 3rd ed. New York: Wiley, 1993.
- Massey, Doreen, and Richard Meegan, eds. 1985. Politics and Method. London: Methuen.
- Mayhew, Susan. 1997. Dictionary of geography, 2nd ed. Oxford; New York.
- National Research Council. 1997. Rediscovering geography: new relevance for science and society. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Robinson, Guy M. 1998. Methods and techniques in human geography. New York: Wiley.
- Robson, Elisabeth, and Katie Wills, eds. 1994. Postgraduate fieldwork in developing areas: A rough guide. Monograph No. 8, Development Areas Research Group, Institute of British Geographers.
- Rodgers, Alisdair, Heather Vilas, and Andrew Goudie. 1992. The students' companion to geography. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Przeworski, Adam, and Frank Salomon. 1988. On the art of writing proposals: Some candid suggestions for applicants to Social Science Research Council competitions. New York: Social Science Research Council.
- Sayer, Andrew. 1992. Method in social science. Second Edition. London: Routledge.
- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 1995. Basics of qualitative research. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Stuart, Merrill M. 1973. Bibliography of master's theses in geography: American and Canadian Universities. Tualatin, OR: Geographic and Area Study Publications.