

Geography 765
Geographical Inquiry and Analysis: An Introduction
Fall 2015 Syllabus

Coordinator: Professor Lisa Naughton
Rm. 355 Science Hall
Email: naughton@geography.wisc.edu; Tel: 608-262-4846
Office hours: Wednesdays, 11-1

Class: Fridays 2:20-3:10 pm in 350 Science Hall

This 1 credit course is designed to introduce incoming geography graduate students to the research community within the Department of Geography, to situate Madison geographers within the broader realm of geography as a discipline, and to help you begin to articulate your own research interests within these contexts. Please note that Geog 765 is not designed to provide a 'foundational' course in geographic thought and practice – this would be impossible to do in one class, and even less so in a 1 Cr class.

During the semester, faculty from each subfield will take turn presenting detailed but accessible research talks, which will be followed by subfield-specific panel discussions. The 765-based research talks & panels will be stand-alone and not directly linked to the Yi-Fu Tuan Lecture Series (which runs Fridays 3:30-5:00 pm, and which you are advised to attend).

Please note that it is critically important for you to speak up and not feel shy or concerned about raising difficult questions, or indeed what you might feel is a naïve question. By design Geography 765 is supposed to stretch every person's capabilities as it sprawls across the diverse subfields that we stitch together and deem 'Geography.' Each class is only 50 minutes long so if you want to ask a question or make a point, please don't hold back!

You are all expected to attend each class meeting. Please use our weekly meetings to think about the following questions:

- Is there a distinct "geographical approach" to research?
- What are differences in the explanatory foci, framing of research questions, and methodological commitments of the different subfields? What constitutes 'evidence' in the different subfields?
- What are the crosscutting problems, themes and issues that all geographers engage?
- How do you see yourself as a professional situated in this complex disciplinary landscape? What types of fruitful engagements have you made with Geography in the past, or would like to make in the future?

For those of you that are entering the M.S. program, you will be expected to develop a thesis proposal by the end of the spring semester (a graded product for Geography 766). Therefore, it is not too early for you to start thinking about your area of research and possible research questions. To spur you on in this endeavor, you will complete four assignments for this seminar:

ASSIGN #1. Questionnaire about developing your research project (1-2 pages, Pass/Fail, due Oct 16)

ASSIGN #2. A ~4 double-spaced page DRAFT of your pre-proposal (see assign#4 below, Pass/Fail, due Nov 13)

ASSIGN #3. 1 page (~350 words) of feedback for your peer on his/her draft preproposal (Pass/Fail due Nov 20)

ASSIGN #4. An 8-10 double-spaced page 'pre-proposal' (graded, due Dec 11th) that:

Presents a research topic;

Poses two or three research questions (sub-questions are permitted) related to that topic;

Provides an abbreviated, preliminary review of literature relevant to the research questions;

Provides a plan for how you will narrow down your research choices/options.

This 'pre-proposal' (assign #4) will be shared with your thesis advisor. It is intended to motivate you to begin thinking about possible research questions. The sooner you force yourself to consider the 'research-ability' of topics/questions, the more success you will have in developing a research program. This said, you will have the flexibility to choose a different research topic up until mid-way through the Spring Semester.

New PhD students are also expected to develop a pre-proposal (due on Dec 11th).

I will offer feedback on your draft pre-proposal as well your final version. In addition, please come and see me during the semester to discuss your evolving research interests. I can point you to resources and other faculty that can help you in the difficult process of narrowing down your interests to something that can be effectively studied in a timely fashion. Faculty and other graduate students will prove very helpful in this process so don't be shy – seek them out, ask questions, and push them for the information you need to develop your research program!

Grading:

Your final grade will be determined based on a total of 80 possible points:

Participation	25 points total (15 pts on quality of participation... <i>How much did you enhance the learning experience of other seminar participants?</i> 10 pts on attendance... <i>You can't enhance seminar if you are not present. One absence is expected. Please let me know if you need to miss more than class</i>).
Assign. #1	5 points (pass/fail)
Assign. #2	10 points (pass/fail)
Assign. #3	5 points (pass/fail)
Assign. #4	35 points (standard grades, A-F)

Late Point Policy:

Two points deducted per day late. Please contact me >1 week before the deadline if you need an extension on an assignment.

Finally, please see the attached schedule.