

Geography 2251 (Winter 2013)

Instructor: Dr. Karen Peterson
Lecture: W/F 8:30 – 9:30
Lab: Th/Fr 10:30 – 12:30
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Course Description: The material in this course serves as an introduction to the philosophical and methodological traditions of geographical inquiry. Its purpose is to examine its historical development, concepts and practices including how geographers interpret information. The significance of research design and the application of qualitative and quantitative research methods will be covered along with the various approaches used to collect, analyze, display and communicate information. Throughout the course, theory and practice will be intertwined through lectures, guest speakers, videos, and lab assignments.

Introduction: Geography 2251 provides insight into the many and varied approaches of geographical inquiry. The focus is on the discipline of geography, its traditions (historically, and currently) and its association to related disciplinary knowledge and understanding. The workload and expectations for excellence in this course reflect the importance of learning these inquiry and interpretational tools in order to take the first step towards an Honour's project, and potentially, a deeper research career. This course will begin to facilitate your growth as a critical, professional geographer.

Aim: By the end of this course, successful students should understand:

- The nature of geography; its historical development approach and practice
- The methods and tools of geographical inquiry
- The practice of geographical interpretation
- The link between clear thinking and clear communications
- Considerations for performing ethical and safe research in geography

Successful students will also gain technical skills in:

- Research design (Conceptualization and implementation)
- Conducting literature reviews
- Applying qualitative and quantitative research methods
- The use of various research tools
- Written communication and presentation

You should emerge from this class with the ability to participate in conversations about geography at an academic and professional level. This means that you should be able familiar and comfortable with the language, terminology, and theories used by academics and professionals in various contexts. You may emerge from this course with concrete ideas for further, advanced research at the senior undergraduate level, for example, formulating a plan to conduct an Honour's thesis.

Course textbook (Mandatory):

Clifford, N., French, S., & Valentine, G. (Eds.) (2010) *Key Methods in Geography (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. *Note: You must bring this text to labs and tutorials.*

Course materials (Recommended):

- Department of Geography *Thesis Manual*. Found here: <http://geography.lakeheadu.ca/thesis.html>
- Lakehead University Ethics Policy.
- NSERC Tri-Council Policies -- Ethical Conduct Regarding Research Involving Humans
- Philip’s (2008). *Oxford New Concise World Atlas*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- American Psychological Association. (2010). *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN 9781433805622
- At various times over the term, material will be posted to the course Moodle/WebCt sites. It is your responsibility to refer to these materials and further reading in order to contribute to class discussions and on assignments.

Student Workload and Expectations:

Assignments	Grade percentage	Due dates
5 laboratory assignments, each covering two to three chapters from textbook	Some labs are worth 5% while others are worth 10% to a total of 50%	Due throughout the course All labs will be completed in groups of two. Choose your partner wisely.
One midterm examination*	20%	March 1, 2013
One final exam examination*	30%	TBD

*You must pass the examinations (combined mark of 25/50 on exams) in order to pass the course regardless of your marks on laboratory assignments.

Notes on workload: You should be doing at least 4-5 hours of good quality reading and class *preparation* per week. Laboratory and examination preparation is not included in this estimate. Not all topics covered in the lectures are covered in laboratory exercises, tutorials, or readings. You are responsible for being familiar with all the information covered in the readings, textbook, labs, and lectures. A mix of questions is used on the examinations. My advice is to plan your term carefully: expect to be busy and working diligently on the labs to help prepare you for the examinations.

Marking: The laboratory instructor(s) and teaching assistants will undertake the marking of laboratory assignments and the grading of portions of the examinations. The course instructor marks the detailed questions on the examination. In addition to grammar and style (discussed below), you are marked on critical thought, internal logic, clarity of data presentation, and the number or carefully considered academic sources (you should make yourself familiar early on with the top-ranked geographical and environmental studies journals and publications – the first lab helps you get started)..

Laboratory marking: You begin each assignment with a perfect mark and each mistake counts for up to one point. Since there are only a limited number of marks per lab, a few spelling or grammatical slips can cost you a passing grade. Edit carefully. The standards for this class are in line with standards for professional geographical employment, which allow for a narrow window of performance (maps, reports, or other productions released to the public with mistakes can be costly and teachers working to develop the minds of the future also need to ensure precise communication in terms of speaking and writing).

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

No plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Please see the Lakehead University policy:
<http://mycoursecalendar.lakeheadu.ca/pg39.html>

Course Schedule: This schedule is subject to change. It should serve as a guide for your reading and lecture preparation.

Date	Topic	Required Readings
January 9 & 11, 2013	Introduction – The Context of Geographic Research Philosophical Frameworks and Historical Development Approaches Research Design Strategies of Inquiry Themes in Geography	Chapters 1 Getting Started In Geographical Research Assignment #1 – Article re: Themes 5%
January 16 & 18, 2013	Communication Skills	Chapters 31, 32 Writing Essays, Reports, Dissertations Understanding Assessments
January 23 & 25, 2013	Basic Research Methods Literature Reviews Making Use of Secondary Data Finding Historical Sources Assignment #1 due – 5%	Chapters 2, 5, 7 Lab – Tour of Library Assignment #2 – Conducting a Literature Review – 5%
January 30/Feb 1, 2013	Research Considerations Ethical Practice in Geographical Research Health & Safety in the Field Cross Cultural Research Assignment #2 – due – 5%	Chapter 3, 4, 12 Lab – Working in Different Cultures Additional: Lakehead University Ethics Policies and Tri-Council Policies – with a focus on Chapter 9 - Research with Aboriginal groups
February 6 & 8, 2013	Qualitative Methods Conducting Questionnaires Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Groups Internet Mediated Research	Chapters 6, 8, 11 Assignment #3 assigned – Semi-Structured Interviews 5%

Date	Topic	Required Readings
February 13 & 15, 2013	Qualitative Methods Participant Observation Participatory Action Research Diaries and Experiential Methods Assignment #3 – due – 5%	Chapters 9, 13, 14 Lab – PAR
February 20 & 22, 2013	Representing & Interpreting Qualitative Data Coding Transcripts & Diaries Analyzing Historical/Archival Sources Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis	Chapters 21, 27, 28, Lab - Analyzing Assignment #4 -- 10% - Coding
February 27, 2013	Representing & Interpreting Qualitative Data Analyzing Cultural Texts Interpreting Visual Imagery	Chapters 29, 30 Lab – visual imagery
March 1, 2013	Mid Term Test	
March 6 & 8, 2013	Quantitative Methods Historical Information – Palaeo & Historical Data Sources Field work - Making Observations & Taking Measurements Sampling in Geography Assignment #4 due	Chapters 15, 16, 17, Assignment #5 - Preparing a research proposal -- 20%
March 13 & 15, 2013	Quantitative Methods Analyzing a Natural System Numerical Modeling Using Remote Sensing	Chapters 18, 19, 20
March 20 & 22, 2013	Representing & Interpreting Quantitative Data Data Handling & Presentation Using Statistics An intro to Geostatistics	Chapters 21, 23, 24

Date	Topic	Required Readings
March 27 & 29, 2013	Representing & Interpreting Quantitative Data Mapping and Graphicacy Using GIS	Chapters 22, 25 Structured Criticism
April 3 & 5, 2013	Summary/Course Evaluations Assignment #5 due – 20%	
April 10, 2013	Examinations	