

GEOGRAPHY FIELD METHODS

GEOGRAPHY 3255 – FALL 2012

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Calendar Description:

An introduction to field methods used by Geographers through a series of off-campus labs, field trips and weekend field excursions. Topics covered will vary from year to year, dependent on the expertise of the course instructors, but will include physical, human and environmental aspects of Geography. An extra course fee will be charged to cover travel and accommodation costs. Students will be required to have personal gear and equipment necessary to carry out field work. These equipment needs will be posted on the Department's website from year to year.

Course Description (Fall 2012):

This course will provide the opportunity for students to learn and practice methods of collecting information in the field. Students will conduct exercises on GPS data collection, stream monitoring and assessment, vegetation monitoring and assessment, map and compass techniques, topo-climate assessment, identification and description of surficial materials along the north shore of Lake Superior, and qualitative data collection.

<i>Special notes:</i> (1) Field trips will typically run on Friday afternoons. There are two planned day-long Saturday fieldtrips on September 22 nd and October 20 th .
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Prerequisites:

Completion of the second year of an Honours Program in Geography or permission of the Department.

Course Objectives:

The main intent of this course is to expose students to some of the field methods employed by Geographers. Geography is a broad discipline and, as such, Geographers make use of a wide range of field methods in their research. The course topics will be determined by the complement of faculty involved in teaching the course, but they will come from both Physical Geography and Human Geography. The course this year includes four (4) half-day field labs, and two (2) daylong fieldtrips, as well as the associated preparatory lecture time (see course schedule). Students will learn all aspects of carrying out successful field-based projects

including: planning and logistics; safety issues in fieldwork; use and care of field equipment; taking good field notes; and analysis and reporting. The course is intended to give you a greater appreciation for what aspect of Geographical fieldwork you may want to pursue in upper level courses or an undergraduate thesis, at graduate school or at a professional level.

Course Organization:

<i>activity</i>	<i>day & time</i>	<i>room</i>
lectures	Wednesdays 3:30-5:20	RC-2003
labs	Fridays 12:30-4:30	RC-2003
fieldtrips	Saturdays Sept 22 nd & Oct 20 th	<i>tba</i>

The course schedule outlines the course meetings throughout the fall term. For each field lab or trip, there will usually be one preparatory lecture period. The lectures are intended to provide the necessary preparation for the field components of the course, and therefore your attendance at these is essential for the proper function of this course. Occasionally, a second lecture may be required. **You are encouraged to pay close attention to the course schedule provided below.** These are mandatory course elements, so make the necessary arrangements to be available on these dates as there is no opportunity to make up a missed class or activity.

Course Grading:

Deliverables related to each field module (field lab or fieldtrip) are at the discretion of the individual faculty member leading that part of the course (as noted on the schedule). These may include but are not limited to: field notes; field journals; lab reports involving post-field data analysis; oral presentations in class; and post-field laboratory analysis. For Fall 2012, final grades will be based on an equal weighting of all assigned field modules. ***Alternatives for absence from lectures and fieldwork experiences will only be possible with provision of a medical or equivalent note.*

Required Course Materials:

There is no required text or course manual. Materials including background information and blank forms to submit for grading will be provided for each session individually. In addition, faculty members will notify students of any specific field gear they may require in advance of a given lab or fieldtrip. The Department will provide all of the necessary technical equipment needed to complete lab modules.

Course Fees:

Course fees will be collected to defray field transportation costs as they arise. Based on rough calculations (as of August 2012), transportation costs for a class of 12 students is estimated at between \$100-150 per student. These fees are due at the beginning of the course; any unused funds will be returned to students in December.

Attendance:

Attendance in field sessions is **mandatory** to receive any credit for that module. There is no opportunity to complete the work at a later date. In cases of a legitimate excuse (as defined by

the LU Calendar, University Regulation III.(f)), students should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

GEOG 3255 COURSE SCHEDULE (*subject to changes*)

Week of	Lectures / Planning Sessions (Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30)	Field Lab Modules (Fridays, 12:30 – 4:30) + TWO Saturdays as noted (see note 5)
Sept 9	Course Overview (Randall) Vegetation (Freeburn)	no lab
Sept 16	Microclimatology (Cornwell)	SATURDAY Sept 22 nd : Vegetation / Microclimatology (Freeburn / Cornwell)
Sept 23	GPS (B. Wilson)	GPS (B. Wilson)
Sept 30	no class	no lab
Oct 7 ⁽¹⁾	Water (Stewart)	Water (Stewart)
Oct 14	Description and Identification of surficial materials along the north shore of Lake Superior (Randall)	SATURDAY Oct 20 th : Northshore Fieldtrip (Randall)
Oct 21	Oct 24 th : Compass & Clinometer (Zaniewski)	Oct 26 th : Compass & Clinometer (Zaniewski)
Oct 28	no class	Post-field Sediment Analysis (in UC- 0033) (Randall)
Nov 4	Nov 7 th : Questionnaires (Dowsley)	no lab
Nov 11	Nov 14 th : Questionnaires (Dowsley)	no lab
Nov 18	no class	no lab
Nov 25	Nov 28 th : Course Wrap-up (Randall / Freeburn)	no lab
Dec 2	no class (see note 2)	

NOTES: (1) Thanksgiving holiday is Monday, Oct 8th, 2012; (2) First day of term: Mon. Sept 10th, 2012; Last day of classes is Mon. Dec. 3rd, 2012; (3) **Final exams** run from Dec 6th to 17th, 2012, inclusive – there is no flexibility in changing exams to accommodate holiday travel; (4) Final date to register for a course (Fri, Sept 21st); (5) Departure times for bus or vans to reach off campus field sites will be announced in class; Friday field labs will, in most cases, run from 12:30 to 4:30; the Saturday fieldtrips will run from 8:00 to 6:30;