GEOGRAPHY FIELD METHODS

GEOGRAPHY 3255 – FALL 2013

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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 2013):

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.

Special notes: (1) Field trips will typically run on Friday afternoons. There are two longer trips planned for this year: a) **a day-long Saturday fieldtrip** on September 21st; and b) a **weekend field excursion** for Friday Oct 4th to Sunday Oct 6th.

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 (Fall 2013) includes three (3) half-day field labs, one (1) daylong fieldtrip and one (1) weekend-long field excursion, 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:

activity	***day & time***	***room***
lectures	Tuesdays 10:30-12:20	RC-2003
labs	Fridays 12:30-4:30	RC-2003
fieldtrip	Saturday Sept 21st	*tba*
weekend trip	Fri. Oct 4th to Sun. Oct 6th	*tba*

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 2013, 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 and accommodation (if necessary) costs as they arise. Based on rough calculations (as of August 2013), transportation and accommodation costs are estimated at **$200 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 Dr Randall as soon as possible.

GEOG 3255 COURSE SCHEDULE (*subject to changes*)

Week of	Lectures / Planning Sessions (Tuesdays, 10:30-12:30)	Field Lab Modules (Fridays, 12:30 – 4:30) + ONE Saturdays + ONE weekend as noted (see note 5)
Sept 8	10th: Course Overview **(Randall)** Vegetation **(Freeburn)**	no lab
Sept 15	17th: Microclimates **(Cornwell)**	**Sept 21st (SATURDAY):** Vegetation / Microclimates **(Freeburn / Cornwell)**
Sept 22	24th: Water **(Stewart)**	no lab
Sept 29	Oct 1st: Northshore Fieldtrip **(Randall)**	**Oct 4-6th** (**WEEKEND**): Water / Northshore Fieldtrip **(Stewart / Randall)**
Oct 6	no lecture	no lab
Oct 13(1)	15th: Compass & Clinometer **(Zaniewski)**	18th: Compass & Clinometer **(Zaniewski)**
Oct 20	Oct 22nd: GPS **(B. Wilson)**	Oct 25th: GPS **(B. Wilson)**
Oct 27	no lecture	no lab
Nov 3	Nov 5th: Field Work Planning **(W. Wilson)**	Post-field Sediment Analysis (in UC-0033) (**Randall**)???
Nov 10	Nov 12th: Field Work Planning **(W. Wilson)**	no lab
Nov 17	no lecture	no lab
Nov 24	Nov 26th: Course Wrap-up **(Randall / Freeburn)**	no lab
Dec 1	no class (see note 2)	

NOTES: **(1)** Thanksgiving holiday is Monday, Oct 14th, 2013; **(2)** First day of term: Mon. Sept 9th, 2013; Last day of classes is Mon. Dec. 2nd, 2013; **(3)** **Final exams** run from Dec 5th to 17th, 2013, inclusive – there is no flexibility in changing exams to accommodate holiday travel; **(4)** Final date to register for a course (Fri, Sept 20th); **(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 pm; Saturday fieldtrip will run from 8:00 to 5:00; weekend field excursion runs Friday 12:30 to Sunday ~6 pm.