

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
GEOG 2251 - GEOGRAPHICAL INQUIRY AND INTERPRETATION – 2017
COURSE OUTLINE

Instructor

Dr. W. Wilson, Department of Geography, RC 2006C

Office Hours: Wednesdays from 14:30 as needed.

Tel: (807) 343-8274 only for emergency

e-mail: I usually only respond to student emails during office hours so seeing then or in class with your questions is faster. I will be very occasionally sending you logistical emails about class times, etc. My email for emergencies is wrwilson@aspencroft.ca

Introduction

Welcome to GEOG 2251 – Geographical Inquiry and Interpretation. This class will provide you with an exploration of the many and varied traditions of geography. In addition, you will be instructed in some basic methods of geographical investigation, analysis, and communication. The focus of this class will be on how geographical traditions undertake geographical inquiry, how they understand the interpretive task of geography, how each of these traditions can contribute to our current practice as geographers, and on how each tradition understands the importance and form of geographical communication. Workload and expectations of excellence in this class will reflect the fact that it is a specialized step towards an Honours Geography degree. My job is to facilitate your movement to this new stage in your geographical career, i.e., to facilitate your growth as a critical, professional geographer.

Aim

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

- 1) The history of geographical thought and practice;
- 2) The necessary link between clear thinking and clear communication;
- 3) The full wealth of geographical methods and philosophies;
- 4) The practice of geographical inquiry;
- 5) The practice of geographical interpretation.

Successful students will also gain technical skills in:

- 1) Writing;
- 2) Research;
- 3) Cartography;
- 4) Various software packages.

Successful students will emerge from this class with the ability to participate in conversations about geography at an advanced academic and professional level. This means that they will be familiar with the language, terminology, and theories used by academics and professionals in the various fields of geography. Some advanced students should emerge from this class with concrete ideas for further, advanced research at the senior undergraduate level, i.e., ideas for undergraduate theses or projects.

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Workload and Expectations of Excellence

Details of the following assignments are provided on the document that accompanies this class outline. We will also be working on your professional CV and application letter.

Mapping assignments	– 30 % of final grade	Various
Final Exam	– 20% of final grade	End of class
Architectural geography project	– 30 % of final grade	Various
Library research project	– 20 % of final grade	First half

Workload: You should anticipate doing at least 4-5 hours of reading and class preparation per week (Note: This is 4-5 hours of good quality work). Time needed to complete assignments is not included in this estimate, nor is time for lab work. Not all topics covered in the readings will be covered in lecture, tutorial, and lab-work. Conversely, not all topics covered in the lab and in lecture are covered in the readings. You are responsible to be familiar with all the information covered in the readings, in lectures, and in labs. My advice to you is to plan your term carefully and conservatively: Expect the unexpected. Remember that you have probably never done this type of work before, that learning new skills is often challenging and difficult, and that you will need time to practice and perfect your own geographical style to bring it in-line with professional standards. Above all, identify any problems you might encounter early on and then talk to me or other professionals about solutions: Don't wait until the last minute!

Marking: I will undertake the marking for this class assisted by your lab instructor. This is a core class that is preparing you for advanced work, possibly in the very demanding field of professional geography. Thus, there will be no late submissions of assignments. This rule will only be waived on presentation of a medical certificate of sickness.

The marking scheme used in this class is in-line with expectations at Canada's top undergraduate universities and with professional employment standards, both of which allow a very narrow window of appropriate performance. Again, my goal is to provide you with the same level and quality of instruction that you would receive at Mount Alison or Trent. In addition to grammar and style, which are discussed below, assignments will be graded on demonstrated critical thought, internal logic, clarity of data presentation and the number of considered academic sources. "Considered academic sources" are articles, books, and other forms of information that you find, analyse, and critique in an academic fashion.

Grammar and Style: It is expected that written submissions in Geography courses will conform to high standards of grammar and style. As professional geographers and/or teachers, it is your responsibility to be able to communicate simply and directly. Although the penalty may vary from course to course, and from one kind of written work to another, poor grammar and style will be penalized in all grading of written work submitted in Geography courses. Sub-standard assignments will be returned un-marked. A required text for this course is either the *APA Manual* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*.