

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES DESIGN

GEOGRAPHY 4771 – FALL 2017

RESEARCH SEMINAR GUIDELINES

Each student will prepare and present two research seminars. Their purposes are to explore specific aspects of the course's main themes (see course schedule) and to facilitate student-led inquiry and discussion. All seminars should make use of PowerPoint. A laptop computer and data projector will be provided at each class.

In **Seminar 1**, topics will be proposed by students or assigned by GS in week 2 (3rd class meeting) of the semester. Seminars are to be efficiently researched using both literature and (some) internet sources. Seminar length will be 12 minutes in duration¹. Within this time, you should allocate a few minutes for discussion. Time limits will be **enforced**, so plan accordingly (the rule of thumb is that each slide takes approximately a minute to speak to, hence a 10 minute presentation would need no more than 10 slides). A paper copy of your seminar slides (**print on once-used paper if at all possible**), with 2 PowerPoint slides per page should be provided to the Instructor prior to your presentation.

The following are the **key dates** and elements surrounding **Seminar 1**:

- Proposal Due: Send electronically by noon Sunday, September 17, 2017
- Summary Due: send electronically by noon to me **two days (2) BEFORE** your seminar; GS to distribute electronically to the class
- Seminar Dates: *Sessions to be announced – aiming for October 20, 25, 27*

In **Seminar 2**, more latitude on topics will be provided, with students choosing topics from one of the course's main themes. Oral presentation format will be similar to that of the first seminar, except that Seminar 2 is to be a *more rigorously-researched* topic (i.e., Internet sources are to be used only for finding diagrams to illustrate presentations) and you will prepare a 2000-word paper, a 300-word summary, a list of 3-4 discussion questions, and lead a class discussion. Students may have 20 to 25 minutes for this presentation.

Please send your summary and discussion question as an email attachment (in Word format) to Graham Saunders by **noon two days prior** to your seminar. I will make this available to your colleagues. Students in the class will be expected to read your summary before class and **come prepared with questions and/or ideas** that they can use in the discussion.

It is your responsibility to ensure that GS has successfully received your summary.

The following are the **key dates** and elements surrounding **Seminar 2**:

- Proposal Due: Friday, October 6 (in class)
- Summary Due: send electronically by noon to me **two days (2) BEFORE** your seminar; GS to distribute electronically to the class
- Seminar Dates: *Sessions to be announced*

Paper Due: **Wednesday, November 29, 2017**

The total marks for these components are shown on the course outline. Overdue papers will be penalized 10% per academic day or part thereof. There will be no opportunity to make up a missed seminar presentation.

Proposal

Topics for papers are of your choosing, but should be situated within the context of the course's main themes. It is likely that your chosen topic will require you to take a position, so don't be afraid to do so. On the following page is a list of topics that might help steer you, but you are not bound to choose from this list (read: I encourage you to think outside the list). Submit a **one-page** proposal that details the nature of the research you intend to conduct. It should include the following elements:

- tentative paper title
- key arguments you intend to make in the paper (i.e. your position on this issue)
- a paragraph or two summarizing the ideas you intend to explore
- list at least 2 journal articles and 2 internet references that will be used.

These questions **MUST** be made available on the **two days prior** to your scheduled seminar date. This way every student in the class will be able to read your summary before your presentation. Students in the class will be expected to read your summary before class and **come prepared with questions and/or ideas** that they can use in the discussion. Please send your summary as an email attachment (in Word format) to Graham Saunders by **noon two days prior** to your seminar. *It is your responsibility to ensure that GS has successfully received your summary.*

Paper

Prepare and submit a paper of at least 2000 words (word count does not include space devoted to references, figures and tables, and a copy of your summary). **Clearly define your position on the issue.** All papers are to be fully referenced using the author-date style of referencing (e.g., Burn and Mackay 2002). Helpful writing and formatting suggestions can be obtained from Northey and McKibbin (2002) – on reserve – or from the Geography Department's Undergraduate Thesis Manual (see <http://geography.lakeheadu.ca/thesis.html>). Be sure to include a 'word count' on your cover page.

Seminar Presentation and Discussion

Each presenter will be allotted 15 or 20 minutes for their seminar. How you use this time is up to you, but remember, in the case of Seminar #2 that you will have an audience who has already "read up" on your topic as they have read through your summary. You might allocate time (~10 minutes) to a formal presentation, followed by a student-led discussion around a series of prepared questions. You might also collaborate with a classmate presenting on a similar course theme to lead a class discussion or activity.

Evaluation and Feedback

Peer assessment will be used to help evaluate the summary and the seminars – to be discussed. Forms for peer assessment will be provided by the Instructor. The last few minutes of each seminar will be used for evaluation. The paper will be evaluated solely by the instructor.

Audience Expectations

Outside of your own seminars, you will be a member of the audience and discussion group. As an audience member, you will be expected to READ THE SUMMARIES BEFORE EACH SEMINAR and come to class ready to participate in a class discussion and ask questions. Participation marks will be higher for those students who contribute to the discussion on a regular basis. **Above all, remember that this is your course and you are largely responsible for making it a successful and interesting learning experience.**

SEMINAR TOPICS – SUGGESTIONS ONLY (You may choose the focus)

Below are some potential topics; there are ***numerous others*** that would be appropriate.

1. *Sustainable Urban Development (Sessions to be announced)*

- Compact city debate
- Eco-villages
- Measuring urban sustainability
- Sustainable community initiatives in Canada and elsewhere
- How dense is too dense for the sustainable city?
- Retrofitting or rejuvenating suburban North America
- Is high-density condo living the path to sustainable cities?

2. *Sustainable Transportation and Sustainable Energy Technologies (Sessions to be announced)*

- Neighbourhood traffic calming programs
- Application of Calthorpe's TOD model to an existing community
- Metropolitan transit services

- Viability of wind or solar power initiatives
- Solar energy planning in existing urban/rural environments
- Geothermal energy systems at the building and neighbourhood scales

3. *Waste Management (Sessions to be announced)*

- Life cycle assessment
- Recycling programs are not doing enough
- Eco-cemeteries

- Greywater recycling systems
- On-site stormwater management

4. *Planning for Severe Weather*

- Spring flooding
- Flash flooding
- Winnipeg floodway
- Thunder Bay initiatives

5. *Sustainable Agriculture / Landscaping (Sessions to be announced)*

Conflicts arising between urbanization and farmland
Arguments for buying local organic produce
How to get away from reliance on California
Farming within urban areas
Naturalizing urban green spaces: tasks and barriers
Greenbelts as agricultural and natural area reserves

6. *Green Building / LEED Standards (Sessions to be announced)*

The challenges of meeting LEED standards
The greening of university campuses
The marketability of green buildings
Resale potential of an eco-home or LEED-certified home

7. *Achieving Sustainability (Sessions to be announced)*

Quieting the consumer economy
Alternative lifestyles (e.g., Voluntary Simplicity)
Social and economic implications of a sustainable future
Reducing personal energy and resource consumption