

## GEOG 9099 – Research Design and Presentation Winter 2019

### 1. Course Information

#### Classroom Location:

Wednesday 11:00am -1:00pm UCC 66 (WALS)

#### Contact Information:

|                         |                          |                             |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Instructor team:</b> | <b>Dr. Katrina Moser</b> | <b>Dr. Michael Buzzelli</b> |
| <b>Office</b>           | SSC Rm. 2407             | SSC Rm. 2429                |
| <b>Office Hours</b>     | By appointment           | By appointment              |
| <b>Phone</b>            | 519-661-2111 x 80015     | 519-661-2111 x 85329        |
| <b>Email</b>            | kmoser@uwo.ca            | mbuzzel@uwo.ca              |

### 2. Course Description

#### Course Description

This course prepares students to successfully design and communicate what they wish to do for their graduate research. The focus of the course is on the development of a research proposal, which requires a comprehensive and critical review of the literature, development of a manageable research question, determining and developing an appropriate and ethical methodology to address the question and the communication of the research project. The end result is the development of a preliminary proposal, suitable for a *general* audience, presented orally and in writing at the end of term. The various components of a proposal are considered in a practical manner to enable effective research leading to the thesis.

**Course weight:** 0.5

#### Senate Regulations

Senate Regulations state, “unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

### 3. Textbook

There is no course textbook, but I will provide several readings on Owl. The readings are not mandatory and are to supplement the course lectures. Some books you may find useful include:

1. Silvia, P.J. 2002. *How to Write a Lot*. APA, Washington.  
*This book has a lot of useful tips for getting going on writing.*
2. Clifford, N., French, S. and Valentine, G. 2010. *Key Methods in Geography*. Sage, London.  
*Very useful text for doing research in Geography. Several of the class readings are from this book.*
3. *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*

Useful for various types of communication you will be asked to do during your time as a student.

## 4. Course Format

### General Format

The course is structured to work through the components of a proposal to allow development of an effective research plan. Much of the course will be practical and hands-on, and you will learn to assess and critique each other's work in a constructive manner. An oral presentation less than 10 minutes in length will be made to the class in mid-March, followed by a short written proposal due at the end of term. **These contributions should be targeted at the general geographer rather than a specialist audience. A subsequent more technical proposal is submitted to the supervisor in April.**

Instruction occurs during one class two hour time slot and will be a mix of lectures, in-class activities, and group work. It is imperative to be at all classes.

### Classroom culture of participation

This course requires active participation from students, both for assessment, and to enhance the learning experience of the entire class. Active learning benefits students by supporting higher-level learning and improves retention of material (M.J. Prince, 2004).

**Please come to class prepared to be involved and to be respectful to your classmates and the instructor team.** Derogatory or offensive remarks and responses are not acceptable, nor are they effective forms of academic debate.

## 5. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Develop manageable research problems
- Identify and appreciate the need for responsible and ethical methodologies
- Efficiently search the literature and have knowledge of other library resources available
- Develop robust research methods to address proposed research questions
- Critically evaluate other's research – both proposals and literature
- Communicate orally and in writing research

## 6. Evaluation

### Summary

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| One Page Problem/Question (1page).....                          | 10% |
| Literature Review (5-6 pages +references).....                  | 10% |
| Methods/Study Area (2-3 pages + references).....                | 10% |
| Presentation (10 minutes – 7 minutes +3 minutes of questions).. | 30% |
| Proposal (maximum of ten pages).....                            | 40% |

**All assignments must be double space and at least 12-point font.**

1. Marks as posted by the course instructor are considered provisional until approved by the Department Chair. Final marks are received from the Registrar; errors may be corrected through use of a Marks Revision Form.
2. Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.
3. No electronic devices will be allowed during test and examinations

## Assignment Summaries

Further details will be provided as each assignment is introduced in class.

**All written assignments will be submitted electronically on OWL as a Word document. We will be using Turnitin to check all assignments for plagiarism. They must be double-spaced, 12-point font and adhere to page number restrictions.**

1. **One Page Problem (10%):** In one page provide the reason for doing the proposed research and the specific questions you will address. You need to convince me that your research is worth doing.
2. **Literature Review (10%):** This is a 5-6 page document (plus references – you must have at least 15 peer-reviewed publications) that provides the context for your research project. It should show me how your research fits into the “bigger” picture and provide me with an understanding of where your research ideas are coming from.
3. **Methods/Study Area (10%):** This is a 2-3 page document (plus references) that provides details of how you will do your research. In some cases you will need to explain why you have chosen the geographical region/area for your research. It is important to show the specific links between your research questions and the methods.
4. **Review of Proposal (No grade assigned, but +3 for useful feedback):** As well as preparing a research proposal, you will be asked to contribute to the development of the successful completion of your peers’ research proposals. This will be done through academic peer review. You will be asked to read two of your peer’s proposals and provide ~1 page of feedback on it.
5. **Presentation (30%):** A short (less than 10 minutes) oral presentation will be made on the morning of March 20<sup>th</sup> using appropriate supporting media (e.g., PowerPoint). This presentation should be geared to a general audience rather than to a group of specialists. Presentations will be evaluated based on quality of the proposal and presentation. A grading rubric will be provided well in advance of your presentation. Supervisors will be invited to attend.
6. **Proposal (40%)**  
An electronic submission of a written proposal is required by April 3<sup>rd</sup> and targeted at a general audience. Marks will be based on quality of your research question, the overall project design, the validity of the research methods and overall organisation and style. Submissions should be a maximum of ten pages, double-spaced, including references, figures and tables, and utilising Times New Roman 12pt with 2.5cm margins. Appropriate acknowledgement of sources must be made using referencing, quotation marks etc. You will use Turnitin to ensure your proposal is entirely your own work. Late proposals will be penalized 10% per day.

Please note that the formal “Proposal” required by the Master’s program is a separate document developed in consultation with the supervisor and advisory committee. It is generally written in greater detail for a more specialised audience and must be approved by the supervisor and committee member for continuation in the graduate programme. All students are advised to consult with the advisor and committee member as appropriate throughout the term.

### Grade Breakdown and Explanation

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 90-100 | Excellent. You have surpassed my expectations (very rare)                                     |
| 80-89  | Very good. You have fulfilled my expectations   |
| 70-79  | Good. Expectations are mostly fulfilled with weak areas.                                      |
| 60-69  | Satisfactory. There are problems such as confusing writing or expectations are not fulfilled. |
| 50-59  | Less than satisfactory. There are major problems.   |
| < 50   | Unsatisfactory. Task not fulfilled.   |

Students are expected to attend all classes.

### Policy on Late Assignments:

For Western University Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see [Policy on Accommodation for Illness](#).

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

For non-documented medical absences or non-medical absences, late assignments will be given a penalty of five percent per day from the final grade for the assignment for a maximum of 5 days. After 5 days the assignment will not be assessed resulting in a grade of 0. Students looking for a change in a deadline are asked to submit a request to the course instructor as soon as possible.

For assignments worth less than 10%, the student must submit a request for accommodation to the instructor. Medical documentation will not be required.

**Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.**

## 7. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [Scholastic Offence](#).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

## **8. Western's Commitment to Accessibility**

The Department of Geography strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. [Information regarding accommodation of exams](#) is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about "[Accessibility at Western](#)" is available.

## **9. Medical Issues**

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. The Student Services website provides greater detail about the University's policy on [medical accommodation](#). This site provides links the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

Students must see the [Academic Counsellor](#) and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation.

## **10. Mental Health**

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information on mental health resources.

## **11. Support Services**

[Student Support Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

## 12. Course Schedule

NOTE: Blue highlighting indicates something is due in class.

| Schedule |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| Date     | Topic   | Notes   |
| 9 Jan    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Class Introductions</li> <li>*Course Syllabus</li> <li>*What is Research?</li> <li>*What makes a good research question?</li> <li>*Time management</li> </ul> | Readings: Clifford & Valentine and Northey et al.<br><br>Assignment 1   |
| 16 Jan   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Introduction to Ethical considerations in Research</li> <li>*Role Play</li> <li>*Evaluating Research Questions</li> </ul>                                     | Bring your thesis research topic/question<br>Readings: Hauck; Hay   |
| 23 Jan   | An Introduction to the Literature Review and Library skills – Ms. Kristin Hoffman and Mr. James Seale<br><br>11:00-1:00 in the instructional room in the Map and Data Center in Weldon Library        | Readings: Kelock & Dorling; Montello & Sutton; Rhoads & Wilson<br><br>Due: one page research question/problem<br><br><b>Assignment 2: Literature Review</b> |
| 30 Jan   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Literature Reviews</li> <li>*Academic Reviews</li> </ul>   | Readings: Healey  |
| 06 Feb   | *Research Design and Methods  | Assignment 3: Methods   |
| 13 Feb   | *Data Acquisition and Analysis  | <b>Due: Literature Review</b>   |
| 20 Feb   | Spring Study Break – No Class   |   |
| 27 Feb   | *Presentation Skills 1  |   |
|          |   |   |

|                   | Schedule                       |                               |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Date              | Topic                          | Notes                         |
| 06<br>Mar         | *Presentation Skills 2         | <b>Due: Methods</b>           |
| 13<br>Mar         | *Professional Development      |                               |
| 20<br>Mar         | <b>Proposal Presentations</b>  | <b>Due: Draft Proposals</b>   |
| 27<br>Mar         | * Draft Proposal Class Reviews | <b>Due: Reviews</b>           |
| <b>03<br/>Apr</b> | *Written proposal due          | <b>Due: Written Proposals</b> |