

**Spring 2006**  
Undergraduate Seminar in Applied Geography  
GEOG 695 (5 credits)

## **Research in Human-Environment Geography**

Instructor: Dr. Kendra McSweeney  
Office: 1164 Derby Hall  
E-mail: [mcsweeney.14@osu.edu](mailto:mcsweeney.14@osu.edu)  
Phone: 247-6400

Office hours: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00, or by appointment

Class: M W 5:00-6:48, Derby Hall 1116  
Call No. 09599

### **Overview**

This course focuses on how to conduct research to understand the relationship between humans and their environment. The course meets twice a week and will be oriented around hands-on projects that will give students practical experience in generating, analyzing, and presenting geographic information. Students will learn how to draw on geographical theories to develop a research question, and how to write a formal research proposal. The course is designed to be the capstone for majors in the People, Society, and Environment (PSE) track. In-class examples may therefore emphasize geography's human-environment subfield, but the readings stress human geography in general. Students from all areas of geography are welcome.

A principal aim of the course is to offer students the opportunity to conceive of, plan for, and execute a research project while exploring a variety of methods for data construction and interpretation. Students interested in pursuing graduate work will find the course a good introduction to self-directed research, 'fieldwork,' and proposal-writing. For other students, the course will offer the chance to develop skills that typically enhance employment opportunities, including formal presentation techniques, c.v. construction, and independent research methods.

Research topics will be identified early in the course, and students will regularly present reports to the class on their research progress. Students are encouraged to pursue their own research interests. Third-year students may wish to explore ideas that can be developed as a Senior thesis and/or as an entry for the Denman Undergraduate Research Competition. Seniors can use this as an opportunity to explore in more detail a research topic encountered earlier in their degree. Success in the course depends on students' engagement with the research process, not on the type of geographic topic they choose. Students who are not in the PSE track are therefore welcome to pursue topics more closely related to their own interests.

Because the quarter is a short time over which to develop a research project, the reading load is relatively light for an upper-level seminar. At least one class meeting is reserved for individual research.

### **Course Format**

This undergraduate seminar meets twice a week. Mondays will generally be reserved for discussing the week's readings. Students will send in brief responses to the readings at least 1 hour prior to each Monday

class; these will help structure the discussion. As in most seminars, the instructor is facilitator more than lecturer, and students are expected to come to class with the readings *read*, thought about, and in-hand, and ready to contribute to class discussion. In fact, involvement in class discussion is critical to success in the course. Wednesday meetings will be used primarily for research reports, peer review and feedback, guest speakers, and some group work.

### Readings

Readings will be drawn from a coursepack created for the course, which is available for \$28.95 at SBX Bookstore.

### Evaluation

Participation in class discussion makes up 20% of your grade. 10% of your grade comes from brief but substantive e-mail comments you will send me relating to the readings at least 1 hour prior to each Monday class. An additional 30% is comprised of two research reports (due Friday April 14 and Friday May 5; 15% each). The first report will comprise a brief synopsis and evaluation of official, non-official, and visual data that you have acquired over the previous 2 weeks that are relevant to your research project. The second report will consist of the raw data generated during your ethnographic and interview experiences over the preceding 3 weeks.

The proposal-writing process accounts for 30% of the final grade. A draft proposal is due in class on Monday, May 22. The final proposal will not exceed 2,500 words (approximately 10 pages double-spaced, 12 pt font), and is due Monday, June 5 by 5pm. A formal 15 minute presentation of the proposed research will be given in class on May 31 (10%). Every student is responsible for each of the written forms of evaluation although the option exists to conduct research in pairs.

Class participation	20%	
E-mail comments on readings	10	
Research Reports		
I: Secondary data (official, non-official, 'imaginative' sources)	15	due F April 14
II: Constructed data (interviews, ethnographies)	15	due F May 5
Research Proposal Draft	10	due M May 22
Presentation of Proposed Research	10	W May 31
Final Research Proposal, including 2-page c.v. (c.v. is worth 5%)	20	due M June 5

### Opportunities for extra credit:

Throughout the quarter, visitors to the department or university will be speaking on themes closely related to geography and human-environment relations. Some of these events are listed below in the schedule [*in italics*]; others will be announced as they come up. Students are encouraged to attend these talks in order to learn from their content as well as from the speakers' presentation style. By briefly but thoughtfully summarizing and critiquing one of these speaking events for the class, students can bolster their grade by a maximum of 5%.

## Policies

All assigned work is due by 5 pm on the due date in the Geography Main Room (DB 1035). Late work will lose two (2) percentage points per day. Any academic misconduct, such as plagiarizing, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Accommodation will be made for any student with special needs based on the impact of a disability. Please contact the instructor and also the Office for Disability Services at 292-3307, 150 Pomerene Hall.

## Class and Reading Schedule

*(subject to change)*

### Week 1. INTRODUCTION

M March 27 Introduction; basic concepts

In-class reference:

- NRC, 1997. "Geography's perspectives"
- Stoddart and Adams, 2004. "Fieldwork and unity in Geography"

W March 29 Research topics

Reading:

- Hoskin, B., W. Gill, and S. Burkill. 2003. "Research design for dissertations and projects."
- Bridge, G. 2001. "Everyday ecologies: cities, nature, and teaching urban ecology."

Th March 30 *Talk: Neil Smith, "After Iraq: Failed Endgames, Failing Globalizations, New Political Geographies," 3:30-5 pm, Campbell Hall 200 (Reception to follow in Derby Foyer)*

### Week 2. EXPLORING EXISTING DATA I

M April 3 Secondary and archival sources

Readings:

- White, P. 2003. "Making use of secondary data"
- Edmonds, 2001. "The pleasures and pitfalls of written records."

*Talk: Riley E. Dunlap, "The Globalization of Citizen Concern for the Environment: Results from Cross-National Surveys," 1:00 pm, Room 105, Ag Admin Building.*

W April 5 Exploring your research topic with secondary & archival sources

### Week 3. EXPLORING EXISTING DATA II

M April 10 'Non-official' sources

Readings:

- Cloke et al., 2004. "Non-official sources"
- Lutz and Collins, 1993. "Fashions in the ethnic other"

W April 12 Interpreting visual imagery

*Talk: Joe Saunders: "Oldest Mounds in America? The Middle Archaic Mound Sites of NE Louisiana." 7-9 pm, Rm 210, Main Library.*

***F April 14 Research reports on secondary data due***

Week 4. GENERATING DATA I: LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION & ETHNOGRAPHY

M April 17 Site visits, ethnographies, 'reading' the landscape

Readings:

- Cloke et al., 2004. "Observing, participating, and ethnographies"
- Saltmarsh, R. 2001. "A journey into autobiography: a coal miner's daughter."

W April 19 Putting method into practice

Reference:

- Birdsall, S. S. 2003. "Learning to see landscape through a flexible lens."

Week 5. GENERATING DATA II: TALKING TO PEOPLE

M April 24 Interviewing strategies and skills

Readings:

- Bridge, G. 2003. "Questionnaire surveys"
- Burgess, J. 2003. "The art of interviewing."
- Matheson, J. 2001. "Stranger, trail, fieldwork, girl."

W April 26 Guest speaker: interviewing

*Talk: Helen Hombeck Tanner. "Ohio Indian Country: The Intense Struggle of Ohio Natives to Retain their Treaty Guaranteed Land..." 7-9 pm, Rm 210, Main Library.*

Week 6. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

M May 1 Analyzing qualitative and quantitative data

Reading:

- Kneale, P. "Representing geographic information"
- Pentecost, A. "Analysing data."

W May 3 In the field

***F May 5 Research reports on interview/ethnographic data due***

Week 7. EXPLAINING & UNDERSTANDING

M May 8 Putting it all together; revising aims, honing techniques

Reading:

- Cloke et al. 2004. "Explaining"

W May 10 In-class data analysis and data presentation

*Talk: Jason Jackson, "The Arts of Community Building among Yuchi and Other Woodland Tribes Today" 7-9 pm, Rm 210, Main Library.*

Week 8. WRITING RESEARCH I

M May 15 Proposal writing

Reading:

- Cloke et al., 2004. "Representing human geographies";
- Heath, A. W. 1997. "The proposal in qualitative research."

W May 17 Honing the literature review

Reference:

- Healey, M. 2003. "How to conduct a literature review"

Th May 18 *Talk: Stewart Fotheringham, Geographer, TBA, 3:30-5 pm, DB 1080*

Week 9. WRITING RESEARCH II

**M May 22 Draft proposal due for peer review**

Writing a "Curriculum vitae"

Reference:

- Kearns, R. A. 2003. "Understanding assessment criteria"

W May 24 Final fieldwork and analysis

Th May 25

Week 10. M May 29 MEMORIAL DAY; no class

Reading:

- "Communications: The presentation"

W May 31 In-class presentations

**M June 5** Final Proposals due by 5 pm.

Th June 9 Grades posted by this date for all (incl. graduating seniors)

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**COURSE READING LIST**

**“R” denotes a reading intended primarily for in-class reference.**

Week 1

**R** NRC. 1997. “Geography’s perspectives.” Pp. 28-46, *Rediscovering Geography: New Relevance for Science and Society*. Washington, DC: National Research Council.

**R** Stoddart, D. R., and W. A. Adams 2004. Fieldwork and unity in Geography. In *Unifying Geography: Common Heritage, Shared Future*, ed. J. A. Matthews and D. T. Herbert, 46-61. London: Routledge.

Hoskin, B., W. Gill, and S. Burkill. 2003. “Research design for dissertations and projects.” Ch. 35 in A. Rogers and H. Viles, eds. *The Student’s Companion to Geography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Blackwell.

Bridge, G. 2001. “Everyday ecologies: cities, nature, and teaching urban ecology.” *Journal of Geography* 100:154-165.

Week 2

White, P. 2003. “Making use of secondary data.” Ch. 5 in N. J. Clifford and G. Valentine, eds. *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage.

Edmonds, M. 2001. The pleasures and pitfalls of written records. In *The Historical Ecology Handbook: a Restorationist’s Guide to Reference Ecosystems*, ed. D. Egan and E. A. Howell, 73-100. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Week 3

Cloke, P., I. Cook, P. Crang, M. Goodwin, J. Painter, and C. Philo. 2004. *Practicing Human Geography*. London: SAGE. Ch. 3, “Non-official sources”

Lutz, C. A., and J. L. Collins. 1993. *Reading National Geographic*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 5, “Fashions in the ethnic other”

Week 4

Cloke, P., I. Cook, P. Crang, M. Goodwin, J. Painter, and C. Philo. 2004. *Practicing Human Geography*. London: SAGE. Ch. 6, “Observing, participating, and ethnographies”

Saltmarsh, R. 2001. A journey into autobiography: a coal miner's daughter. In *Placing Autobiography in Geography*, ed. P. Moss, 138-148. Syracuse: Syracuse UP.

**R** Birdsall, S. S. 2003. Learning to see landscape through a flexible lens. *Journal of Geography* 102(1):29-34.

Week 5

Bridge, G. 2003. "Questionnaire surveys." Ch. 40 in A. Rogers and H. Viles, eds. *The Student's Companion to Geography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Blackwell.

Burgess, J. 2003. "The art of interviewing." Ch. 4 in A. Rogers and H. Viles, eds. *The Student's Companion to Geography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Blackwell.

Matheson, J. 2001. Stranger, trail, fieldwork, girl. *Geographical Review* 91(1-2):225-230.

#### Week 6

Kneale, P.E. 2003. Ch. 22, "Representing geographic information," *Study Skills for Geography Students: A Practical Guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Arnold.

Pentecost, A. 2003. "Analysing data." Ch. 36 in A. Rogers and H. Viles, eds. *The Student's Companion to Geography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Blackwell.

#### Week 7

Cloke, P., I. Cook, P. Crang, M. Goodwin, J. Painter, and C. Philo. 2004. *Practicing Human Geography*. London: SAGE. Ch. 9, "Explaining"

#### Week 8

Cloke, P., I. Cook, P. Crang, M. Goodwin, J. Painter, and C. Philo. 2004. *Practicing Human Geography*. London: SAGE. Ch. 11, "Representing human geographies"

Heath, A. W. 1997. "The proposal in qualitative research." Available online at: <http://www.nova.edu/~ron/heath.html>. Accessed 23 March 2006.

**R** Healey, M. 2003. "How to conduct a literature review." Ch. 2 in N. J. Clifford and G. Valentine, eds. *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage.

#### Week 9

**R** Kearns, R. A. 2003. "Understanding assessment criteria." Ch. 30 in N. J. Clifford and G. Valentine, eds. *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage.

#### Week 10

Anon. "Communications: The Presentation Structure." UniS Skills Project Pilot Pack: Oral Presentations. Online at <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/Skills/pack/comms/start.html>. Accessed 23 May 2005.