

University of Guelph
Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics
GEOG*4690 Geography Field Course, 1.0 credits

Winter 2025

Instructors: Dr. Aaron Berg (aberg@uoguelph.ca)

Why should I take this course?

Field research and place-based learning are important aspects of Geography. Students taking this course can expect to advance their understanding of field research approaches in Geography and refine skills developed in previous geography courses.

Course Description (from UofG Academic Calendar)

This course provides an opportunity for upper-year students to further enhance their learning experience through place-based learning and the lens of Geography, Environment and Geomatics. This course focuses on developing research proposals and project design for a particular topic related to the place-based learning location for a particular offering. Students build on geographical research methods introduced and developed in second- and third-year courses. This course can include on-campus and off-campus learning, with field locations varying by offering. Examples of previous locations, as well as information on the location and cost of the field course is available from the department in the winter semester prior to each fall offering.

Prerequisite(s): 12.50 credits

Restriction(s): Restricted to students in BSCH.EG, BAH.EGOV, BAH.GEOG and BSES with an overall average of at least 70% at the time of registration. Instructor consent required.

Territorial Acknowledgements

Acknowledging the territory on which we learn and work honours the relationship between lands/waters and the Indigenous ancestors and stewards of them. The University of Guelph rests on the traditional territory of the Attawanderon people. We therefore acknowledge the Attawanderon people and offer our respect to Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours as the university and community strive to strengthen our relationships with them. We also recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land. The Dish with One Spoon Covenant is a peace agreement made between Indigenous nations before the Europeans arrived. It characterizes our collective responsibility to each other and Mother Earth -we should take only what we need, leave enough for others and keep the dish clean.¹

Statement on Expectations for Inclusivity

Different perspectives and lived experiences shape who we are and make our communities stronger. We want everyone in our class to feel safe, feel that they belong and that their ideas, perspectives, and lived experiences are important. It is our intent that students with diverse backgrounds and identities be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

¹ This acknowledgement is adapted from the University of Guelph Indigenous Resource Centre and Student Life.

Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In particular, travel to different locales can raise unique challenges for inclusivity – please reach out to discuss these with us as appropriate.

Winter 2025 Course Offering & Structure

The field portion of the W25 course offering will take place during Reading Week (Feb 15-22) in and around Marrakesh, Morocco. Our university host is the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University based in Ben Guerir Morocco. Prior to the field portion (Week 1-6 in the semester) we will discuss aspects of field research and methodologies in Geography, and regional geography information about Morocco. Following the field portion (Week 7-12) students will work on a research proposals and design (detailed weekly topics listed below). The course is designed to support students in applying skills acquired through other courses within the geography program to investigate topics emphasizing human systems, biophysical processes, as well as their interaction.

Winter 2025 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students who have actively participated in all course activities and assignments will be able to:

- Understand a range of approaches to conducting field research, including their appropriate and ethical application
- Identify effective approaches for analyzing integrated human-environment systems in a particular location.
- Critically evaluate the primary literature for key themes of interest to Morocco (e.g. water resources and management, desertification, human-environment interactions, food insecurity, natural hazards) and contextualize the selected topic in relation to field-based research in Geography.
- Observe and critically reflect on complex real-world challenges related to the identified key themes.
- Improve and refine oral and written communication skills related to geographical field research
- Offer and respond to constructive peer feedback
- Work effectively individually, as well as a member of a group

Evaluation

The final grade will be assessed on the following items:

Context of Geographical Themes in Morocco Group Presentation (in week 5)	15%
Field methods in Geography Group Presentation (in week 10)	15%
Field notes and reflections (individual, due Feb 26, in class)	20%
Research Proposal (individual)	40%
Proposal Draft (week 11)	5%
Peer Review Feedback (week 12)	5%
Final Proposal (Due on exam date)	30%
Class Engagement	10%
Field preparation & participation	4%
Class preparation & participation	4%
CORE certificate completion (Week 3)	2%

Human-Environment Context Presentation 15% (week 5) - Based on selected readings focused on aspects of research in Morocco, students will reflect on how the given topic links to Geography. In small groups, students will present on their topic to the rest of the class (~15 minutes + 5 for questions) and then lead the class in follow-up discussions of their topic while in the field. The purpose of this assignment is to complete some preparation work/readings and introduce the rest of the class to a given topic ahead of our travel to Morocco. Further details and topics will be confirmed in Week 1.

Field methods in Geography Group Presentation 15% (week 10) - Based on a selected method in Geography, students will find examples of that method used in a Moroccan context and present to the rest of the class (~15 minutes + minutes for questions) and then participate in a discussion of field methods. The purpose of this assignment is to think about research methods and reflect on how they are adapted and/or applied in various settings. Further details and topics will be confirmed in Week 6.

Field notebook 20% - Students are required to keep a daily log of their field activities and experience, including guest lectures, field trips, and observations. The Instructor will provide students with reflective questions or specific tasks to be completed within the field notebooks. Notebooks will be collected after the field trip. We will discuss field notebook work and expectations in Week 6.

Research Proposal 40% - Initial draft is due in Week 11 for the peer review process, and the final draft is due on the exam date in April. Will also include providing and responding to peer review feedback (details on the peer review process will be discussed in Week 11). We will discuss proposal expectations in Week 4.

Engagement 10% - Throughout the field trip and course it is expected that you are prepared and engaged with the course material. The quality of your contributions during trip excursions, key informant talks, peer presentations, and regular class meetings will be assessed as part of your final grade in this course. We will discuss engagement during Week 1. Additionally, it is expected that you complete the TCSP CORE certificate (details discussed in Week 2, due Jan 27).

Requirements

To participate in the W25 offering of GEOG*4690, students must (a) hold a valid passport (expiry dates CANNOT be within 6 months of February 25, 2025) for travel to the Morocco (and proof of eligibility for Morocco entry if applicable); (b) purchase health and travel insurance (proof required); (c) sign travel release forms; (d) complete and provide proof of travel tutorial from Centre for International Programs for the field excursion portion of the course. Photocopies (of passport/travel documents; insurance coverage) and signed originals (of travel release; CIP tutorial forms) must be submitted to the instructors no later than January 15, 2025.

Students must provide a deposit of \$300.00 by December 18, 2024, and the remaining balance (\$900 (total cost is \$1200)) by January 20, 2025. Cheques should be made out to the Department of Geography, Environment & Geomatics, University of Guelph.

Financial Issues

The approximate cost of the field excursion (Feb 15-25, 2025) will be approximately \$1200 per student. Air transportation will be organized collectively for the best rate possible -based on numbers and is in addition to the course fee. The course fee includes ground transportation (van rental & fuel costs), accommodation and some food and incidentals (e.g., site fees, activities, speaker fees, etc.). Final

budget numbers will be confirmed once deposits are received and will be dependent on the Canadian to the Moroccan Dirham (~0.14/CAD) currency exchange rate.

- To help with travel costs, you may wish to consider CSAHS Undergraduate Awards:
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/apps/awards?class=Travelling&program=&college=CSAHS&category=Travel Grant&required=&needcomponent=&citizen=>

Specifically, the following travel grants may be of interest (be sure to check online for specific requirements and deadlines)

- Grants for Undergraduate Experiential Learning \$500-1000
- Latornell Undergraduate Travel Grants [T0058] \$1000
- Hungerford Undergraduate Travel Scholarships [T4508] \$1000
- University of Guelph Travel Scholarships [T0421] \$1500
- Kiyoko Miyanishi International Travel Grant [T0742] \$3500
- Wardlaw Travel Grant [T0665] \$1000
- Geography Field Trip Travel Grant [T0584] \$400

[Details for the majority of above awards found in Undergraduate Calendar:

http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c09/sec_d0e16496.shtml]

[Details for GUEL at: <http://www.theresearchshop.ca/news/grants-undergraduate-experiential-learning-guel-deadline-february-1>]

Detailed Course Schedule (be sure to check CourseLink for updates)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (complete BEFORE class)	Reminders
1	Jan 6	Introductions and Overview of Fieldwork in Geography	Course Outline, & skim through the CourseLink page for our course	Class engagement discussed today Bring some paper to class
	Jan 8	Introduction to Morocco Class Contract		First group presentation assignment introduced today
2	Jan 13	Presentations and Literature Reviews	See CourseLink	
	Jan 15	Ethics in Field Research	Denscombe 2012, Ch. 9 (optional) Guasco 2022 Stefanoudis et al. 2021 Tooth and Viles 2021	Get started on your CORE certificate
3	Jan 20	Positionality, Inclusivity, Accessibility, Safety	Sultana 2007 Bracken and Mawdsley 2004 Leyland et al. 2022 Plus <u>one</u> of: Bhakta 2022 Lawrence 2022 Mackay & Bishop 2022 Rose 2022 Tucker et al 2022 Zebracki & Greatrick 2022	
	Jan 22	Ethics in Data Management Quality Assurance and Quality Control	See CourseLink	Core Certificate due
4	Jan 27	Group Work Session/meetings	None	
	Jan 29	Group Work Session/meetings	None	Proposal Assignment introduced today
5	Feb 3	Group Presentations	none	First group presentation
	Feb 5	Group Presentations	none	First group presentation
6	Feb 10	Fieldnotes	Wolfinger 2002	Field Notebook assignment introduced today
	Feb 12	Data Management, Field Trip Preparation	none	Second group presentation assignment introduced today
<i>Field Trip</i>	Feb 15-22	<i>Travel to Marrakesh, Morocco</i>		

Detailed Course Schedule (continued) (be sure to check CourseLink for updates)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (complete BEFORE class)	Reminders
7	Feb 24			
	Feb 26	Research Proposals	Denscombe 2012, Ch.1 and 2	Complete Research Question worksheet before next class Field notes due today
8	Mar 3	Research Questions	O'Leary Ch. 3	
	Mar 5	Research Design	O'Leary Ch. 7 Montello & Sutton, Ch. 8	
9	Mar 10	No class – work period	none	
	Mar 12	No class – work period	none	
10	Mar 17	Methods	none	Second group presentation
	Mar 19	Methods	none	Second group presentation
11	Mar 24	Peer Review	See CourseLink	Proposal Draft Due
	Mar 26	Peer Review	none	
12	Mar 31	Research – what's next?	none	Peer feedback due
	Apr 2	Course Wrap Up	none	Proposals due April 14

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Financial Issues

The approximate cost of the field excursion (Feb 15-23, 2025) will be approximately \$2600 per student (this includes course fee and estimated airfare (students are responsible for purchasing their air transportation, however a group rate will be arranged). The course fee includes ground transportation (van rental & fuel costs), accommodation and food, and incidentals (e.g., site fees, activities, speaker fees, etc.). Final budget numbers will be confirmed once deposits are received and is highly dependent on the Canadian to Moroccan currency exchange rate.

- To help with travel costs, you may wish to consider CSAHS Undergraduate Awards: https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/studentfinance/apps/awards?class=Travelling&program=&college=CSAHS&category=Travel_Grant&required=&needcomponent=&citizen=

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Learning and Well-being Resources

Writing Services -- <https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/writing>

Studying/Time Management/Learning Services -- <https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/studying>

Research Services -- <https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/research-help>

Well-being -- <https://www.uoguelph.ca/mentalwellbeing/front-page>

Turnitin

In this course we use Turnitin integrated with the CourseLink Dropbox tool to detect potential plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and/or copying as part of the ongoing efforts to maintain academic integrity at the University of Guelph. All materials submitted to the Dropbox will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting inappropriate use. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. A major benefit of using Turnitin is that students will be able to educate and empower themselves in preventing academic misconduct. In this course you may screen your own assignments through Turnitin as many times as you wish before the due date. You will be able to see and print reports that show you exactly where you have properly and improperly referenced outside source and materials in your assignment. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about this software.

E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on [regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration](#).

Drop Date

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is April 10, 2023. For [regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the Undergraduate Calendar](#).

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at [519-824-4120](tel:519-824-4120) ext. 56208 or email SAS@uoguelph.ca or see the [Student Accessibility Services website](#).

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The [Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar](#)

Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The [Academic Calendars](#) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.