GEOG*6091: Geographical Research Methods II

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Jennifer Silver  
**Pronouns:** she/her and GEOG*6091 students are welcome to refer to me as Jen and/or Prof. Silver  
**Email:** j.silver@uoguelph.ca  
**One-on-one meetings:** over zoom by appointment (2-3 day advance notice required)

**Calendar Description:** A review of philosophies and research methods in geography. The development and presentation of a research proposal for the thesis or research project.  
**Prerequisites:** GEOG*6090

---

**Land Acknowledgement**

*The University of Guelph resides on the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. These lands are a gathering place and home to many past, present, and future First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The Dish with One Spoon is an agreement between Hodinöhso:ní, Anishinaabeg and their allied nations to live peaceably on these lands and those throughout what is now known as the Great Lakes Region. The Dish with One Spoon speaks to interconnectivity and our collective relations with each other and the Earth. Abiding by it means that one should always strive to take only what they need, leave enough for others, and keep the shared dish clean.*

Acknowledging the land on which we learn and work recognizes the importance of place-based histories and upholds Indigenous peoples as having been in relation with this place since immemorial. The acknowledgement above is adapted from resource material shared online by the University of Guelph Indigenous Student Centre.

**Overview & Outcomes**

The purpose of this course is to provide a structured pathway through which first year masters students gain insight on geographic research as a process and develop their own research project proposal. Throughout the semester, students will refine a research question or aim, identify their research objectives and describe their methods, and write and orally present their research proposal. By the end of the semester students should be able to:

- identify and discuss key areas and approaches to geography and in geographical research;
- formulate research aims and/or questions that appropriately reflect their sub-discipline and are reasonable given objectives and intended analytical approach; and,
- effectively and efficiently communicate a research proposal in written and oral form.

**Covid-19**

The Covid-19 pandemic is not over. It may be fair to say that we are in a different phase and/or that the risks for many people, especially fully vaccinated individuals, have lessened. However, risks -- of (re)infection and of negative long-term health outcomes -- remain for all of us. For people with frequent or intense patterns of exposure (e.g., staff in or frequent visitor to healthcare settings) and/or certain types of home, care-giving or other family circumstances and/or those who are immunocompromised or unable to receive the vaccine, the risk of (re)infection and negative health outcomes remain very high. One way that everyone in this class can contribute to making our learning environment safer and more equitable is to choose to wear a mask when we are together inside.
For University of Guelph policy statements and updates on Covid-19, including the request that anyone who feels sick stay home, please see: https://news.uoguelph.ca/covid-19/. Starting in September, Hospitality Services will have rapid tests available for students at the checkout counter of various locations across campus, including: Chef’s Kitchen in the University Centre; Creelman Hall; Starbucks in the library; the Bookstore; and wayfinding stations in Branion Plaza and Creelman Plaza during Orientation Week. Rapid tests and vaccination shots will also be available from Student Health Services.

### Preliminary Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>TOPIC(S)</th>
<th>FORMAL SUBMISSIONS/ DEADLINES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 9-13</td>
<td>• intro to the course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 16-20</td>
<td>• overview of contemporary research and thought in geography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• what are research aims/questions and objectives? how do they related to methods?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23-27</td>
<td>• TBD based on ideas generated and discussion during our first meeting on Jan 13. Student responsibilities/preparations and meeting plan will be shared with class by end of Jan. 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 30-Feb 3</td>
<td>• data collection/organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 6-10</td>
<td>• data analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 13-17</td>
<td>• planning for fieldwork and other forms of data collection; overview and tips for proposal presentations</td>
<td>Proposal outline due by 5pm, Fri. Feb. 17; upload to CourseLink dropbox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### READING WEEK (Feb 20-24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 27-Mar 3</td>
<td>• Panel: Hearing from other GEG faculty about their tips and approaches to academic writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 6-10</td>
<td>• Panel: Hearing from senior GEG grad students about their research experiences and ‘life beyond first year’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 13-17</td>
<td>• TBD based on ideas generated and discussion during our first meeting on Feb. 17. Student responsibilities/preparations and meeting plan will be shared with class by end of Mar. 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 20-24</td>
<td>Research Proposal Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 27-31</td>
<td>Research Proposal Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 3-7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MON., Apr 10</td>
<td>Research Proposal Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Evaluation
Your final course grade will be determined by Jen in consultation with your supervisor/committee. The evaluation will consider the oral presentation (25% as evaluated by all faculty in attendance at your presentation) and final research proposal (75% as evaluated by supervisor, the course instructor, and where deemed appropriate by the supervisor, one or more committee members). Class attendance and participation are taken into account; unannounced absences will be communicated to the supervisor and discussed in terms of whether they should impact your final grade.

To keep your progress on track, a series of non-negotiable deadlines are scheduled throughout the semester. They are as follows:

- **February 17:** Draft proposal outline (recommended: also share and discuss draft with your supervisor)
• **March 6-25:** Full draft of proposal to supervisor/committee and Jen -- no PDFs please! Students will submit at their convenience during this window (and no later than 5pm, March 25). Jen will review drafts and return feedback in the order that they are received.

• **March 27 & Apr 10:** Proposal presentations (scheduled according to supervisor/committee availability and taking order from last semester into account). All GEOG*6091 students expected to attend all proposal presentations.

• **April 17:** Final copies of research proposal; upload to Courselink Dropbox by 5pm

**Research Proposal Guidelines**

The thesis research proposal will:

1. Briefly contextualize and define the area/problem to be studied;
2. Articulate how you will approach this area/problem through a research question;
3. Identify the broad aim and specific objectives of the research that will address this question;
4. Describe the particular approach to the research (data sources, methods of data collection, methods of analysis, etc.) to enable completion of the objectives; and,
5. Identify the expected scholarly and practical contributions of the research, including the timeline that will be followed.

Length: 4,000 - 5,000 words + any figure titles and bibliography. Options regarding structure, style, and other content-related topics will be detailed and discussed in class.

**Presentation Guidelines**

The presentation will be a maximum of 20 minutes (and no less than 17). An additional 10 minutes will be allowed for audience questions, discussion, and suggestions.

Options regarding structure, style, and other content-related topics will be detailed and discussed in class. Remember, most of the people will not have seen your proposal, so clear organization and visuals will help to communicate your points efficiently and effectively. Ultimately, the objective is for you rationalize your research and research approach and for the audience to ask questions that will help to extend your thinking, to raise possible limitations, and to make suggestions that will improve the potential of your proposed study.

**Instructor Policies for the Course**

**Attendance.** Attendance at all class meetings in the schedule is mandatory; please raise any planned/necessary absences with Jen in person or over phone at least one week in advance. Absences related to illness or other unexpected personal circumstances should be raised with Jen as soon as is feasible. Absences that go unannounced or unaccounted for will be communicated to the student’s supervisor and a decision will be made about whether they should negatively impact the student’s final grade.

**Video and Audio Recordings.** Slides and any video/audio content developed for this course by Prof. Silver are her intellectual property. Students are welcome to cite them in assignments and discuss them with
classmates and other students. However, slides and any video/audio content developed for this course by Prof. Silver are not intended for circulation outside of the course and she does not grant permission for students to permanently save, post or publicly share them.

**Academic Integrity.** Students are expected to undertake this course with honesty and integrity, and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Refer to the Academic Calendar and the university policies below. If you still have uncertainty about how to avoid plagiarism, complete the U of G tutorial (see: academicintegrity.uoguelph.ca/) and/or speak with the instructor or library resource-persons for guidance. Plagiarism and other types of misconduct will not be tolerated; any instances will be treated seriously and are likely to be referred on to the Associate Dean Academic of the College.

**Communication.** Please check your university email account and the 'news' section of the CourseLink page frequently (ideally at least once every 1-2 days). Any important information arising throughout the semester will be communicated by these means and the university mandates that students must check them. The instructor and TA will do their best to respond to emails within 2 business days. Emails received after 3pm on Friday will not be responded to until at least the following Monday, and questions that are answered in course documents will receive short replies only (i.e., see course syllabus). Please use proper punctuation and professional language when emailing the instructor or TA.

**University of Guelph Course Policies**

**Email 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.** Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses are available in 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 promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.
Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time.

More information: www.uoguelph.ca/sas

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 outlined 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.

Disclaimer. Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/) and circulated by email.
Illness. Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

COVID-19 Safety Protocols. For information on current safety protocols, follow these links:
- https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/
- https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campuses/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces

Please note, that these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.