

GEOG 6091 | Geographical Research Methods II (Winter 2025)

Department of Geography, Environment & Geomatics, University of Guelph

Course Information

Pre-requisites: GEOG*6090 - Must be completed prior to taking this course.

Instructor: Dr. Karina Benessaiah (pronouns She/Her)

Email kbenessa@uoguelph.ca ; Meetings: by appointment (in person or via MS Teams)

Classroom location | Hutt 234 | ~~Tuesdays 8:30-11:20am~~ **Fridays 9-11am (we might start at 8:30am and end at 11:20am when needed, to be determined in advance)**

Course Website | <https://courselink.uoguelph.ca/d2l/home/925392>

Course Format | Attendance and active participation is required for all students registered in the class.

****Please note that some classes may be online if the situation warrants it (i.e. covid 19 or other circumstances); class schedule, topics and readings subject to change and will be announced on courselink ****

Land acknowledgement

The university of Guelph, and our classroom, resides on treaty land and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. This is the home of many past, present and future First Nations, Inuit and Metis people. The Dish with One Spoon is an agreement between Hodinöhsö:ni', Anishinaabeg and their allied nations to live peaceably on the lands throughout what is now known as the Great Lakes Region. The circle at the centre is a dish with a beaver's tail, indicating that they will have one dish and what belongs to one will be shared among all. This land acknowledgement is a recognition of collective responsibility to hold governments and colonial forces to account, to seek redress and healing for injustice. Learn more [here](#).

Course Overview & Learning outcomes

The purpose of this course is to help first-year master's students gain insight on the diverse approaches to geographic research through readings, in-class discussions and presentations by different speakers (e.g. faculty, guest speakers, technical staff, and senior graduate students) and to support students as they develop their own research project proposal. Throughout the semester, students will refine a broad research aim or question, identify their research objectives and associated research methods and write and orally present their research proposal. By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Examine and discuss key approaches within geography and geographical research methods.
- Develop research aims and questions that are relevant to their sub-discipline and that are feasible given their proposed objectives and analytical methods.
- Effectively communicate a well-supported research proposal in written and oral form.

Class Schedule

Note: Schedule of session topics and assigned readings may change. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. Students are responsible for paying careful attention and staying organized when those changes are made. Readings and other course materials will be posted on courselink

Dates	Topics and Activities	Assignments due date
Week 1 (Jan 6-12)	Course introduction Discussion of what is the rationale for a research proposal From context paper to proposal	
Week 2 (Jan 13-19)	Quick overview: research philosophies and approaches in geography Developing your research aims/questions and objectives What is "good" research?	<i>Bring to class:</i> conceptual mapping of context paper main bodies of knowledge, main research gaps and proto-research questions (not graded)
Week 3 (Jan 20-26)	Linking questions to research design/methods (I) Introducing the W25 'Objectives to Methods Worksheet'	
Week 4 (Jan 27-Feb 2)	Linking questions to research design/methods (II)	
Week 5 (Feb 3-9)	Data collection planning	Proposal outline & objectives to methods worksheet due on February 7. Submit to Karina and Supervisor(s)/advisory committee no later than 11:59pm.
Week 6 (Feb 10-16)	Research week – no in-person class	
Week 7 (Feb 17-23)	Spring break	
Week 8 (Feb 24-Mar 2)	Effective writing and presentation	Submission window opens for the full draft of the proposal on March 2. Proposal draft due during submission window (March 2-9th) and must be submitted no later than March 9th at 11:59pm (submitted to Karina & Supervisor(s) & one peer-reviewer)
Week 9 (Mar 3-9)	TBD based on ideas discussed collectively in class	Peer-review of a fellow student's draft proposal due three days after reception (submission window March 5-12th)
Week 10 (Mar 10-16)	Research Proposal Presentations	
Week 11 (Mar 17-23)	Research Proposal Presentations	
Week 12 (Mar 24-30)	Research Proposal Presentations	
Week 13 (Mar 31-Apr 6)	Research week, Instructor will be available for consultations	Final proposals due April 11th at 11:59pm. Email as .doc or PDF file to Karina & Supervisor(s) no later than 11:59pm.

Readings & Support for writing

There is no textbook for the class. All assigned readings will be posted on courselink. Students should complete the readings *before* class. Students will be provided with advance notice for any changes to required readings.

Learning Services - Writing Centre

As the semester progresses, you may find yourself with questions on research or paper writing. While you are always encouraged to talk to me, you may find the following helpful resources. The writing Center – <https://www.lib.uoquelfh.ca/writing-studying/writing-resources-workshops>

Assessment

Your final course grade will be determined by the course instructor in consultation with your supervisor/committee. Your overall grade will consider your oral proposal presentation (25% as evaluated by all faculty in attendance at your presentation) and the final research proposal (65%) as evaluated by the course instructor, your supervisor(s) and if applicable one or more committee members). Completion of other course assignments including a peer-review of another students draft proposal, attending and writing a short summary of at least 3 academic/guest lectures and active participation during the class will constitute the remainder 10% of the class. Class attendance and active participation are expected and will be taken into consideration; repeat absences and/or absences that have not been discussed with the course instructor in advance will be discussed with the supervisor and might impact your final grade.

Deadlines (see class schedule):

February 7: Proposal Outline and Objectives to Methods worksheet (email both as .doc files to Karina and Supervisor(s) by 11:59pm)

March 9: Full draft of the proposal due (email as .doc file to Karina and Supervisor(s)). You can submit the full draft of the proposal any time during the submission window (March 2nd-9th) but no later than March 9th at 11:59pm. The instructor will review drafts in the order received; students should discuss in advance with their supervisor(s) anticipated turnaround times.

Peer-reviews due 3 days after being received (window March 5-12th). Guideline for the peer-review will be posted on courselink

Weeks 10,11 and 12 Proposal presentations scheduled according to supervisor(s)/committee availability. All GEOG*6091 students expected to attend each other's proposal presentations. Guideline for the oral proposal presentation will be posted on courselink.

April 11: Final copies of research proposal (email as .doc or PDF file to Karina and Supervisor(s) by 11:59pm). Guideline for the written proposal will be posted on courselink.

An *academic integrity quiz* is mandatory and pass/fail to be able to submit your draft and final proposals (will be posted online). Keep back-up copies of all your assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Students need to attend at least 3 academic/professional presentations (e.g. Geography guest lectures or other university lectures) and write a short summary (guideline will be posted online; to be done within weeks 2-12; cannot all be done in the same week).

Instructor's course Policies

Course attendance

Attendance is required for all scheduled classes in the syllabus. Please discuss with the course instructor any prospective absences in advance at least a week in advance. Unexpected absences (e.g. illness or other unexpected personal circumstances) should be brought up to the instructor as soon as possible. Repeated absences that have not been discussed with the instructor will be communicated to the student's supervisor and a decision will be made about whether these will result in deductions from the student's final grade.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to undertake this course with honesty and integrity, and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for finding guilt. If you have uncertainty about how to avoid plagiarism in your writing, please refer to the Academic Calendar, the university-produced tutorial (<https://academicintegrity.uoguelph.ca/plagiarism>) and/or talk to a university librarian or the instructor. Plagiarism and other types of misconduct will not be tolerated, and any instances will be treated seriously.

Using artificial intelligence tools (e.g. generative AI tools) such as ChatGPT or similar tools that generate text, code, or visual images) for content generation and submitting it as one's own original work is not permitted in this course.

Communication: The instructor will do their best to respond to emails within 1-3 business days. Emails sent after work hours will be answered the next day. Emails sent after 3pm on Friday will not be responded to until at least the following Monday, and questions with answers that can be found in course documents will receive short replies (e.g., "please see course syllabus"). Students must be respectful and use professional language when emailing the instructor. Please check your university email account and the course's courselink page once every 1-2 business days. Any important information arising throughout the semester will be communicated by these means and the university mandates that students must check them.

Late Policy:

I do not want to have to give late penalties, if you cannot meet a deadline for medical reasons or personal reasons, let me know as soon as possible. Please talk to me in advance and we will try and find a solution. If you submit your assignments late - without having discussed your situation with me- the full allocated mark will be reduced by 10% for every 24 hours (including Saturday and Sundays) after the deadline for the submission of the assignment to a limit of three days. After three days the assignment will get a zero. Late assignments will not be accepted once graded assignments have been returned officially to the class at large unless circumstances permit, and alternative arrangements have been made.

University Policy Statements

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

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 Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible. For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or visit the [SAS 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 outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

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.

Drop Date. The last date to drop one-semester courses is Friday, April 4th, 2025.

Copies of out-of-class assignments. Keep reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

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 Undergraduate Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

Covid-19: The risk of contracting COVID has not disappeared. 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 remains high. See for recommendations on how to maintain a healthy campus <https://news.uoguelph.ca/covid-19/>. So if you feel sick, let the instructor know of your situation and consider whether you should be staying home.