

GEO 406 - FIELD STUDIES IN GEOGRAPHY

Thursdays 2:00 - 4:30

Miller Hall Room 6

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Office Hours: 12:00 - 2:00 Tues or by appt

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a field-based, regionally specific study of selected topics in cultural, economic, environmental, physical, political, social or urban geography. The class is a core requirement for the Geography major and an optional class for the minor. It also fulfills the Laboratory or Field Experience Requirement for a BA degree in the College of Arts and Science. The college requires its students to complete at least one course which includes some laboratory or field experience. In such courses the external world is observed in a controlled manner using systematic techniques and methods. A substantial portion of the course must include data collection, data analysis, and hypothetical testing under supervised conditions.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, students will have completed basic training in geographic field methods including, but not restricted to basic mapping, repeat photo analysis, sampling designs, ecological characterization, interviewing, textual approaches, and participatory methods. To complete the course, students must be able to 1) describe how geographic field studies differs from experimental studies; 2) compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative methods; 4) identify the appropriate field methods and protocols for addressing a range of geographic research question; 3) perform basic database management and exploratory data statistical analyses; and 4) synthesize and communicate findings from field-based data collection.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students must purchase 1) a field journal and 2) a notebook for archiving all class materials. Appropriate outdoor clothing and footwear is also necessary. There is no required textbook

GRADING

Final letter grade is based upon the percentage of points earned out of a possible 285 points.

Field assignments - 110 points (11 at 10 points each)	40%	Grading scale
Project proposal paper - 75 points	25%	90-100 A
Project proposal presentation - 25 points	10%	80-89 B
Field journal - 50 points	15%	70-79 C
Exit exam - 25 points	10%	60-69 D
Total points - 285 points		<60 E

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Proposal paper: This paper proposes and outlines a larger study incorporating the development of a question, a hypothesis, and the selection of an appropriate field-based methodology to generate data to answer this question. Format will follow a standard proposal using the following sections: Project Summary, Introduction, Background, Study Area, Methodology, Analyses, and Expected Outcomes, References. Length must be at least five pages (excluding the Project Summary and References section), single-spaced, 12-point font Arial, and submitted as a pdf.

Proposal presentation: The proposal must be presented to the class for critique. This is the visual component of your paper. Slides will contain the figures (maps, photos, graphs) referenced in your paper. Each presentation will be 10 minutes. The presentation will be made during final exam week.

Field assignments: Eleven assignments will require field-based work or follow up lab work from previous field data collection. These assignments will be due the following week or as specified for longer assignments. Students are to submit their field assignments as individual work, but the nature of the assignments may require collaboration in groups in the field.

Data archiving: Students must keep a **field journal** throughout the semester in which they record their notes and observations in the field. A spiral-bound perforated notebook is sufficient. Students are also to assemble and maintain a record of all class handouts, assignments, graded work, and readings provided in hardcopy and assembled into a hardback **three-ring binder**. These will also include a hardcopy of the proposal paper and presentation, and a list of the digital files for the course that have been formally archived online and shared with the instructor. It is essential that students show evidence of an ability to maintain take notes and maintain records.

Oral exit exam: Students will meet individually with the professor during the last three weeks of class (excluding dead week) to assess and comment upon the student's performance and contribution to class discussions, and to address questions concerning the proposal paper and presentation. The students will also be posed hypothetical research questions and asked to compose a field-based research plan based on the content of the course.

Grading rubric:

An "A" for the course is characterized by:

On-time attendance for all classes and field trips

No absences

Full participation in all classes and field trips

Evidence of preparation for all classes

High quality of contributions to discussions, data collection, and group work.

Succinct, clearly written, proposal paper with very little redundancy or empty statements

Well-designed visuals and clear communication in the supporting proposal presentation

Notebook contains a complete record of the class materials and student performance.

SCHEDULE

Please consult the online class page in Canvas for the current and most up-to-date schedule.

DATE		TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
Jan	14	Field research cultures and ethics	
	21	Basic locational mapping	Mapping and analyzing track data
	28	Sampling design	Estimating cover
Feb	4	Distributed data networks	iButton sensor monitoring
	11	Forest characterization	Arboretum activity
	18	Database management	MS Access
	25	Modeling field data	Cultural weathering rates
March	3	Exploratory statistics	Computer lab activity
	10	Repeat photography	Lexington landscape interpretation
	24	Textual methods	Finding nature at the mall
	31	Interviewing	Alternative food networks
	7	Participatory methods	Community volunteer activity
April	14	Independent projects and oral exit exams	
	21		
	28	Dead Week	
May	3	Final presentations 1:00 - 3:30	
	6	Submission of paper (in pdf via email) and delivery of notebook to Rm 869 POT	

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (excused or unexcused) per university policy. As this course meets 13 times, three absences will require a withdrawal. Attendance will be taken regularly. On the second unexcused absences your final grade will be lowered by one letter (from an A to a B, a B to C...)

Electronic devices in the classroom: You are encouraged to bring your laptops and portable devices to class. However, use of them in class is restricted to class content. Undue use or attention to your devices can result in your dismissal from the class for that day..

Communications between instructor and students: Verbal communications in the classroom will be prioritized over electronic communications. Please check your UK email at least daily. Email from students requesting information made available in class will not be acknowledged.

Verification of absences: Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 states that faculty have the right to request “appropriate verification” when students claim an excused absence because of illness or death in the family. Written notification or verification must be provided **within one week** of the absence. Appropriate notification of absences due to university-related trips is required prior to the absence.

Excused absences: Students should notify the professor of absences **prior** to class when possible. S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: a) **serious** illness, b) illness or death of family member, c) University-related trips, d) major religious holidays, and e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor. Notes or emails from an on or off campus health clinic or doctor (Tier 1 and 2) or doctor do not automatically suffice for an excused absence. Minor illness or medical appointments will be considered unexcused until the end of the semester. At that time the student’s full attendance and grade record will be examined to make a decision regarding the possibility of make up work. It is not feasible to make up all missed work as some activities are not replicable outside of the group and/or field setting of each week’s class.

Students must contact the instructor the night before any class meeting if they are ill and expect to be absent. In all cases of a pre-announced, school-affiliated absence on a test date an official, **original, signed, hardcopy** excuse is also required. The name, email address, and phone number of the specific individual overseeing your official university-related absence must be provided so that direct verification can be made. Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through the religious liaison in the UK Office of Academic Affairs.

Job interviews, job fairs, standardized test administrations, family weddings, possession of airline tickets, and Greek events are not excused absences. Students with chronic medical conditions that jeopardize attendance must go through UK Disability Services or the UK Health Center to have these absences officially excused.

Academic integrity: Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited. Part II of Student Rights and Responsibilities (available online <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission. When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in

any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is submitted, it must be submitted by the student, and the student alone. When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain (Section 6.3.1). Please note: Any assignment you turn in may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

Accommodations due to disability. If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (Room 2, Alumni Gym, 257-2754) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.