

Geography 391

Field Research

Winter 2017

12:30 - 2:30 F EV1 350

Instructor

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Office Hours: EV1 rm, 222, Wed. 1:30 to 4:00 and Thurs. 12:30 to 2:20.

TA

Office Hours: available upon request via e-mail

Calendar Description

Field research course in which a specific area will be analyzed from a geographic point of view. Individual or group analysis of specific field problems.

Prereq: Level at least 3A Honours Geography.

2017 estimated cost to student (winter 2017 no field trip fee anticipated)

Overview

Students will work as members of a study group comprised of 3-4 people. The theme for this session of 391 will be pre-field research and field methods for a regional geographical synthesis. Each student selects the group in which they wish to participate. Study topics include: regional geography, geomorphology, urban studies, conservation and park management, ecology and recreational land use, climate change and adaptation. Each group will be required to compile the necessary data to provide a detailed synthesis of their study area, the environs of a sub watershed. Each group is responsible for organizing their study, allocating tasks to particular members of the group and carrying out the actual research.

Objectives

- to design and complete a successful field research program.
- to develop field research skills and to work cooperatively and equitably as a team in problem solving in the pre-field, field and post-field components of the research.
- To present a verbal and written report based on field observations, measurements and conclusions.

Course Structure

Dates: Class meetings, 12:30-2:20, EV1 rm 350 on the following Fridays:
January 6, Introduction to field location (Rockwood), field research design, research themes, group selection;
January 13, research proposal, tasks, timelines, budget, group work and refinement of topics;
January 20, field methods and safety, group progress updates;
January 27, field proposals, group progress updates;
February 3, Proposal review and group progress,
February 10, Field tests and pilot studies
Field visits (optional dates) February TBA; March 4-6;
March 11-13 (Friday/Sunday).
March 24, Field research presentations

Equipment: Normal field clothing for the time of year. The weather can be variable (snow, cold and wet), so be prepared with appropriate field clothing. You will arrange, during the pre-field component, for equipment suitable for the investigation of your field topic (Ecology Lab EV1 135). A notebook for field notes is important.

Travel: Transportation to and from the field will be arranged.

Fee: A course fee for transportation not expected for 2017

Various References available for on line and in library for:

Field Techniques and Research Methods in Geography,

Introduction to Geographic Field Methods and Techniques in Human and Physical Geography

Fieldwork in Geography

The Study –

Field research can be divided into 3 phases: Pre-Field, Field and Post-Field

I Pre-Field

The most important component of field study is the pre-field planning. Once you have defined your topic, your group is required to submit a 10-12 page statement on your pre-field program. The statement should include information on the goal and objectives of the study, a list of information sources, and the proposed outline of your study, including the field program.

The outline of the field portion of the statement should include where, when and how, you will collect your field data.

II Field

The field portion of the course is intended to 1) check information based on your pre-field assessment and 2) collect additional information in order to complete your study. A preliminary, informal field summary will be given by each group in the field.

III Post Field

Within 4 days of returning from the field, your group will submit a summary of field work (7-9 pages). The summary of field work should include date and location of the field visit and information on the success of your field tour. For example, did you meet all your pre-field objectives? The summary of field work should also include an outline of the final report.

Each group will present a 15-minute seminar to the entire class during the meeting on March 24 (12:30 to 2:20). The purpose of the seminar is to familiarize the rest of the class with your topic. Attendance is mandatory (Verification of Illness form required).

Although the groups will be working somewhat independently, a collection of the studies could form a geographical monograph of the environs of the study area. March 31 will be independent group work and report preparation.

Evaluation and Deadlines

In order to ensure that we keep to an adequate time frame for this course, I will insist on the following requirements being met. All reports are group reports. The course grade will be based on group work.

1. Statement of research and field plan, progress report due January 27, (10-12 pages) (15%)
2. Summary of fieldwork, due four days after your return from the field (7-9 pages) (11%).
3. Presentation of a 15-minute, group seminar - March 24 (20%)
4. A report on your study topic, due on or before April 8, (15 to 25 pages) (50%)
5. Peer evaluation submitted online via learn by (2% Mar.24 & 2% April 12)

Please note that it is the responsibility of each student to be aware of what constitutes responsible behaviour in a class, lab or the field and what constitutes plagiarism, and your rights and responsibilities with respect to these issues. The University of Waterloo has policies on these issues which are outlined in the calendar and available on the university web site.

Field Work Risk Management Form: This form must be completed prior to undertaking any field work entailing higher risk and the requisite approvals obtained. Components of these forms need to be completed by the instructor and the student.

<https://uwaterloo.ca/safety-office/programs-and-procedures/field-work>

https://uwaterloo.ca/safety-office/sites/ca.safety-office/files/uploads/files/risk_responsibility08_0.pdf

<https://uwaterloo.ca/safety-office/sites/ca.safety-office/files/uploads/files/emergencyinfoformdec08.pdf>

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/. Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/>.

Research Ethics: Please note that the University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty which involves humans as participants to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Director, Office of Human Research and Animal Care (Office). The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office's Guidelines for Research with Human Participants (Guidelines) as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures which are of concern when conducting research with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.). If the development of your research proposal consists of research that involves humans as participants, the please contact the course instructor for guidance and see <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/>

Note for students with disabilities:

The AccessAbility Services Office, located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the Office at the beginning of each academic term. <https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/>

Mental Health: The University of Waterloo considers students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges - physical and / or emotional. **Please note that help is available.** Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services> is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

Religious Observances: Please inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm

