

GGR1200 - Physical Geography Core Course

Fridays 12-3 PM, Fall Term
Synchronous Delivery

Instructors



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Course Description

The Graduate Department of Geography and Planning offers a mandatory course on topics of interest to physical geographers, and centered on the dissemination of information useful for the career advancement of Masters and Doctoral students. Seminar presentations from both U of T faculty and invited researchers will be given to introduce students to the Department's physical geography research clusters. Practical information on how to write funding applications, paper abstracts and how to give effective oral presentations will also be covered. Discussions of multi-perspective issues such as the supervisor-student relationship, women in science, the peer-review system, authorship and evaluating success in academia will be led by students. Actual content of course will vary from year-to-year depending on the specialty of Instructors and interests of enrolled students.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to gain a broad overview of Physical Geography at U of T and beyond, complete your thesis proposal (MSc) or thesis literature review (PhD), and develop strong science communication skills.

Course Organization

All course material will be posted to Quercus. Any changes will be indicated on the course Quercus site and discussed with the class. If you need assistance, you can seek support on the [Quercus Help](#). Alternatively, you can contact the Instructional Technology Support at [Arts & Science Educational Technology Team](#). [Google Chrome](#) or [Mozilla Firefox](#) are the preferred browsers to optimally use Quercus; update your browsers frequently.

Both Zoom and BB Collaborate will be used for the course. You are expected to review and be in compliance with [the University's requirements for online learning](#). As for Zoom, you are required to register for a Zoom account using your UofT email, prior to the first lecture.

Assignments and Evaluation

Two instructors teach this course and both instructors will evaluate your work. You are required to submit your assignments in the appropriate folder on Quercus.

Assignment 1 – Participation

Throughout the semester and 10%

Part I (5%): Attendance will be recorded each week. It is very important that you inform the instructors if you cannot make a class due to illness, field work activities, or attending academia conferences.

Part II (5%): Joining in class discussions and activities. This component assesses your ability to articulate comments and questions during class, your ability to make meaningful contributions to the discussion, and your ability to analyze and interpret key points raised in the class discussions.

Assignment 2 – One Page Research Statement

Friday, October 2 @ 12:00pm and 10%

You will develop an original one-page research statement for this class that is intended to serve as a working document for your grant application (i.e. NSERC and OGS). Examples will be provided to help you formulate your own research statement. Please discuss with your supervisor to make sure your research topic is in line with your MSc/PhD research. If time permits, you will be asked to give a 3-minute presentation of your research statement to the class.

Assignment 3 – Two Seminar Summaries

See below and 10%

In order to identify any writing problems that might require correction, you will be required to write a summary of two of the guest faculty seminars that will be given during the course. Each of your summaries should be approximately 2 pages (double spaced) and consist of two parts:

Part I (5%): A brief overview of the talk, outlining the need for the study in terms of which gap it fills, the question(s) asked, and the approach or main methods and important results found. Be sure to include a statement of the overall scholarly or societal significance of the findings.

Part II (5%): An insightful assessment and analysis of the talk. For example, did the methods suit the questions asked, did it come to a reasonable conclusion based on the data, did it effectively argue a standpoint with supporting points, were there obvious omissions, biases or limitations of the work, was there sufficient novelty to the work, did it fill the research gap noted in the introduction, etc.?

Each summary should be submitted online **5 days** after the seminar, so that marked summaries can be returned the class timely.

Assignment 4 – Research Methods Presentation

Midway through the course and 10%

Midway through the course, students will give a 20 minute presentation describing and explaining the laboratory or field methods, or computer modelling software or approaches that will be used as part of their research.

Assignment 5 – Research Proposal (MSc) or Literature Review (PhD)

Friday, December 11 @ 5 PM and 40%

MSc students: The research proposal you prepare for this class is intended to serve as a working document for the final thesis proposal that will be approved by your committee. The intent is that you can take this document, adapt and add where required by your supervisor, and then prepare for approval of the final document. The format requirements will be provided later in the term.

PhD students: A literature review is more than a summary of previous research. The literature review organizes previous work in order to develop a line of argument and establish the groundwork for your own study. While a literature review may use individual papers to illustrate broader themes, it is not an evaluation of each article, research project, or program separately. Refer to peer-reviewed papers for examples of effective literature reviews. Your review should lead you to the research objective(s), question(s) or hypotheses that will guide your work. Please include these questions/objectives as a separate section at the end of the review. We will not grade your research objective, questions or hypotheses at this stage of the course; rather, this is an opportunity to receive early feedback prior to the development of your research proposal. By addressing these considerations you are setting a foundation for your research question and rationale for your research objectives. In this way, you can relate your research findings back to the literature (in the discussion section of your thesis/dissertation) in order to explain the significance or contributions of your research.

Assignment 6 – Literature Review / Research Proposal Presentation

During the two last classes and 20%

You will be scheduled to present your literature review or research proposal in the last two classes. Presentations will be limited to 12 minutes in length, plus 3 minutes for questions. Marks for the oral presentation will be based on evidence of background research, provision of context, overall coherence and organization, and ability to generate interest and to respond to questions, as well as presentation details such as ability to be heard, provision of clear visual materials, and ability to finish on time. We will discuss strategies for successful presentations in class and further details will be provided later in the term.

Late Penalties

Extensions without penalty will be granted for reasons of accommodation, illness or emergencies when appropriate documentation is submitted to the instructors. Reweighting of assignments/grades is not permitted.

Required Text

There is no required textbook for this course.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – September 11

12-1:30pm Course Overview (Harvey and He)

1:30-3pm Questions

Readings:

1. Stearns SC (1987) Some modest advice for graduate students. *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America* 68(2): 145-150.
2. Huey RB (1987) Reply to Stearns: some acynical advice for graduate students. *Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America* 68(2): 150-153.
3. Schwartz, M. (2008) The importance of stupidity in scientific research. *Journal of Cell Science*. 121(11): 1771-1772.

Week 2 – September 18

12-1:30pm History of Physical Geography (Harvey)

1:30-3pm Research paradigms and the philosophy of science (Harvey)

Readings:

Aspinall, R. 2010. A century of physical geography research in the Annals. *Annals Assoc. Amer. Geographers* 100:5, 1049-1059.

Week 3 – September 25

12-1:30pm Writing a one-page outline of proposed research (He)

1:30-3pm Common scientific writing errors (Harvey)

Readings: no reading

Week 4 – October 2

12-2pm Research approaches in Physical Geography (Harvey)

2-3pm Writing tips (Daniel Newman)

Readings:

Whitfield, P.J. 2012. Why the provenance of data matters: assessing “fitness for purpose” for environmental data. *Canadian Water Resources Journal* 37(1): 23-36.

Week 5 – October 9

12-2pm Guest Lectures by Professor Trevor Porter and Professor Matthew Adams

2-3pm What to include in your research method presentations (He)

Readings:

TBA for Professor Porter’s readings.

1. Adams, Matthew D., and Pavlos S. Kanaroglou. "Mapping real-time air pollution health risk for environmental management: Combining mobile and stationary air pollution monitoring with neural network models." *Journal of environmental management* 168 (2016): 133-141.
2. Requia, Weeberb J., et al. "Risk of the Brazilian health care system over 5572 municipalities to exceed health care capacity due to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)." *Science of the Total Environment* (2020): 139144.
3. Adams, Matthew D. "Air pollution in Ontario, Canada during the COVID-19 State of Emergency." *Science of The Total Environment* (2020): 140516.

Week 6 – October 16

12-3pm Student Presentations: Research Methods

Readings: no reading

Week 7 – October 23

12-3pm Student Presentations: Research Methods

Readings: no reading

Week 8 – October 30

12-1:30pm How to write an abstract (Danny)

1:30-3pm How to write an effective literature review (He)

Readings:

Torraco, R.J. (2009) Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review* 4(3): 356-367.

Week 9 – November 6

12-1:30pm Element of a research proposal (He)

1:30-3pm Oral presentation schedule and tips (He)

Readings: no reading

Week 10 – November 13

12-3pm Guest Lecture(s)

Readings: TBA

Week 11 – November 20

12-3pm Student Presentations: Literature Review or Proposal

Readings: no reading

Week 12 – November 27

12-3pm Student Presentations: Literature Review or Proposal

Readings: no reading

Please note: the lecture topics are subject to change based on guest lecturers' availability.

Graduate Course Policies

Important Dates

Graduate courses are normally a minimum of 2-3 hours/week for 12 weeks. Reading week is optional for graduate courses. If observed, the instructor will inform the class and provide a make-up date for the missed class.

Fall 2020

July 30, 2020	Course enrolment opens
September 8, 2020	F (fall) and Y (fall-winter) session graduate courses and seminars begin
September 11, 2020	Final registration deadline
September 21, 2020	Deadline to add F (fall) and Y (fall-winter) session courses
October 26, 2020	Deadline to drop Fall courses
October-November 2020	Undergraduate reading week*

Winter 2020

January 4, 2021	S (winter) session graduate courses and seminars begin
January 13, 2021	Grades for F (fall) courses available for viewing on ACORN
January 18, 2021	Deadline to add S (winter) session courses
February 22, 2021	Deadline to drop S (winter) and Y (fall-winter) session courses
April 16, 2021	Grade deadline for students graduating in June 2021

Summer 2021

May 3, 2021	Summer F (May-June) and Y (May-August) session graduate courses and seminars begin
May 19, 2021	Grades for S (winter) and Y (fall-winter) courses available for viewing on ACORN
May 28, 2021	Final date to drop F (May-June) session courses without academic penalty
June 7, 2021	Summer S (July-August) session graduate courses and seminars begin
July 14, 2021	Grades for F (May-June) courses available for viewing on ACORN

* Reading week applies to undergraduate programs, and is optional for graduate courses, at the discretion of the instructor. If observed, the instructor will inform the class and provide a make-up date for the missed class. This may include an extra class at the end of term. Fall reading week dates: UTSC – October 10-16; UTM – October 13-16; UTSG – November 9-13. Winter reading week dates: UTSC – February 13-19; UTM – February 16-19; UTSG – February 16-19.

Course Syllabi

A final course syllabus, which includes all assignments, deadlines and weighting of methods of evaluation, must be made available to all students enrolled in the course as early as possible, no later than the deadline for enrolling in classes. Changes to the methods of evaluation or their relative weights cannot be made after this date without the consent of a simple majority of students in the class, provided a vote is announced at the previous class meeting.

Late Assignments

Instructors are not obligated to accept late work, except where there are legitimate, documented reasons beyond a student's control. In such cases a late penalty is not normally applied. In all other circumstances, if an instructor intends to accept and apply penalties to late assignments this will be clearly set out in the syllabus.

Attendance and Participation

Although attendance makes up no more than 20% of the final course grade, regular and consistent attendance in graduate courses is expected. Most graduate courses are seminar style classes, which involve collaborative work and in-class discussions with other students and instructors. Students who are unable to attend class each week must inform the instructor as early as possible.

Accessibility and Accommodations

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations because you are disabled, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) as soon as possible.

Where there is an accommodation recommended by Accessibility Services, the department and/or instructors will be provided with an accommodation letter.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct by graduate students is taken very seriously. The University's policy on academic misconduct is found in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (the Code). Students in graduate studies are expected to commit to the highest standards of integrity and to understand the importance of protecting and acknowledging intellectual property. For example, it is assumed that they bring to their graduate studies a clear understanding of how to cite references appropriately, thereby avoiding plagiarism.

Regarding plagiarism, the Code includes the following statements:

B.i.1. It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

(d) to represent as one's own idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism.

Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on "knowing," the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.

Other academic offences include the possession and/or use of unauthorized aids in examinations, submitting the same paper for different courses, forgery (whether of academic records or other documents), concocting facts or references to sources, personating someone, and other forms of cheating and academic dishonesty. Please refer to sections B.i.1. and B.i.3. in the Code for detailed descriptions of offences applicable to students.

The [SGS Academic Integrity Resources](#) webpage outlines the policy on academic misconduct and the process for handling an allegation of academic misconduct.

Coursework Extensions

The authority to grant an extension to submit coursework beyond the sessional grade deadline is with the department and not the instructor of the course. To request a formal extension, students must submit a Coursework Extension Form, completed by both the student and course instructor, to the relevant graduate department prior to the final grade deadline.

In order to ensure fairness in granting extensions, the department must be reasonably certain that:

- The reasons for delay are serious and substantiated.
- The student is not granted unfair advantage over other students in the course.
- The student has a reasonable chance of completing the outstanding work within the time allotted.
- The normal and satisfactory completion of any new coursework is not in jeopardy.

Extension requests for medical reasons (e.g. short-term illness) must be accompanied by a medical note. Extension requests for students with accommodations due to disability must be supported by documentation from Accessibility Services. Extension requests for other reasons must be detailed in the form or a note to the department.

Religious Accommodations

Students must alert instructors in a timely fashion to any upcoming religious observances and anticipated absences. Instructors will make every reasonable effort to avoid scheduling tests, exams or other compulsory activities at these times. In the case of an unavoidable conflict with a compulsory activity, every reasonable effort is made to give students the opportunity to make up missed work.

Course Enrolment and Quercus

Acorn is the only indicator of official course enrolment; Quercus is not. Students enrolled in Acorn will be automatically populated to a course's Quercus site within 24 hours of enrolling. In some cases, if a student is on a course wait list or there is another delay in processing registration an instructor may give a student access to Quercus as a guest. This will not constitute official enrolment and students are responsible for making sure the course is added correctly using Acorn.

Auditing

Students who wish to audit a course must obtain permission directly from the course instructor within the first week of class. Permission is subject to available space and can only be granted by the course instructor.

Only registered students at the University of Toronto may audit courses. Auditing entitles a student to attend lectures only. Students may not submit any written work, attend labs/tutorials or write

tests/exams. The student will not be enrolled in the course and the course will not appear on their transcript. The department does not provide certificates of attendance.

Reading Courses

Reading courses allow students to complete coursework in topics not covered by current course offerings in Geography or Planning. The [Reading Course Form](#) must be accompanied by a brief course outline.

Copyright in Instructional Settings

If a student wishes to record (tape, video, photograph, etc.) any lecture presentations or other similar materials provided by the instructor; the instructor's written consent must be obtained beforehand. Otherwise, all such reproduction is infringement of copyright and prohibited. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.