

Geography 520-001: Research Methods in Geography
Course Syllabus - Fall 2010

Instructor:	Dr. Gillian Acheson	Time:	M 5:30-8:20 pm
Phone:	650-5281	Location:	AH 1312
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Office Hours:	M 11-12; W 10-11; or, by appointment		

Course Website: <http://www.siue.edu/~gacheso>

Course Description & Objectives: The primary objective of this course is to learn how to conceptualize, plan, and describe a proposed research project as part of your graduate program in Geography. In addition, time will be spent discussing professionalism, identifying funding sources, and considering potential career paths. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to do the following:

- develop the skills necessary to develop and plan a research project;
- communicate their ideas both orally and in writing;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research studies; and,
- conduct research in a professional and ethically responsible manner.

Texts:

- Montello, D. R. and P. C. Sutton. 2006. *An Introduction to Scientific Research Methods in Geography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Additional readings (available via Blackboard; <http://bb.siue.edu/>)

Course Mechanics: Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

Short writing assignments:	25%
Short presentations:	15%
Discussion:	10%
Proposal	
Literature Review:	10%
Proposal Presentation:	15%
Proposal:	25%

Short writing assignments: Over the course of the semester you will be assigned short written assignments. These assignments are designed to help you work toward preparing your proposal. Descriptions will be provided in class for each assignment.

Short presentations: Throughout the semester, you will give brief presentations in class. These presentations will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of course material, as well as let you share information with the class about your area of research.

Discussion: A significant portion of your final grade is based on discussion. An important part of earning an advanced degree is developing your ability to discuss research thoughtfully and intelligently. As a consequence, you are expected to discuss class material, including each other's research projects.

Proposal: The primary purpose of this course is to help you prepare a proposal that potentially will be used for thesis research. The proposal project includes a literature review (10%), a formal presentation of your proposed research (15%), and a written proposal (25%). Preparation of your proposal represents a significant portion of your final grade - take it seriously! Details, directions will be discussed in class and a hand out will be provided.

Attendance: One component of this course is professionalism. As a graduate student you are expected to attend all classes. Absences will affect your final grade adversely (unless they are for university sanctioned reasons). *You are responsible for all course material regardless of attendance.*

Class Courtesy: It is important for each person enrolled in this course to be treated with, and to treat others, with respect and courtesy. To that end:

- (1) come to class by 5:30 pm and stay until 8:20 pm. If you must arrive late or depart early, do so quickly and quietly;
- (2) turn your cell phone off; no ringing and no text messaging;
- (3) come to class prepared to listen and participate (in other words, do not do other work while in class);
- (4) listen to each other's comments and opinions with an open mind; and,
- (5) avoid using offensive speech. Inflammatory comments which provoke or insult anyone in this class will not be tolerated.

Scholastic Honesty: Each student enrolled is expected to earn her/his grade honestly, without cheating. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses; they will not be tolerated. Cheating of any kind will be dealt with according to the *Student Code of Conduct*. (See www.siu.edu/policies/1i6.shtml for more information.)

ADA Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services at 650-3726.

Schedule and Readings: The schedule listed below is flexible and can be modified over the course of the semester. Readings from the text are listed below; additional readings may be assigned over the course of the semester. Readings must be completed prior to class.

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Reading completed:*	Assignment due:**
1	8/23	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography AOS • Professionalism 		
2	8/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Masters Degree • AOS • Identifying funding sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB: <i>The Masters Degree</i> (4 p.) • BB: <i>Choosing & Managing Your...</i> (9 p.) • DRM: Preface (5 p.) • DRM: Chapter 13 (22 p.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W & P: Individual AOS • W & P: Identify AOS journals
3	9/6	<i>Labor Day - No Class!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB: <i>The Thesis Topic: Finding It</i> (9 p.) • DRM: Chapter 1 (16 p.) • DRM: Chapter 2 (16 p.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W: Complete "Citing Information" tutorial & quiz
4	9/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research in Geography • The Literature Review • Ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB: <i>Review of the Literature</i> (22 p.) • DRM: Chapter 14 (13 p.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W: Journal article critique
5	9/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Purpose statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB: Planning & Drafting (18 p.) • BB: Revising Style... (17 p.) • BB: Style & Form in Writing... (10 p.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W & P: Purpose statement/Res. Questions
6	9/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals (nuts & bolts) • Methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB: The Function of the Proposal (20 p.) • DRM: Chapter 3 (20 p.) & Chapter 7 (25 p.) 	
7	10/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRM: Chapters 4, 5, & 6 (63 p.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet at Lovejoy's instruction room (1st floor)
8	10/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DRM: Chapter 10 (26 p.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P: Methodology discussion (individ.)
9	10/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals - troubleshooting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review due
10	10/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual consultations 		
11	11/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules, planning, realities... 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W: Timeline • W: Career goals
12	11/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers • Presentations - Getting Ready 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB: Bringing it all together... (39 p.) • BB: The Oral Presentation (15 p.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals - first draft - due
13	11/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual consultations 		
14	11/22	<i>Thanksgiving Break - No Class!</i>		
15	11/29	Proposal presentations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals - second draft - due
16	12/6	Proposal presentations		

*DRM refers to the class textbook; BB refers to readings available on Blackboard.

**Additional details will be provided in class; W= Short Written Assignment; P = Presentation