Geography 766 Geographical Inquiry and Analysis: Techniques

Spring 2014

Wednesdays 3:30-5, Room 280
Instructor: Prof. Lisa Naughton
Office Hours: MW 11-12 or by appointment, naughton@geography.wisc.edu
Office: 355 Science Hall

Course Description
This course is open to first-year Masters students in Geography and undergraduate majors with junior standing pursuing Honors in the Major. The course is designed to assist participants in developing their research proposals (for Masters or Honor’s Thesis). Course activities will include a mix of discussions, in-class presentations, and written assignments. Together these activities will provide participants with guidance and feedback on the steps leading to a final thesis proposal. Topics covered include the development of research questions; research design and methodologies; proposal format and preparation; conference presentation and research planning. Although research design and methodology issues are considered in this class, their treatment is necessarily broad and general, focusing on overall research design issues and ensuring that the mix of methodologies utilized will sufficiently address research problem. To learn about more specific research methodologies, students must work with their advisor(s) during the term and take relevant methods courses (or read up on specific methods). Materials to be examined in the course include previously completed master’s theses, previous proposals for thesis research, and relevant scholarly publications and resources in geography.

We will also devote some time to professional skills development (e.g. writing, networking, time management) and tips for getting the most out of graduate school. Each student will sign up for a ‘professional skills’ topic and lead a related informal activity or discussion.

Course Requirements
The primary requirement is the completion of a full advisor-approved proposal for thesis research. (Honors students are allowed to submit a ‘pre-proposal’ at the end of the semester or final thesis, depending on their stage). The following class assignments will help you advance toward a full proposal or thesis:

Course schedule by week (some details might change for Weeks 8-13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required reading</th>
<th>Assignment due (by start of class)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Introduction. Tips on finding and organizing references, Tom Tews, Head Librarian, Geography Library</td>
<td>Perlmutter, D. 2008.</td>
<td>Come prepared to give your ‘elevator’ speech, that is 2-3 min. about your academic background, professional interests &amp; semester goals.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Insights from previous Geography Master’s and Honor’s Theses</td>
<td>Booth et al 2008 (pp. 45-48, 51-62, 120-129). 3 M.Sc. Theses.</td>
<td>Review 3 theses, 1 in depth. Come prepared to share thoughtful reflections on 1 of the 3. Email LN one page of key points &amp; questions about 1 thesis.</td>
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* Many assignments for this seminar were originally prepared by Prof Matthew Turner (Geography, UW Madison). Some of the readings come from Dr. L. Persha’s seminar “Communicating Geography” at UNC.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 Feb 19</td>
<td>Insights from prior proposals</td>
<td>Przeworski, A and F. Salomon 1995. Review 3 prior proposals for thesis or Honors research. Email LN one page of key points &amp;/or questions about your in-depth review of one proposal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Feb 26</td>
<td>Insights from prior proposals (cont)</td>
<td>Locke, L. et al 126-129. Write a 6-8 page preliminary proposal (all but Methods section). Email this to LN and your peer reviewer.</td>
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<td>7 March 5</td>
<td>Discussion and peer feedback on preliminary proposals.</td>
<td>Peer’s preliminary proposal. Provide peer (classmate) feedback on preliminary proposal.</td>
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<td>8 March 12</td>
<td>Qualitative, quantitative &amp; mixed method approaches</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>9 March 19</td>
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<td><strong>SPRING BREAK – No Class.</strong></td>
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<td>10 March 26</td>
<td>Choosing methods for your research.</td>
<td>Write a questions-to-design essay.</td>
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<td>11 April 2</td>
<td>Discussion and peer feedback on research design.</td>
<td>Optional: DUE: 500 word proposal for Trewartha Graduate Award. See <a href="http://www.geography.wisc.edu/graduate/awards.php#trewartha">http://www.geography.wisc.edu/graduate/awards.php#trewartha</a></td>
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<td>12 April 9</td>
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<td><strong>AAG MEETING – No Class.</strong></td>
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<td>13 April 16</td>
<td>Planning your research activities. Tips from other grads.</td>
<td>Write a full-length DRAFT proposal.</td>
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<td>14 April 23</td>
<td>Writing journal articles &amp; the peer-review process.</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>15 April 30</td>
<td>Oral presentations.</td>
<td>Locke et al 131-146. Present proposal in class (25 minutes).</td>
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<td>16 May 7</td>
<td>Oral presentations.</td>
<td>Present proposal in class (25 minutes).</td>
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<td>17 May 14</td>
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<td><strong>FINALS - No Class.</strong></td>
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<td>Show proof of advisor’s approval. Submit approved proposal to Geography Library.</td>
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**Grading policy:**

You’ll be graded on 175 points total.

75 pts for ‘participation’, …Did you contribute significantly to the learning experience of your fellow 766-ers?

- **25 pts:** Regular attendance. (You can’t enhance your peers’ learning experience if you are not present!) One absence during course of semester is ok (you can still get full 25 pts). >1 absence: -5 pts per session missed. Come talk to me asap if you anticipate >1 absence.

- **20 pts:** Leadership of professional tips/skill session (expectation: ≥2 hr investment of prep time). Full 25 pts if you put this time in and present something interesting & helpful – if you try something inventive/playful and it ‘flops’ you can still get 25 pts!
Grading on participation, cont.
30 pts: quality of engagement in group discussions. 25 pts: insightful comments, suggestions or good questions at nearly every session, demonstrates that read assignment material. 20 pts insightful comments, suggestions or good questions at about half of every session. 15 pts insightful comments or good questions at fewer than half of sessions. Come talk to me asap if you are concerned about engaging in group discussions.

100 pts for individual work.
Pass/fail 10 pts for each of these 10 assignments (or alternate Honor’s assignment, as appropriate)
- review 3 Geography thesis projects, discuss 1 in class & send 1 page of key points to LN
- prepare a 2-5 page literature review plan (or alternate assignment for Honor’s)
- complete CITI human subjects training (not required for those absolutely sure they will not engage with human subjects!, these individuals will be graded on 165 pts total)
- review 3 Geography proposals, discuss 1 in class & send 1 page of key points to LN
- write a 6-8 page preliminary proposal (all but Methods section)
- Review a classmate’s preliminary proposal or (alternate assignment) in writing and orally in seminar (by email, cc me)
- write a 2-3 page research questions-to-design essay
- write a full-length draft proposal
- present proposal or research report in class (15 minute presentation, 10 minute Q&A)
- turn in advisor-approved proposal (Honor’s students: 7 p. pre-proposal or final version of thesis.)

Late policy: for all 10 assignments, 5 pt per day deducted for assignments turned in late w/o my prior approval. Exception: no late penalty if advisor is late on approval. However, I can’t give you credit for seminar until you turn in an advisor-approved proposal.

Required readings


Przeworski, Adam, and Frank Salomon. 1988. On the art of writing proposals: Some candid suggestions for applicants to Social Science Research Council competitions. New York: Social Science Research Council. (Learn@UW)


Plus …Essays from The Thesis Whisperer and a few other online grad student resource sites.
Geography 766 (Spring 2014)

Books and Materials in the Regular Collection of the Geography Library (unless otherwise noted)