

GGG 689 Seminar in Geographic Thought and Methodology

Fall 2018, Wednesdays, 4:30-7:10 Music/Theater Building 1004

Professor David Wong

Office: Exploratory Hall 2214; Email: dwong2@gmu.edu; Phone: 703-993-9260

Office Hours: Mons 2-3pm, Weds 3-4pm, or by appointment

Course Description: This is a graduate seminar focusing on research in Geography, i.e. **what** to do and **how** to do. The primary objective is to provide an overview of current geographic thoughts and research methodologies. The secondary objective is to assist students to develop a research proposal. Primary modes of learning include reading, preparing presentations and leading discussions, in-class discussions and writing assignments-exercises. Materials cover major approaches in contemporary Geography and some common research methodologies for geographical studies. Students should expect to expose to thoughts and methods beyond their comfort zones.

Required Texts:

Holt-Jensen, Arild (2018) *Geography: History and Concepts* (5th Ed.) Sage Publishing. (HJ)

Montello, D. and P. Sutton (2013) *An Introduction to Scientific Research Methods in Geography and Environmental Studies* (2nd Ed.) Sage Publishing. (MS)

Additional References:

Clifford, N., M. Cope, T. Gillespie, and S. French (2016) *Key Methods in Geography* (3rd Ed.) Sage Publishing.

Cresswell, T. 2013. *Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Davis, J. P. 2011. *The Rowman & Littlefield Guide to Writing with Sources*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 4th Edition.

Gomez, B. and J. P. Jones III. (eds.) 2010. *Research Methods in Geography*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Gregory, D., R.J. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. Watts, and S. Whalmore. (eds.) 2009. *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. Wiley-Blackwell. 5th Edition.

*Terrell, S. R. (2015) *Writing a Proposal for Your Dissertation: Guidelines and Examples*. Guilford.

Grading:

- 1) 30% Presentations and Leading Discussions
- 2) 25% Participation
- 3) 10% Literature review practice (3 pages)
- 4) 35% Research proposal (8-10 pages)

All submissions should be double-spaced, include page numbers, and use Times New Roman in 12 point font with 1 inch margin in all sides.

- 1) Each student will be randomly assigned to one or two chapters (P1 to P13) in the required texts. Those assignments with "*" should include additional materials from the **Additional References** and/or **Selected Important Literature** in syllabus, or additional references on the book's **Student Resources** website. In the assigned week for that chapter(s), the student should prepare an approximately 20 minutes presentation. The presentation should summarize pertinent ideas of that chapter(s), *critically evaluate* the

ideas and *raise substantive issues* in geographical and social research. After the presentation, the student should also lead an open discussion session of approximately 15 minutes (select question(s) from #2 below). Presentation and discussion will be evaluated according to a set of rubrics to be provided later.

- 2) Non-presenting students are expected to (1) read the assigned chapter(s) of the week; (2) submit at least one substantive and constructive question by noon before class through Blackboard; and (3) participate in class discussion. Students will be evaluated by the instructor according to their levels of preparation, participation and constructive contributions to the discussion, based on their readings of course material.
- 3) Develop a research proposal on a topic of your interest. Present a 75-100 words summary and a 10-minute presentation of your potential research to your fellow classmates and the professor for comments and critique on **September 19** (5%).
- 4) Develop the research idea more fully over the semester. Submit a 3-page drafted literature review section of the proposal by **October 31** for comments (10%). Submit the proposal on **November 28** (30%). Suggested structure of the proposal will be provided later.

Final Grading Scale: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), F (69 and Below)

Policies/Student Conduct: As a graduate course, attendance is expected. You are also expected to come to class prepared by critically reading and evaluating the material, and make connections to readings in other weeks. You should be prepared with comments, questions, and/or views of the material. You must use your Mason email account (@gmu.edu) for all course communications. All academic accommodations for documented disabilities must be arranged through the Office of Disability Services (<http://ods.gmu.edu/>).

All students are required to be familiar with and adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code and the Mason Values of Academic Integrity which can be found in the Office of Academic Integrity or online at (<http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>). Failure to abide by the code could result in failure of this course and dismissal from the University.

*The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus, but will notify students about the change.

Course Outline and Readings (Subject to change):

August 29

Introduction to the course and semester, HJ 1 and MS 1

September 5

Roots/Early Geography, HJ 2

Research Ethics, MS 14

Research Proposal Overview

September 12

Fundamental Research Concepts MS 2

Scientific Communication MS 3

Research Proposal Development – Research topics/questions

September 19 (5%)

Prepare a 10-minute in-class presentation and a 75-100 words research summary to be submitted to Blackboard before class). Your presentation should discuss your area or field of your research. What are your academic interests? What is the *likely* focus of your study? The more specific the better. Hypothesis? Data? Methodology? Expected outcome? Try your best and we together will help.

September 26 – no class

October 3

Toward modern Geography HJ 3 (P1)*

Regional Tradition HJ 4 (P2)*

Research Proposal – Literature Review & Library Research

October 10

Paradigms & Revolution HJ 6 (P3)

Spatial Science HJ 5 (P4)*

Research Proposal – Methodology & Data

October 17

Data Collection MS 4 (P5)

Measurements MS 5 (P5)

October 24

Behavioral Observations and Archives MS 6 (P7)

Explicit Reports MS 7 (P7)

Research Proposal – Expected outcome/preliminary results

October 31

Experimental and Nonexperimental Research Designs MS 8 (P8)

Sampling MS 9 (P8)

November 7

Positivism and its critics HJ 7 (P9)*
Alternatives to Spatial Science HJ 8 (P9)*
Poststructuralism and Beyond HJ 9 (P10)*

November 14

Statistical Data Analysis MS 10 (P11)*
Reliability and Validity MS 12 (P11)

November 21 – No Class (Thanksgiving Break)

November 28

Data Display MS 11 (P12)
Information Technology 13 (P12)

December 5

Geographical Tasks HJ 10 (P13)

Selected Important Literature

- Semple, E. 1911. "Influences of Geographic Environment." from *Influences of Geographic Environment on the Basis of Ratzel's System of Anthrogeographie*, New York: Henry Holt, p. 1-32.
- Sauer, C. 1925. "The Morphology of Landscape." University of California Publications in Geography 2(2): 19-54.
- Pattison, W. 1990. "The Four Traditions of Geography." *Journal of Geography* Sept./Oct. 202-206.
- Cutter, S., Golledge, R. and Graf, W. 2002. "The Big Questions in Geography." *The Professional Geographer* 54: 305-317.
- Taaffe, E.J. 1974. "The Spatial View in Context." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 64(1): 1-16.
- Hartshorne, R. 1939. "The Character of Regional Geography." in *The Nature of Geography*, Association of American Geographers, Washington DC: 436-444.
- Schaefer, F.K. 1953. "Exceptionalism in Geography: A Methodological Examination." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 43: 226-249.
- Hartshorne, R. 1954. "Comment on Exceptionalism in Geography." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 44: 108-109.
- Hartshorne, R. 1958. "The Concept of Geography as a Science of Space, from Kant to Humboldt to Hettner." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 48(2): 97-108.
- Burton, I. 1963. "The Quantitative Revolution and Theoretical Geography." *The Canadian Geographer* 7(4): 151-162
- Wilson, A.G. 1972. "Theoretical Geography: Some Speculations." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 57: 31-44.
- Isard, W. 1956. "Regional Science, the Concept of Region, and Regional Structure."

- Papers and Proceedings, The Regional Science Association* 2: 13-26
- Wright, D., Goodchild, M. and Proctor, J. 1997. "GIS: Tool or Science? Demystifying the Persistent Ambiguity of GIS as Tool versus Science." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87(2): 346-362.
- Pickles, J. 1997. "Tool or Science: GIS, Technoscience and the Theoretical Turn." *Annals Of the Association of American Geographers* 87(2): 363-372.
- Harvey, D. 1985. "The Geography of Capitalist Accumulation." in *The Urbanization of Capital*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell pp. 32-61.
- Massey, D. 1979. "In What Sense a Regional Problem?" *Regional Studies* 13: 233-243.
- Harvey, D. 1987. "Flexible Accumulation Through Urbanization: Reflections on Post-Modernism" in the American City, *Antipode*, 19: 260-286.
- Cassetti, E. 1999. "The Evolution of Scientific Disciplines, Mathematical Modeling and Human Geography." *Geographical Analysis* 31: 332-339.
- Markusen, A. 1999. "Fuzzy Concepts, Scanty Evidence, Policy Distance: The Case for Rigor and Policy Relevance in Critical Regional Studies." *Regional Studies* 33: 869-884
- Wheeler, J.O. 2000. "Have We Lost a Generation of Urban Geographers?" *Urban Geography* 21: 377-379.
- Sheppard, E. 2001. "Quantitative Geography: Representations, Practices and Possibilities." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19: 535-554.
- Openshaw, S. 1991. "A View on the GIS Crisis in Geography." *Environment and Planning A*, 23: 621-628