

# Geographic Research Methods

## GEOG 25000

### Fall 2019

#### Course Information:

- GEOG 250 Geographic Research Methods
- Pre-requisites: ENGL 120 and a 100-level GEOG, GEOL, PGEOG, or PGEOG course
- Lectures plus in-class and online activities, group project

#### Contact Information

- Professor Ines Miyares
- [imiyares@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:imiyares@hunter.cuny.edu) (best way to contact)
- Office: HN 1045
- Office Phone: 212-772-5443
- Every other Wednesday (alternating with Senate meetings) and every Thursday 4:30-5:15 and/or by appointment
- Department Office: HN1006

#### Course Materials

**Required textbook:** *Research Methods in Geography* edited by Basil Gomez and John Paul Jones III ISBN 978-1-4051-0711-2 Wiley-Blackwell 2010

- The textbook really is required. We will be completing exercises at the end of assigned chapters
- Selected additional readings as part of activities
- Activities on Blackboard and Google Earth

#### Course Description

- One of the most important skill sets a geographer needs to develop is the relationship between geographic theories and observed phenomena in the natural and social/cultural environment. This course focuses on social and cultural geographic theories and research methodologies. We will cover a variety of important contemporary geographic theories and will complete exercises to give you hands-on experience in completing qualitative and quantitative geographic research.
- This course will prepare you to complete research projects in more advanced courses and to develop and complete your capstone project.
- Every week we will cover an aspect of geographic research and complete hands-on exercises in class and/or as homework related to the week's theme.
- You will be working in groups to learn the process of collaborative research

#### Learning Outcomes:

- Explain and apply the fundamental concepts, theories, and research methods in social, cultural, and environmental geography
- Discuss and explain the ethics, laws, and responsibilities in human subjects research

- Apply the scientific method to understanding and analyzing various forms of qualitative and quantitative geographic data
- Be able to go from a theory, to a question, to an appropriate methodology, to data, to analysis, to appropriate interpretation, to a formal presentation of results
- Demonstrate the structure of scientific writing

#### **Requirements:**

- Hands-on exercises 40%
- Final Group Paper 30%
- Midterm (online) 15%
- Final Project Presentation 15%

#### **Final Project:**

- I will assign you to groups. As a group, you need to define a research question within one of the theories we cover in class, and utilize three appropriate methodologies for answering the research question.
- All groups will complete a survey or interviews or conduct a focus group, plus two additional research methodologies.
- We will begin the group projects by week 5, and time in class each week will be given for you to meet as a group. However, collaborative research requires time outside class as well. I will create group workspaces on Blackboard for you to be able to communicate and share files. You can work in other virtual spaces, such as Google drive, but all group members must be able to work in that space.
- You will present your research on the last day of class. We will conduct the class in the same format as a professional research conference. You will also submit a single, collaboratively written paper.

#### **Grading and Other Essential Information:**

- We will do several in-class and homework exercises, most of which are taken from the textbook. Assignments typically have a written component submitted on Blackboard.
- There will be significant deductions in points given for late assignments. No points will be given for an assignment submitted more than a week late unless you have given me an *excellent documentable* excuse.
- ***I do not give incompletes.*** The only students who will be eligible to request a grade of Cr/NC at the end of the semester are those who have completed **ALL** assignments in a *timely manner* (that is, each one *on its due date!*).
- A grade of WU will be given to students who *completely* disappear from the class *prior to submitting graded work* and neglect to withdraw from the course. This includes the final project and presentation. **If you disappear without officially withdrawing, it may affect your financial aid status.**
- If a documentable emergency situation arises that may result in the late submission of an assignment, please let me know as soon as possible via email. Once I have responded and approved the late submission, please put a note in the comments box reminding me of our email interaction so I can confirm it when grading your work.
- Email Policy: I do check my email regularly and will respond promptly until 8 pm. I expect professional respectful communication via email (no Twitter or texting shorthand). Email is

the best way to contact me. I am not in the office regularly and I do not always check my voicemail.

### **Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity**

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

If I suspect plagiarism, I will run your work through SafeAssign. If there is clear evidence of plagiarism, I will give a zero on the assignment and will notify the Dean of Students. We will discuss appropriate citation and bibliographic formats early in the semester.

### **ADA Policy**

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical, and/or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY, located in Room E1214B, to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance, please call: (212) 772- 4857 or (212) 650-3230. If you have a documentable disability or condition that makes it impossible to complete an assignment as written, please contact me immediately so an alternative can be arranged.

### **Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct**

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College affirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationship. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.

- a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, on contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444)
- b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose ([jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu) or 212-650-3262) of Colleen Barry ([colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu) or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct

Link: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf>

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

- Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

- If changes are made to the syllabus, I will notify you via email through Blackboard. It is essential that you have your correct email linked to your Blackboard account and that you check your Hunter or other Blackboard-linked email regularly. Bounced emails will not be an acceptable excuse for not being aware of changes or any other communications to the class.

Readings and Weekly Assignments: Read and complete the exercises as follow-up to the lecture and in class activities. **All assignments are due before class the week after they are assigned.**

Weekly topics:

8/29: Introduction to Theory, Ontology, Epistemology *RMG* Ch 1-2; Exercise 2.1

*9/5 No Class. Monday Schedule. Suggestion-start CITI course.*

9/12: Research Ethics *RMG* Ch 24; CITI online human subjects research course

9/19: Interplay of Theory and Observation *RMG* Ch 3; Exercise 3.1 (adapted-see Blackboard for details)

9/26: Measurement and Observation. Lecture posted online. *RMG* Ch 4; Exercise 4.1

10/3: Research Approaches/Making Operational Decisions *RMG* Ch 5; Complete exercise in folder on Blackboard in preparation for group projects. Start to contact group members.

10/10: Sampling *RMG* Ch 6; Exercise 6.1

10/17: Secondary Data *RMG* Ch 11; Midterm exam online becomes available

10/24: Surveys, Interviews, and Focus Groups *RMG* Ch 12; Work in group to develop survey or interview schedule or focus group questions for group project

10/31: Ethnography and Participant-Observation *RMG* Ch 13; Ethnographic interviews; Work in groups

11/7: Cultural Landscapes *RMG* Ch 14; Cultural landscape exercise (see Blackboard for details); Work in groups

11/14: Human-Environment Field Study *RMG* Ch 15; Exercise 15.1; Work in groups

11/21: Maps and Representation of Data *RMG* Ch 11, 16; Exercise 11.2; Work in groups

*No Class November 28—Happy Thanksgiving!*

12/5: Analyzing Meaning and Writing Up Research *RMG* Ch 23, 25; Work in groups

12/12: Group presentations (last formal day of class)

December 19: Group papers due in lieu of final exam