

Syllabus
GEOG 4173, RESEARCH SEMINAR

Fall, 1998
A.D. Hill

T,R 2:00-3:15
Guggenheim 201E

Among the many "ways of knowing," it is research that continues to have the greatest practical effect on our lives; yet research is widely misunderstood. It is not merely a collection and reporting of information on a topic. Rather, it is the formulation of a significant problem and the systematic interpretation of appropriate information so as to shed new light on that problem. In this seminar, we explore the meaning of research, examine the nature of research in geography, and provide each student the opportunity to learn to conduct scientific research following a practical, systematic process culminating in a geographic research paper. This process requires students to attend all classes, to frequently submit written work, to report orally, and to critique each others' work and ideas in constructive, seminar style. The seminar encourages friendly give-and-take, and specifically requires critical examination of alternative perspectives, hypotheses, methods, sources, and data.

This is recognized as a "critical thinking" course in the College of Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum because it requires you to critically evaluate the literature on a significant topic, develop an original thesis or problem related to that topic, test that thesis against an organized body of data, and make your own original interpretation of those data. Since research in the seminar must conform to the canons of geographic research, this course also serves as a senior seminar for majors in geography, and as a practical guide for those students doing departmental honors theses in geography. Experience shows that students who succeed in Research Seminar have senior-level competency in a geographic subfield (at least one upper-division course in that subfield), which enables them to identify a significant research problem and data set related to that subfield. Simply put, one cannot do research on a topic without having invested substantial prior study of that topic.

In the first part of the course, you will read, evaluate, and report orally on research articles from geographic journals. The seminar then turns to the formulation of research proposals. You will present these in both written and oral forms for constructive criticism. Similarly, you will present additional elements of your research according to the seminar schedule. This schedule is tentative and subject to change to take advantage of opportunities or cope with problems. You are responsible for changes announced in class.

TERM GRADES:

Seminar Contributions, including attendance, reviews, etc.	25%
Oral Paper	15%
Written Paper	60%
Note: all assignments must be completed to pass the course.	

TEXT: P.D. Leedy, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 6th edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997).

A.D. Hill's office hours: TR: 9:30-10:45 am; 3:15-4:30 pm; or by appointment. Gugg. 102-B, 492-6760; e-mail: adh@colorado.edu

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

DATES	READING S IN LEEDY	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1: 8/25, 27	Intro. and Chap. 1	As you read Chap. 1, think about a geographic topic you can do research on this semester. See "Finding a Topic" in Syllabus.
Week 2: 9/1, 3	Chap. 1, 2	Oral and written reviews of articles in <i>Annals, AAG</i> . See checklist on p. 13 in Leedy, and use "Checklist for Evaluating" in Syllabus
Week 3: 9/8, 10	Chap. 2, 3	Continue oral and written reviews of articles in <i>Annals, AAG</i> ; Library orientation TBA; Interview expert using checklist p. 40
Week 4: 9/15, 17	Chap. 3, 4	Report on interviews. Write your statement of the research problem, using checklist p. 53, and present to seminar.
Week 5: 9/22, 24	Chap. 4, 5	Continue presenting statements of research problems. Begin reviews of related literature (Chap. 4). Checklist p. 69
Week 6: 9/29, 10/1	Chap. 5, 6	Oral and written reports on reviews of related literature (Chap. 4) Re-submit statement of problem, as needed.
Week 7: 10/6, 8	Chap. 7, 8	Continue oral and written reports on reviews of related literature. Re-submit statement of problem, as needed.
Week 8: 10/13, 15	Chap. 9	NO CLASS ON 10/13. Written and oral proposals (The problem and its setting, Chap. 3) Complete checklist pp. 112-13.
Week 9: 10/20, 22	Chap. 11	Continue written and oral proposals (The problem and its setting) Complete checklist pp. 112-13.
Week 10: 10/27, 29	Chap. 12	Read K.E. Landes, A scrutiny of the abstract; J.F. Hart, Ruminations of a dyspeptic ex-editor. Submit outlines of papers (<i>Annals, AAG</i> form required for papers)
Week 11: 11/3, 5		Consultations
Week 12: 11/10, 12		Consultations
Week 13: 11/17, 19		Consultations

Week 14: 11/24, 26		Oral papers; NO CLASS ON 11/26--THANKSGIVING
Week 15: 12/1, 3		Oral papers
Week 16: 12/8		LAST DAY OF CLASS AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF FINAL, WRITTEN RESEARCH PAPERS. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE. Evaluations.
Sat, 12/12 7:30 p.m.		SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM: Pick up final papers in my office and discuss your term performance

FINDING A TOPIC

(Adapted from J.D. Lester. 1996. *Writing Research Papers*, 8th ed., Harper Collins)

- The subject for a research paper must meet three demands:
 1. It must have a serious purpose, one that demands analysis of the issues, argues from a position, and explains complex details.
 2. It must address the academic community, both your fellow students and the faculty.
 3. The thesis (or hypothesis) must be one that you can thoroughly support within the confines of the paper.

Note: Choose a topic with a built-in issue so that you can interpret the issue and cite the opinions of outside sources.

- When your topic addresses a problem or raises an issue, you have a reason to:
 - Examine specific sources in the library,
 - Share your point of view with the reader,
 - Write a meaningful conclusion.
- Three techniques will help you with topic selection before you enter the library:
 1. Reflect on your personal experiences to find a topic that touches your life or career ambitions.
 2. Talk with other people because collaborative learning can broaden your vision of the issues.
 3. Speculate about the subject, and discover ideas by listing issues, asking questions, engaging in freewriting, keeping a research journal, listing key words, clustering, and using rhetorical modes, such as:

comparison	process
definition	classification
cause and effect	evaluation

- Use Public Access Catalog (PAC) and CD-ROM Files
 1. Select a general subject
 2. View the subtopics
 3. Select one topic
 4. View specific references
 5. Print interesting references

Note: Use computer search to control size of project. If computer lists 50 or 60 books and 200 or more articles, the topic is too broad. Narrow it. If it provides one book and only two or three articles, you must broaden the topic.

- Use printed materials to discover and evaluate a topic:
 - Inspect books' tables of contents
 - Examine a book's index to discover a subject
 - Scan encyclopedia articles
 - Search headings in reference books

Drafting a research proposal

- A proposal identifies four essentials:
 1. The purpose of the paper (explain, analyze, argue)
 2. The intended audience (general or specialized)
 3. Your voice as the writer (informer or advocate)
 4. The preliminary thesis sentence or opening hypothesis.
- Explaining your purpose in the research proposal. Research papers accomplish different tasks:
 1. They explain and define the topic. Use the *explanatory purpose* to review and itemize factual data.
 2. They analyze the specific issues. Use the *analytic purpose* to classify various parts of the subject and to investigate each one in detail.
 3. They persuade the reader with the weight of evidence. Use the *persuasive purpose* to defend your argument convincingly.
- Narrowing the General Subject to a Specific Topic:
 - Narrowing and focusing with comparison topics
 - Restricting and narrowing with disciplinary interests
 - Narrowing the topic to match source materials

Research Paper Requirements

Length: 5,000 words (20-25 pages)

Structure: Title

Abstract

Introduction, including problem, hypotheses, etc.

Literature review

Data analysis (primary data, if possible)

Interpretation/discussion

Summary and conclusions

List of References

Sources: A minimum of 15 scholarly and authoritative sources, at least 3 of which are from scholarly geographic journals.

Reference style: Must comply with latest requirements of the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*

CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATING RESEARCH ARTICLES

Name _____ Date _____

Author(s) of article _____

Title _____

Appearing in _____

Journal title Vol.No. Month Year Pages

Directions: After carefully reading the research article, check the appropriate column and answer the questions.

Factor	Yes	No
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1. Is there a clear statement of the research problem? Write the research problem statement here:

2. Are any subproblems stated? Write the subproblems here:

3. Are any hypotheses stated? Write the hypothesis or hypotheses here:

4. Is the article organized under appropriate subheadings? Illustrate the levels of subheadings used:

5. Are the data analyzed and interpreted? Give examples of how this is done?

6. Is any indication given whether the hypothesis is supported or rejected? How is this done?

7. Does the article refer to any related literature or supporting studies?

8. Are the conclusions clearly stated? What were they?

9. Are any further studies or need research suggested? What were they?

10. Did you understand the research and comprehend what the author was trying to do?

11. What were the main strengths of this article?

12. What were its main weaknesses?

13. Do you think the article added new understanding of the world around us? Why or why not?

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ORAL RESEARCH PAPER EVALUATION

Student's Name _____ Topic _____

<u>Ratings</u>	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>
1. Quality/originality of problem/thesis	1	2 3 4 5
2. Geographic perspective	1	2 3 4 5
3. Research methods	1	2 3 4 5
4. Quality of data and data displays	1	2 3 4 5
5. Originality/quality of data interpretation	1	2 3 4 5
6. Contribution/significance to knowledge	1	2 3 4 5
7. Organization (sequence, clarity, timing)	1	2 3 4 5
8. Attention to audience (graphics, level of involvement, examples)	1	2 3 4 5
9. Quality of standard English expression	1	2 3 4 5
10. Demeanor/credibility (enthusiasm, rapport, professionalism)	1	2 3 4 5

Maximum Points = 50

Points =

GEOG. 4173 RESEARCH PAPER EVALUATION

DATE _____

Name _____ **Topic** _____

Ratings

Low **High**

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|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1. Geographic perspective | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Statement of problem/thesis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Depth of analysis/argument | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Originality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Abstract | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Introduction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Conclusion | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Development of ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. Flow of ideas/transitions | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Amount/use of authoritative literature | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. Appropriateness of research methods | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Quality of data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Amount of data | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Data interpretation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Maps, tables, and figures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Writing style/use of language | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Mechanics: spelling, punctuation, etc. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Presentation: title, subheadings,
 pagination, appearance, assigned length | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Crediting sources: in-text references | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. List of references | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Maximum Points = 100

Points = _____

Department of Geography Code of Conduct

In the Department of Geography, instructors strive to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect in which learning, debate, and intellectual growth can thrive. Creating this atmosphere, however, requires that instructors and students work to achieve a classroom in which learning is not disrupted. At the most basic level, this means that everyone attend class, be prepared with readings and assignments completed, and that students pay attention. This means no conversations with friends, reading the newspaper, coming late, or leaving early. Such behavior is disruptive to the instructor and to your fellow classmates.

These basics of classroom etiquette are an important means of building and showing mutual respect. Inevitably, however, disagreements will arise. Sometimes these disagreements will be about content, sometimes about grades or course procedures, and sometimes they will be about the treatment of participants in the class. In order to facilitate the resolution of these disagreements, the following guidelines should be followed by everyone:

- All interactions must be guided by mutual respect and trust.
- If you are bothered by some aspect of the class, identify what it is that is bothering you and center the discussion on that issue.
- Address issues that concern you early. Problems are easier to resolve before they fester.
- Consider whether it is best to address your concerns in class or in a separate appointment with the instructor. Remember, behavior that disrupts your fellow classmates is not acceptable.
- Abusive speech or behavior will not be tolerated in any interaction between students or between student and instructor. If an instructor feels that your speech or behavior is abusive, you will be asked to leave the room. If you believe an instructor has become abusive, you may leave the room and talk with the department chairperson. Debate and discussion can continue after all parties can proceed with mutual respect.
- If mutual respect cannot be restored, either you or the instructor may take the issue to the department chairperson or the campus Ombuds Office.

Notice to All Students Taking Geography Courses

You should know that in cases of academic dishonesty the Geography Department, following College of Arts and Sciences regulations, will give an **F** for the part of the course (such as an individual lab exercise, or test) or possibly an **F** for the whole course, depending on the seriousness of the instance, for any violations of academic dishonesty. If copying a piece of work is involved, action will be taken against both the person who copied and the person whose work was copied, unless the latter had no control over the situation. All cases of academic dishonesty have to be reported to the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Cases where one person is illegally in possession of another person's work are subject to further disciplinary measures by the College Committee on Academic Ethics.