

GEO 7300 – ADVANCED GEOGRAPHIC RESEARCH DESIGN

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY*, SPRING 2007

Instructor: Mark A. Fonstad

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Office Hours: 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM Tuesdays or by appointment

Class Time: 2:00 PM – 4:45 PM Tuesdays

Classroom: Evans Liberal Arts (ELA) Building, Room 313

Course Line Number: 309636

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to develop an appreciation for the process of research as practiced by contemporary professional geographers. Topics covered include formulating research problems, reviewing and critiquing published literature, developing and executing a research design, and completing a research project or proposal. Secondary objectives include familiarizing students with methods associated with the presentation of research results, *i.e.*, written and oral presentations, and becoming professionally aware.

KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES

Develop a meaningful and theoretically significant research problem statement and review literature relevant to this research problem.

Demonstrate understanding of the components of research design including problem definition, theory, literature review, methodology, analysis, and presentation of results.

SKILLS OUTCOMES

Write a review of theory and literature based on a problem statement.

Complete a proposal to undertake a doctoral dissertation or master's thesis.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

A course readings packet distributed by the instructor

EVALUATION AND GRADING POLICIES

I will evaluate your performance and assign grades based on two major areas of work in this course. First, I will assess your ability to communicate advanced material through class participations in weekly research article discussions, and in-class presentation of your proposed research project. Second, several written assignments are also used to evaluate your final grade. All students are expected to prepare assignments by the scheduled time. Late assignments (presentation or project) will have their grade lowered 10 percent of the maximum points for that assignment per class day late. I will endeavor to grade projects within a week of their submission. There are NO exams in this course, and thus NO final exam date. However, the “final” proposal will be due to me at the scheduled final exam time for this class, May 8, 3:00pm – 5:30pm. The “final” proposals you produce in this class will still need to be amended with changes requested by your research advisor before they are officially accepted by the department.

There is a maximum of 400 points for all of the discussion, presentation, project, and critique activities. The basis for grading will be as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points (Percent of Total)</u>
Class Contributions	40 (10%)
Curriculum Vitae	20 (5%)
Area of Specialization Statement	20 (5%)
Literature Review Outline	20 (5%)
Literature Review	60 (15%)
Critique of Colleague's Lit Review	20 (5%)
Problem Statement	20 (5%)
Critique of Colleague's Prob. State.	20 (5%)
Draft Proposal	60 (15%)
Critique of Colleague's Draft Prop.	20 (5%)
Oral Presentation of Proposal	40 (10%)
"Final" Proposal	60 (15%)
TOTAL	400 (100%)

The final grades will be determined based on the following rules (grades will not be posted):

A	≥90% (≥360 points)
B	≥80% and <90% (320 – 359 points)
C	≥70% and <80% (280 – 319 points)
D	≥60% and <70% (240 – 279 points)
F	<60% (< 239 points)

CLASSROOM AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Good attendance in the class is key to your success in this course. First, the student discussions in class will require knowledge from previous weeks. Second, the individual writing projects will require a deep familiarity with class material.

The department of geography typically will not allow more than 2 missed days per semester for graduate level classes, and that standard will hold for this class because it only meets once per week. This maximum can only be exceeded under dire circumstances that I have approved. If you must miss class because of an illness, a personal emergency, or some other extenuating circumstance, please contact me as soon as possible so I can make alternative arrangements for you (this is key). Of course, good attendance means more than just showing up for class. Please read and adhere to the policy on classroom etiquette that appears below. These codes of conduct will allow everyone to participate equally as learners. Thank you for your cooperation.

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 should 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.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students having special needs/disabilities (as documented by the Office of Disability Services) that will require compensatory arrangements must contact the instructor no later than the fourth class period to discuss specific arrangements and logistics. Students who have not already done so will be required to contact the Office of Disability Services located at LBJ 5-5.1 (512-245-3451). Texas State

is dedicated to providing these students with necessary academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to facilitate their participation and performance in the classroom.

TEXAS STATE ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Learning and teaching take place best in an atmosphere of intellectual fair-minded openness. All members of the academic community are responsible for supporting freedom and openness through rigorous personal standards of honesty and fairness. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty undermine the very purpose of the university and diminish the value of an education. Specific sanctions for academic dishonesty are outlined in the *Texas State Student Handbook*.

SCHEDULE BY WEEK

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings Discussed</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
Jan 16	NONE	Intro to Research Design, CVs, Area of Specialization	NONE
Jan 23	Hornbeck, Fonstad CV, Lu CV, Fonstad Statement	Geography as a Research Discipline	Curriculum Vitae
Jan 30	Pattison, Taafe, Chappell, Cutter et al.	Communication of Research	Area of Specialization Statement
Feb 6	Ford, Parker et al., de Souza, Gopen and Swan,	Communication of Research II	Problem Statement
Feb 13	Butler, Bourne, Hanson (1)	Focussing on the Research Question	NONE
Feb 20	Borgman, Wolman (1), Gould	How to Write vs. the Process of Writing	Literature Review Outline
Feb 27	Brunn, Loyd, Fonstad Proposal, Graf Proposal	How to Write vs. the Process of Writing II	Literature Review
Mar 6	Murphy, Colwell, Goodchild,	Philosophical Approaches in Geographical Research	Critique of Colleague's Lit Review
Mar 13	NONE	SPRING BREAK -- NO CLASS	NONE
Mar 20	Hanson (2), Wolman (2), Tuan	Philosophical Approaches in Geographical Research II	Critique of Colleague's Problem Statement
Mar 27	Liverman, Shepard, Mitchell	Hypotheses, Data, Methods, Ethics in Research	NONE
Apr 3	Rutherford and Lloyd, Wilkerson	More on Methods of Analysis	NONE
Apr 10	Dunham et al., Nickels and Day	Analysis of Theses and Dissertations	Draft Proposal
Apr 17	NONE	AAG WEEK	Critique of Colleague's Draft Proposal
Apr 24	NONE	Oral Presentations of Proposed Research	Oral Presentation
May 8	NONE	Open Period (for Presentations if Necessary)	"Final" Proposal

* A member of the Texas State University System