

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Contract Instructor's Manual

Welcome

Welcome to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (DGES). If you are referring to this manual you are likely new to DGES as a Contract Instructor (CI). As CI's we play an important part in the Department. Many of us have taught here for a number of years. The process can be a bit confusing at first. Moreover, as CI's we do not always have a lot of time to learn the ropes.

This manual is intended to provide some advice on how to settle into your new position. It also addresses some questions raised by CI's in the past. Although a handbook for New Faculty and CI's is available from the University*, it is hoped that this manual will provide some details that are more specific to working in DGES. This is intended to be an evolving project and if there are more items you wish to see or amendments made please let us know.

Enjoy your time in DGES. It is a great and rewarding place to work, with a friendly support team and helpful and welcoming colleagues.

<https://carleton.ca/edc/teachingresources/new-faculty-members-and-contract-instructors/>

“Who do I need to know?”

Below is a list of the people you may need to interact with during your time at Carleton. Please note that, these people may change from time to time. Likewise, contact information may change. Please report any changes you find or non-working websites or emails to the Chair's Administrative Assistant, in order that the manual can be kept up-to-date for future Instructors.

- **Scott Mitchell is the Departmental Chair.** You will probably not need to interact with Scott on daily matters. Having said that, his door is nearly always open and he is always happy to discuss issues to do with your course, ideas for teaching, concerns with grading, students, teaching evaluations, etc. Scott should also be your first point of contact over issues to do with student academic offences.
- **Natalia Fierro is the Administrative Assistant to the Chair** and should you need to see Scott you can coordinate with her. Natalia is also responsible for the needs of Cl's – office space, coordinating office hours, keys, photocopy card, contracts, and any other issues that may arise. Contact information:

TEL: 613-520-2600, ext. 2560 / FAX: 613-520-4301

chair_geography@carleton.ca

- **Erin Johnston is Graduate Programs Administrator:** you will only need to coordinate with the Graduate Programs Administrator in matters to do with Teaching Assistant assignments, needs or problems.
- **Karen Tucker is the Undergraduate Administrator.** It is unlikely that you will need to work with Karen unless you need information about a particular student. Karen can also fill you in on issues to do with student requirements in your course.
- **Susan Tudin is the Library Subject Specialist for Geography and Environmental Studies** ([Reference Services, Carleton University Library, Tel \(613\) 520-2600 ext. 2018; susan_tudin@carleton.ca](#)). Susan should be your most important Library contact in terms of course preparation. She has prepared course guides for most courses within DGES and, over the years, has worked with a large number of faculty members in helping to design their courses (more below). She has posted a number of course and subject-guides on the Library website (see below).
- **Research Support Services** (you may also hear reference to "MADGIC", but that department was merged with others in 2017): this department includes folks who are also extremely useful contacts when it comes to: preparing mapping components; research assignments involving government documents; and demonstrations or workshops for a course.
 - **Monica Ferguson, Archives Project and Ottawa Room Specialist** (613 520-2600 ext. 8125; monica.ferguson@carleton.ca)
 - **Rebecca Bartlett, GIS and Digital Resources Librarian** (613 520-2600 ext. 4084; Rebecca.bartlett@carleton.ca)
 - **Meaghan Kenny, Geospatial Data Service Specialist** (613-520-2600 ext. 1685; meaghan.kenny@carleton.ca)

- Maureen Leslie, Map and Government Information Specialist (613-520-2600 ext. 8038; Maureen.leslie@carleton.ca).
- Human Resources – Payroll: (613) 520-3634

Payroll-specific information that used to be in a Payroll section on the Human Resources website has been moved to the campus intranet, including details of how to set up automatic payment into your bank account.

<https://i.carleton.ca/hr>

Details of the pay schedule for 2019-20 may be found here:

<https://i.carleton.ca/hr/payroll/>

Note: You will NOT get paper pay stubs. Instead you can check your payment history on Carleton Central. Similarly, there are no paper tax receipts. Your T4 will be downloadable from Carleton Central. You will get a notification that the forms are ready in January.

- **CUPE 4600 is the union that oversees labour rights for CIs and Teaching Assistants at Carleton University.** On a day-to-day basis, you should not have to deal with the Union. On the occasion you have contractual, departmental or disciplinary issues you can approach the shop steward for DGES (currently held by Darren Pacione) or the Union Office directly. The Union also holds regular open meetings to discuss issues that affect CI's, especially around the time of contract bargaining. There are also regular social gatherings at which you can meet and talk to other CI's from across the Carleton community. On the occasion that work action is called, you will be asked to coordinate with the Union.

Facebook: [CUPE 4600](#)

Twitter: [@CUPE4600](#)

Email: cupe4600@carleton.ca

Phone: 613 520 7482

511A Unicentre 1125 Colonel By Drive Carleton University Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday: 9:00am-12:00pm, 1:00pm-5:00pm

What do I need to know?

<http://www.carleton.ca/geography/contract-instructors/>

- **Office Space:** Office space for CI's is limited in DGES. Consequently, you will likely be sharing an office with one or two other CI's. In terms of pre-class preparation time, this is usually not a problem as your course timetable is unlikely to overlap with office mates. Choosing office hours that don't conflict with each other, however, is sometimes a little harder to arrange. Prior to the start of the term, Natalia will coordinate your office hours based on your preferences. She usually does her best to pair up CI's whose needs don't conflict with each other's.

Assess your own needs prior to discussing timetables with Natalia. Ask yourself the following:

- Do I need office access before class to prepare?
- Will I be meeting regularly with students or TA's?
- Do I have other requirements?
- Will I have room/ facilities to file documents or store materials for teaching?
- Will the room have a computer and printer? If not, is there access to central printing?

Coordinate with Natalia if there are any problems.

- **Computer access:** CI offices all have computer access – both wired-in and wireless internet access, a CPU and a flatscreen monitor. You will most likely not have a printer in the office. There is, however, a central Departmental printer in the Mailroom. You should be able to send your documents to that printer.
- **Phones:** There are phones in all offices with phone message systems. Setting up phone messages, and having others leave messages for you, becomes tricky when sharing an office. If you want this function you will have to coordinate with your office mates in terms of access codes. In general, though, most if not all students use email for contact. Consequently, it is really unnecessary to give out the office phone number on your course outline.

- **Meeting with students:** You will be expected to hold weekly office hours, or times when you are available for consultation. For safety reasons, these are best scheduled during the day. On the other hand, if you can only schedule your office hours in the evening, you should be aware of safety considerations both for you and your students. There are “safe-walking programs” on campus. At the beginning of the term you might direct them to the following website:

<http://carleton.ca/safety/protect-yourself/walking-alone-late-at-night/>

If you teach in the evening, you may also choose to arrange to meet students immediately before or after class. The reality is that few students choose to see you during office hours. These days, most students prefer to discuss issues via email.

[A final note, if you have TAs, ensure that they set up times to see students. Regular office hours are important, but especially prior to assignment due dates and exam preparation.]

- **Office Keys:** Your office key must be picked up from Natalia Fierro in Loeb B350. You will be given keys for both your office and the mailroom.
- **Mailroom:** You will be assigned a mail slot in the mailroom. Student assignments may be deposited in the dropbox in the mailroom door **Loeb B342**. They will be collected and placed in your mailbox.
- **Photocopying:** There are photocopiers located in the mailroom. Natalia keeps an access card to these machines. The mailroom also houses a fax machine, a central printer and a paper cutter. [Note: Material (e.g. readings) for TAs can be placed in the mailboxes in Room B342 or left in the file boxes on the windowsill].
- **Classroom Electronic Media Access:** Before your first class you will have to get a key for electronic classroom media units from IMS (room D283, second floor of Loeb Building). You will have to sign out the key. This will be your key until the end of your contract. There is a \$25 fine for losing the key. IMS gives training sessions on how to use the electronic classroom facilities. As there are several different systems in use across the campus (full-electronic podia to mini-electronic boxes) these training sessions are a must. Note that DGES’ own classrooms (Loeb A211, A220, A410 now have control panels very similar to the ones used in other campus classrooms, and support is provided by IMS.
- **Carleton Central:** Carleton Central is your “one-stop” access to all of your university details (e.g. pay, course details, timetable, tax forms, etc.). You will need to arrange for an email address and coordinates to access the University computer system.

<https://central.carleton.ca/>

<https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/accounts-and-passwords/>

<https://exchange.carleton.ca> (email access)

- **ID card:** You will be required to pick up a staff card at the Campus Card office in the Atrium between the University Centre and the Tory Building (UC 407). You will need to provide a copy of your contract before they will issue your card. You can then take your card to the Library and have it activated for library access.
- **Contract Instructor Benefits:** CUPE 4600 has negotiated some benefits for Contract Instructors, including: Dental Coverage and Professional Development Funds [<https://www.cupe4600.ca/contract-instructors-benefits>]. Professional Development Funds to a total of \$800.00 may be used for: Professional Fees; Books; Conferences; etc. Please note that there are limited total fees for the whole University, therefore, payment to individual CI's is often on a first-come basis [Details of the current CUPE 4600 Collective Agreement for Contract Instructors can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/hr/cu-files/cupe-4600-unit-2-16-19/>].

What do I need to know about my course?

What do I need to do before the term begins?

- **Where do I find my course details?** On Carleton Central you can check the details of your course (e.g. enrollment, room number, and timetable; whether your class is a seminar or a lecture-based course; whether there are discussion groups or labs scheduled; etc.). You can even access a course summary class list – listing the students' names, student numbers, majors and year of study. This is useful in understanding the mix in the class (e.g. the number of DGES majors; the number of non-DGES students; the number of senior students).

https://central.carleton.ca/prod/twbkwbis.P_GenMenu?name=bmenu.P_FacMainMnu

- **What are the course prerequisites?** Make sure that you understand the required student prerequisites for your course, for example: whether students need previous background knowledge of the material in order to do their work; whether you can

make exceptions or special allowances to allow students into the course who don't have the requirements; and what it means when it says "or at the discretion of the instructor" or "permission of the department."

- This is sometimes a thorny issue, particularly when a first-year student enrolls to take your third-year course and does not have the required prerequisites. Occasionally, students can register online without having the required prerequisites. The registration system is able to discriminate, but is not always set to do so, or students may have requested an override and had it granted before you were contracted to teach the course. Students will register because they are interested in the course material, are looking for a course to fill their timetable or have heard from others about you as a teacher. Remember, though, that prerequisites are meant to ensure that the students have the necessary background and experience needed to function at the course level.
- So, how does one deal with such potential problems? Often, the decisions are left to the student as to whether she should continue in the course. This can lead to problems when she is unable to complete the work at the course level. Prior to the course starting you might check with the undergraduate administrator, Karen Tucker, to find out: 1) if the student in question has taken comparable courses to those listed as prerequisites or 2) whether she has the academic standing to be able to cope with the course requirements. You may also choose to talk to the student directly, outlining your expectations for the course and ascertaining whether she has a good grasp of the course material. One thing you can stress is that there is a higher 'risk' of not doing as well in a course if she doesn't have the prerequisites. **[NOTE: These decisions are largely about identifying risk to the student. For example, if it is a 3rd year course, you might tell her that all students in the course are expected to be at that level, and most are. Consequently, as she is at a lower level, this presents a disadvantage and potential risk to her academic standing.]**
- If you feel that the student does not have the necessary abilities you may have to recommend that she think about finding a more suitable option.
- **What do I need to know about my classroom?** Ensure that the type of room assigned to your course meets your teaching needs. For example, do you need desks and chairs that can be moved around for group activities? Do you need space to layout maps or other materials? Do you need computers for the students? If possible, take time to visit the classroom ahead of your first teaching day. Familiarize yourself with the type of electronic facilities, lighting, screen position, blackboards, etc. Different classrooms have different set-ups – from mini-electronic classrooms to fully electronic rooms. There are quite a few variations in the electronic setup.

<https://carleton.ca/ims/rooms/>

Instructional Media Services – Classroom Technology Support also offers instructional seminars on working with the equipment in the different classrooms. These sessions are announced via email prior to the term starting. There are also instructional videos on their website:

<https://carleton.ca/ims/help-centre/>

[NOTE: if you like to use the blackboard to teach, don't rely on there being chalk in the classroom. There is a supply of chalk in the teaching supplies cupboard in the Departmental mailroom. Likewise, for classrooms with whiteboards you will have to pick up pens.]

If the room does not meet your requirements you can request a room change through Natalia. This is better done early when you are first made aware of course details. Given pressure on space, it does not always work out.

- **When do I need to have a course outline (see below) completed?** The Department and the Dean's Office require a course outline from you as soon as possible, to comply with regulations and to recruit students. Although CI contracts are in place primarily for the duration of the term, the Collective Agreement for Contract Instructors also recognizes that some preparation will need to be done before the start of term (e.g. Article 15.4); part of this preparation includes the creation of course outlines. As of 2018-19, university regulations require course outlines to be available a week before the start of term – and DGES appreciates if outlines can be made available earlier than that, for student recruiting purposes (often draft outlines are initially posted, labelled as such, so that refinements can still be made). Additionally, unless this is a course you have taught before, your outline must be presented to the Chair for approval. It is then sent back for amendments if needed. In most cases, the Chair will not question the content to be covered. Amendments usually have to do more with technicalities and wording. The course outline is then posted on the Departmental website ahead of the term.
- **Will I get TA's? How do I work with them?** Being assigned Teaching Assistants (TA's) for your course isn't always a given. If your class is over a certain size (usually around 60 students) or has lab/ tutorial components you will likely be assigned a TA. Larger classes will have several TA's assigned to them. The availability of TA's does depend upon the availability of grad students to cover these positions. On some occasions, you might find that your TA comes from another department other than DGES. These are always students from related disciplines, however. In certain circumstances, senior undergraduates have also been hired as TA's. If your class is smaller, but you think you may require a TA you can always inquire. Bear in mind that while TA's can be a

benefit in terms of reducing your assignment and exam marking workload, working with TA's also adds a further level of responsibility (see below).

IMPORTANT NOTE: TA's certainly help reduce what you have to do in terms of grading assignments and meeting with students, but can add other things to your workload. You will need to have regular meetings with TA's to discuss marking guidelines, grading, lab/ discussion group preparation and time management. Full TA's are also contracted for 130 hours (10 hours/week x 13 weeks). This means that you have to be aware of the amount of work they are required to do for you each week and over the course of the term. When you split a TA's time between delivering a lab/ discussion group, marking assignments, office hours, answering student queries, and meeting with you, 130 hours can disappear quickly. Be aware of this when you are planning the number and type of assignments for the course. If your course TA needs ramp up in intensity over the term, be careful in planning the assigned hours towards the beginning. Furthermore, if you want TA's to mark final exams you must leave some hours spare at the end of the course. Tell your TAs to warn you when they are at a pre-arranged number of hours (e.g. 100hrs for a 130hr TA assignment). Don't let them go over their assigned hours for the course! Also, make sure they tell you at the beginning of the term if they will be away for any part of the term (including December for fall courses, and April for winter courses). Precise planning and constant communication are key to successful working relationships with TAs. If there are any issues that cannot be easily resolved, please bring them to the Chair immediately – do not wait until they accumulate or until it is too late to take appropriate action.

Designing your course outline

- **What is needed in the course outline?** Every course must have a course outline. As discussed above, you will be asked by the Chair to provide a draft course outline prior to the beginning of the course. This is then reviewed and suggestions made for changes or corrections. Once the outline has been approved it will be uploaded to the Departmental website for your course. Make your outline as interesting as possible and use images if you want. The Course outline must follow a standard template and include certain necessary information: course description and objectives; methods of grading the students; textbooks or readings required; and the curriculum to be covered.

Typical layout:

- University and Departmental Details
- Course title
- Course details and personal information

- Course Description
 - Course Objectives
 - Method of assessment
 - Course textbooks
 - Syllabus
 - Other required details
- **Course Outline Preparation:** In preparing your course outline, you can access many previous course outlines in an electronic format. Natalia Fierro keeps copies of many of these. The most recent course outlines for courses taught in the Department are on the Departmental website:

<http://www.carleton.ca/geography/geography/undergraduate/courses/>

<http://www.carleton.ca/geography/environmental-studies/undergraduate/courses/>

<http://www.carleton.ca/geography/geomatics/undergraduate/courses/>

- If you are new to a course you can contact Natalia or the Chair about possible materials from the previous instructor. Many instructors will be happy to provide details about the course (e.g. approaches, what worked, what didn't work, etc.) or course material with you, particularly if they can't teach the course again or are on leave and want someone to deliver the course in a similar way. Natalia or the Chair can contact the previous instructors on your behalf if you prefer.

- Other excellent resources in planning your course outline are the course and subject-guides prepared by Susan Tudin, Library Subject Specialist for Geography and Environmental Studies:

<http://www.library.carleton.ca/research/course-guides>

<http://www.library.carleton.ca/research/subject-guides/geography>

Susan has spent many years working with instructors and compiling material on her own to build an online reference collection designed to meet the needs of different DGES courses. If there isn't a specific course-guide for your course, Susan will be happy to discuss one with you, to give advice and ideas and to set one up for you. She is also happy to provide instructional sessions

for your classes on how to use the library facilities, databases and catalogues.

Monica Ferguson, the Cartographic Specialist, is also an excellent resource person, especially if your course requires a cartographic component. She also has a page that is helpful:

<http://www.library.carleton.ca/find/maps>.

- **Course Outline Requirements:** There are always certain requirements that must appear at the beginning: of the outline
 - **Course number and title.**
 - **Your name.**
 - **Your office hours.**
 - **Your contact information** – email address, phone number (but see comments above): If you have TA's, their contact information should also be provided.
 - **The course prerequisites.**
 - **Meeting times and rooms** – lectures and tutorials/ labs/ discussion groups (if these are scheduled for your class)

- **Course Description and Objectives:** The course description for your course can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/courses/ENST/>

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/courses/GEOG/>

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/courses/GEOM/>

- These **course descriptions** have been developed over a number of years and are based on departmental curriculum needs and concerns. The subject matter is largely set to ensure that there is consistency and that your course follows on from or corresponds with other courses. Nevertheless, within these parameters, there is some flexibility to interpret how you can teach your course. There is always enough breadth in the subject matter to allow you to mold the course to your own strengths and interests.

- The **course objectives** give you a chance to explain your own approach to the course and to expand on the details as laid out in the course description. This is also your chance to highlight how you wish to approach the material and to lay out what you want the students to take away from the course.
 - Once you have outlined your **course objectives**, you can then turn your attention to your **course syllabus** (see below). Develop a clear idea of how you wish to approach the course and how your own interests or research will be incorporated into the course material.
- **Student Assessment:** How to assess the work of the students in your course is always a difficult decision to make. While it is often a matter of personal preference, a number of factors will determine the type and amount of assessment you choose, including for example: the size of the class; the course level; your own time schedules; access to TAs; number of TAs; what you hope to achieve through the deliverables; the fact that many students these days prefer regular feedback; etc. Getting feedback to students early and often is important. Rather than leaving the bulk of the grade until the end of the course.

When determining your methods of assessment it is often a good idea to mix up the types of assignments – e.g. short assignments, longer papers, group assignments (more below), midterm exams, final exams, take-home exams. There are also different ways students may present material throughout the term. Some of us, for example, have been experimenting with alternatives to traditional papers (e.g. photo-essays, posters, journals). These sometimes get the students fired up about the work and they often produce better quality assignments. Remember, that you can have lots of shorter assignments or exercises, but these all take time to grade and if you are also preparing for classes this can take more time than you perhaps would like. Contrarily, having too few assignments – especially if they are all due at the end of the course (e.g. a big paper and an exam) – can make students anxious about their standing. It is perhaps a good idea to take a middle ground that allows for some early feedback (e.g. a short assignment or two; quizzes; a midterm; etc.) and then to rely on larger projects/ exams to provide the substantive part of the grade. It is perhaps important to note that senior students are more used to fewer and larger assignments.

Group Assignments: Why use group assignments? Students generally view group work as “evil”. Nevertheless, it can be an important component in your teaching arsenal. It is a chance to encourage: cooperation and teamwork particularly in a smaller class; collaboration on a larger research topic; problem solving; the management, synthesis and presentation of results; etc. Group work mirrors real-life/ work situations. Geographers themselves, both human and physical, regularly work in teams. Geographical topics, therefore, usually lend themselves well to group work. Finally, you will also

have to determine if you are going to have the group simply submit a project to you or whether you are going to have an in-class oral presentation at the end of the term that will be part of the assessment.

In using group work, try and make the work relevant and interesting. Give the students something real or worthwhile to explore, for example: doing an eco-workshop for school kids; completing a neighbourhood study of a part of town; carrying out an environmental assessment; or creating and evaluating a waste-management plan for a hypothetical town. Debates also work well with groups being assigned different positions within an argument, for example in the case of a debate on whether graffiti is art or vandalism, groups would be divided into the different actors – city officials, business owners, police, residents, youth workers, and artists.

Smaller groups (3-4) usually work best as there is less of a chance of “free-riders.” Moreover, smaller groups ensure that each group member does a suitable amount of work. The only time when small groups may fail is if a student drops out of the course. You then need to ensure that the remaining group members have an adjusted workload. If you do choose to use larger groups, make sure that the topic has enough breadth to allow for each member of the group to contribute. The students should be encouraged to divide the project into individual tasks. By apportioning the work it makes it easier to recognize individual contributions to the whole project.

Group Project Assessment: In order to avoid student concerns about unfairness in workloads and assessment, find ways to grade individual contributions to the group and not just the group project as a whole. This avoids the “so-and-so did no work and got the same mark as the rest of us” complaint! Individual write-ups should focus on the research that each student did to prepare their own contribution to the group project. Another option is to get students to anonymously grade the other members of the group.

Presentations: If the group project has an oral presentation you will need to give guidelines as to what you will be looking for and how it will be assessed. Presentations, whether as a group or individually are an essential part of some courses, e.g. more senior seminar-based courses and First Year Seminar Courses. *[Be aware that not all students, especially those in first year, function well in presentations. You should make attempts to identify the students who may be stressed by the process ahead of time and give them assistance to prepare. In some circumstances, you may need to find an alternative means for assessing their contributions.]*

Attendance and Participation: Attendance marks are not always a really effective means of assessment. Many students don't seem too concerned about these few marks. There are a number of factors that keep students away from class. Consequently, recording names, particularly in a big class, and filtering excuses can either be time-consuming or fruitless.

Some instructors, therefore, use participation marks in their final assessment. These can be useful for assessing a student's contribution to a seminar or smaller class. They are more than a simple attendance grade. They assess the contributions of the student to the class.

- **Textbooks/ course packs/ readings/ Library reserves:** Have a look at what texts have been used in the past and, if possible, discuss their merits with the previous instructor. You can also contact the sales-reps for the various academic publishers (if they don't contact you in advance). Find out what the various publishers have that match your course needs.

There are a number of publishers offering both introductory and advanced **Geography and Environmental Studies** textbooks, including: **Oxford University Press, Pearson, Wiley, Sage and Taylor & Francis (Routledge)**. Smaller university presses usually have more specialized publications that may be better suited to senior undergraduate or graduate courses.

Most publishers will send you a complimentary copy for review. Some of them may require that you return the book after a certain time or pay for it if you wish to keep it. If you choose to adopt the text for your course, you will be given a desk-copy for yourself. If you have TA's who will need to read the text in preparing their tutorials, you may be able to negotiate further desk-copies. In some cases, "review" books are made available for a short time as *eBooks*. In general, students balk at having to buy overly expensive course texts. Similarly, from experience, if you choose more than one text for the course you may find that few students will buy more than one. In such circumstances, you might consider putting copies of the **text on reserve in the Library**.

Library reserves are also useful if you just wish to use parts of one or more textbooks. Library reserves can be problematic for big classes, however, unless there are multiple copies of the texts available. Not every student takes the time to look at readings on reserve. You will be notified by the Library a couple of months before the term starts to submit requests for texts to be placed on reserve. You can now access the Library's reserve system online. Details about how to proceed with this are located on the Library page at:

<http://www.library.carleton.ca/services/library-reserves-faculty-and-instructors/ares>

You may also choose to put together **coursepacks** of readings:

Coursepacks, also referred to as manuals or course readers, comprise whatever a professor, lecturer, or teaching assistant wants to use as a 'personalized' educational aid in the classroom. By taking advantage of the coursepack

program, an instructor can choose from a wide variety of materials and resources, tailoring them to the specific needs and demands of their particular course. Coursepacks come in a wide variety of forms: as collections of bound articles to supplement lectures and seminars, as course notes and/or lab manuals that may include in-class lectures, in-class syllabi, as of yet unpublished books and/or articles, or even out of print books that may no longer be available to the academic community.

[\(http://www.carleton.ca/graphicservices/coursepacks/\)](http://www.carleton.ca/graphicservices/coursepacks/)

You should be aware, however, that course-packs or readers are usually time-consuming to prepare. They must also be prepared well enough in advance in order to get them printed in time for the beginning of a term. They also raise a number of concerns over what you can and can't use due to copyright issues.

Another option is to **assign the URL's** for academic papers, newspaper columns, magazine articles, government documents and rely on the students to access these themselves (as a result of the copyright rules you can no longer post many readings as pdf's on the course page). When posting academic papers you must assume that the students have some knowledge of how to access the University Library catalogue and databases. [NOTE: Don't assume anything. You may have to give basic instruction on accessing the catalogue or direct the students to workshops in the Library. With earlier level courses, it is not a bad idea to arrange an in-class tutorial on using the Library resources. Susan Tudin is your best contact for this.]

- Finally, your outline needs some remaining **Standard details** about academic offences, Paul Menton Centre and other resources for students must also be included at the end of the outline. These details may be obtained from Natalia as a complete set of instructions and just need to be appended to your outline.

Designing your course syllabus

- While previous course outlines can be good templates, and are always a good reference point, don't always get caught up in how someone else has taught or might teach the course. Some of these courses have been developed over many years and have been tailored to the specific strengths, interests or research projects of the previous instructor.
- **What makes a course interesting?** The simple answer to that question is **variety!** Mixing up your instructional methods (e.g. hands-on work, group work and discussions, interactive lectures, self-learning, audio-visual multi-media, etc.) keeps both the students and you interested in the material. These days, students are used to learning in different sorts of ways through a range

of media – the traditional lecture of the past does not always keep their attention class after class. The other answer to the question might be to **relate** some of the material to **student interests** (e.g. youth and urban culture, local community, youth engagement in environmental issues, etc.). Community-based learning also keeps material relevant and engages students in real-life issues.

- **Should I use a textbook to provide the framework for my syllabus?** A textbook can often be a good starting point for designing a syllabus, particularly for introductory or foundation courses. Lectures can be set up to follow the chapters or themes in the text. In addition, textbooks will often have ideas at the end of the chapters for discussion groups, labs or tutorials.
- **What other approach might I use?** Another approach is to use themed blocks or units. You can then delve into the ideas more deeply over a few classes through the use of case studies, films, debates, etc.
- **How much detail should I include in my syllabus?** This is a difficult question to answer. Instructors have varying views on this. Often it is a matter of personal preference. Some choose to produce highly detailed daily outlines of what will be taught, including readings, activities and assignments. Others will give a more basic idea of the range of topics to be discussed. Some instructors provide the minimum required components (or some intermediate level of detail) in the official course outline, and then flesh out the details in a supplemental syllabus, such as readings and detailed weekly schedule. Students generally prefer to have a detailed breakdown so that they can plan their term. On the other hand, this can be problematic if you choose to make changes as the term goes along: e.g. if you decide to explore a topic in more detail or you don't get through your material in one class. Allow yourself some flexibility. The statement that the schedule is “tentative and subject to change” often accompanies course syllabi. It is a good idea, however, to ensure that due dates for assignments or exams remain fixed or that students are given enough warnings about changes.
- **Am I being realistic?** Be realistic in what you can expect to cover in a set number of weeks. There is usually a temptation to want to cover too many ideas and to try to fit in as much as you can into a short space of time. *More* is not always better: again allow yourself some flexibility to expand and develop certain themes and allow students time for discussion, reflection and other activities. This will give the students different ways to think about the material as well as giving you some breathing space. Also be aware that 3.0hr vs. 1.5hr class may require slightly different teaching approaches. Lecturing for a full three-hours can be a challenge for both you and the students (see below). On the other hand, 1.5hr classes – which are technically 80 minutes – can sometimes not give you enough time to present all your material.
- **Should I include other types of instruction?** Students always enjoy having a different perspective on the material. Guest speakers, who are experts in an aspect of the subject matter to be covered in the course, add that additional perspective. Likewise, **library based classes** (arranged through Susan Tudin and other Library staff) are also useful if your students are going to be doing a

research project of some sort. **Fieldtrips** and **hands-on activities** can also augment your lecture (see below), giving you a break and the students something different.

- If you have **labs or tutorials** (see below) attached to your class you also need to determine what material you want to cover in those sessions and how they will dovetail with your lectures. Are you going to use the labs/ tutorials to introduce and hand back assignments? Are these sessions going to be for additional instruction? Are they going to have hands-on activities? Etc. *[Note: Lab or tutorial times are set centrally by the Registrar's Office]*
- If you are having student **presentations** in your course, provide enough time within the syllabus for these. If you are teaching a 1.5hr class, it is often a good idea to allow a spillover class for group or individual presentations as these invariably run over time. For example, if you have 7 groups presenting do not expect them all to get through in the time you have (which is technically 80 minutes). Technical/ technological issues, longer than expected presentations, and turnover between presentations will eat into the allotted time of the next group and throw off your schedule. Moreover, rushing to get all presentations done in one time slot does not allow any time for discussion or reflection. Likewise, allow time within your syllabus for **in-class exams**. You may also want to set aside some class time to review the exam material beforehand and for discussing the exam upon completion of the grading. The same applies for returning assignments. Some instructors also allow a day at the end of the term for final exam review.

Teaching help

- **How do I submit grades?** Final grades for your course will be submitted online through the e-Grades system on Carleton Central. Log in to <https://central.carleton.ca/>, then on the Faculty tab choose E-Grades.

Grades are submitted in Letter-grade format: Information about Carleton's grading schemes can be found in the undergraduate calendar:

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv2/#2.3>)

Grades are to be submitted within ten days of either the last day of class (if you have no formal exam) or your final exam. It is important to get your grades in on time. If you have a fourth year class or graduating students in your class their graduation date might be affected by late grading. If, for medical or other reasons, students require deferred dates for exams or assignments this will be arranged between the student and the Registrar's Office. NOTE: If you are required to grade deferred exams or assignments the Collective Agreement makes allowances for you to be paid extra for your time as this grading may come after the completion of your contract.

- **How do I deal with a big class?** Big classes present interesting challenges for CI's. They will almost certainly be more time-consuming. If your course doesn't merit a TA you will have to tailor the student deliverables to your own time-schedule or you will find yourself swamped with marking. If you have been assigned a TA or TAs, it may seem that your workload is reduced. Certainly, in terms of marking, you may find that this is the case. Preparing the TA's for tutorials, instructing them on grading schemes, dealing with their queries and ensuring that they are grading in the same range, however, may give you more to do. Occasionally, you may find yourself having to review papers at the request of the TA's or the students themselves. When dealing with multiple TA's you will have to set aside times for regular meetings with them. The whole process then becomes an exercise as much in people-management as it does simply teaching the course.

- **I have a three-hour class, how should I teach it?** Three-hour classes can be a bit of a challenge. A straight three-hour lecture can be hard for both you and your students. The reality is that students learn in shorter chunks. From vast experience, there are few of us who can comfortably lecture for three hours straight. Mix up what you do within that time frame. The rule of thirds works quite well: 1) lecture for the first 3/4hr. - 1hr. then take a break; 2) show a film or do an interactive exercise; and 3) have a general discussion about the film or exercise and how it ties into the subject matter of the lecture. Another approach is to sprinkle videos and discussion points throughout your lecture to break things up a bit. Students always react better to mixed approaches. You can also sprinkle other things into your schedule – guest-speakers or a panel of speakers; a visit to the map library (with mapping activities to do); group exercises that take the students out of the classroom to observe things around campus; a fieldtrip to a museum, a national historic site, or a local neighbourhood; or a class debate where different groups present different sides of an argument.

- **Should I use CULearn?** CULearn is an online course organizer available for all courses at Carleton. This is the place where you can upload your lectures and other course documents for your students; set up discussions; send emails; keep an electronic gradebook; etc.. You can also set up electronic dropboxes for student assignments. Similarly, you can return marked assignments and comments on CULearn. The students now expect all course material to be available on CULearn. If you choose not to use some of the electronic facilities of CULearn you will need to inform the students of alternative ways you will get the material to them.

- **Where do students submit assignments if they are hard copy?** Many instructors now choose to have assignments submitted electronically on CULearn. On the other hand, if you prefer hard-copy assignments you will have to collect these in class time or have them submit them through the departmental dropbox in Loeb B342 (*NOTE: if you choose to have students hand in assignments to the dropbox it is vital that you give students instruction on what information MUST*

be attached to the assignment – name, instructor’s name, course number, TA’s name if applicable, date. Do not have students place assignments under your door or hand them in at the Main Office (unless there is a special reason for doing so. Note also that time stamping of assignments is NOT available if you use the dropbox, while it is automatically performed if you use CULearn’s electronic submissions.)]

- **How do I prepare labs and discussion groups?** There are a couple of ways you can approach this (bear in mind that human geography/ environmental studies discussion groups are going to require a different approach from physical geography labs).
 - 1) Human geography or environmental studies discussion groups can be tailored to aspects of your weekly lecture. The students will be asked to explore in more detail a key issue, principle, theory, etc. using things like case-studies or experiments. Readings associated with the lecture could be discussed and explored further in a discussion group.
 - 2) You could use the discussion groups to explore ideas that are related to the lecture subject matter but have not been discussed in the lecture. In this way, they stand alone as a “mini-lecture” on their own. This could apply to any aspect of geography and environmental studies.
 - 3) Physical geography labs require more hands-on physical exercises/ activities – if you can get out of the classroom to do these even better. Labs like these require worksheets or instructions to guide the students. This can take you time to prepare.
 - Whichever approach you choose, mix things up. Do not do the same thing week after week. If it is a discussion group, for example, use hands-on exercises, group work, group discussions, and debates. If you have TA’s running these sessions, ensure that they have been properly prepared and each know what they are doing. This may necessitate a preparation meeting where you go through the lab/discussion group step-by-step with the TA’s (i.e. have them actually do the tutorial).
- **How do I deal with student issues?**
 - **Academic Offences:** These can be some of the most troubling situations that may arise during your contract. Plagiarism is perhaps the most prevalent form of academic dishonesty and has been occurring at an increased rate

in recent years. The use of the Internet has made “cut-and-paste” assignments relatively commonplace. Regrettably, you will almost certainly have to deal with at least one plagiarism case at some point during your time at Carleton. This may consist of a couple of lines that have not been properly accredited to whole pages that have been “clipped” from the Internet verbatim with no citations.

It is recommended that you repeat throughout the term that any copying from another student, a previous assignment (say from a previous year) or from another source without proper citation and/or quotation will be sent to the Associate Dean for review. If academic dishonesty is deemed to have taken place, a stiff penalty is usually imposed (this is usually a 0 for the assignment; repeat offenders are often treated more severely and can either be failed in the course or expelled from the University). Ensure that the students ask for help from you or the TA’s if they are not sure how to use/cite materials from various sources.

If you suspect academic dishonesty you must complete the required form (see below) and submit copies of all the necessary material, fully documented and annotated, for review by the Chair. The Chair will then sign them and hand them on to the Associate Dean. There are no exceptions or custom solutions and, at this point, **do not talk directly to the student**. At Carleton there is a “zero tolerance” policy towards cases of academic dishonesty. In other words, cases of plagiarism or cheating must be reported through official channels and, ultimately, sent to the Dean’s Office. The student will then be informed that they are suspected of committing acts of academic dishonesty and that they are requested to attend a meeting in the Dean’s Office to address the situation. You will not be required to be involved at this stage. At Carleton you are not allowed to come up with your own penalty for any form of academic dishonesty.

If you are unsure about the process and how to proceed you can get further advice from Natalia or the Chair. More information can be found at:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

<http://carleton.ca/studentaffairs/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Instructors-Guide.pdf>

<http://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

The memo template for reporting an offence to the Dean’s office is available here:

<https://carleton.ca/fass/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Jan-2018-1.pdf>

- **A student has informed me that he has medical issues and cannot complete a task at a certain time, how do I deal with this?** Medical decisions are usually discretionary. You are certainly within your rights to ask the student to provide a medical note from a doctor if you want to confirm an illness or another medical issue. This is especially so in situations where a student has missed an exam or a due date and has not contacted you beforehand or when a student has missed a number of classes due to illness. Please note, however, that forged medical notes are becoming more common.
- **How do I deal with a student who is registered with the Paul Menton Centre?** At some point either prior to or early into the term you may be sent information from the Paul Menton Centre (PMC) about a student who has registered with them. The PMC is a facility that is set up to help students with various disabilities to succeed academically. Disabilities may range from simple cases of dyslexia and learning disabilities to sight or hearing impairment to other physical disabilities. All students with disabilities who are registered with the PMC **must** be given accommodation:

*Post-secondary institutions are required to take a proactive approach in addressing disability related issues and in establishing policies and programs that are inclusive for students with disabilities. All members of the Carleton University community have a shared responsibility to accommodate students with disabilities whose needs have been duly assessed by the Paul Menton Centre. Academic accommodations play an important role in creating an equitable environment where respect for the dignity of the persons with disabilities and respect for confidentiality are realized. Carleton's current **Academic Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities** is intended to reflect the University's response to the legislative requirements of Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. <http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/faculty/>*

Each student registered with the PMC is assigned a caseworker who coordinates with faculty and helps to design the means by which the student can cope with course challenges. When contacted by the PMC, you will be informed of the sorts of accommodation he or she requires. These are varied but include, for example: making provisions for the student to have more time to do tasks; arranging for a note taker to be present in your classroom; or having your lectures or other material transcribed into brail. The PMC will make arrangements with you for accommodating any students who have special needs with regards to formal exams:

<https://carleton.ca/pmc/faculty/tests-exams/>

- **I have a student who needs help with his writing, what resources are available to help him?** You can direct any student who may need help to Writing Services:

<https://students.carleton.ca/services/writing-services/>

- What other academic resources are there for students?

For an overview, see [Supporting Our Students](#), and the service directory at <https://students.carleton.ca/faculty-staff/>

Some specific resources:

Academic Advising Centre (<https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>)

There is also a student led initiative that can help with studying and preparing for exams and assignments: **PASS – Peer Assisted Study Sessions** (<https://carleton.ca/csas/pass/>)

Finally, the Library holds seminars for students on how to use the Library. You can also arrange for these seminars to be included in your course schedule. These can be arranged with Susan Tudin (navigating the library catalogue; doing library-based research; methods of citation; etc,) or with the Map Librarians (using Library map collection; basic Library-based GIS; etc.): (<http://www.library.carleton.ca/services/tours-and-workshops/library-seminars>).