

**APPROACHES TO GEOGRAPHICAL INQUIRY (GEOG 5000, FALL 2023)**  
**Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Carleton University**  
*August Draft (complete syllabus to be provided in class and posted on Brightspace)*



**Instructor:** Dr. Jill Wigle  
**Class Meetings:** Thursdays, 11:35 to 14:25  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Course Brightspace:** <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/209370>

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION**

A review of the major philosophical perspectives shaping research and explanation by geographers. Particular attention is paid to interpretations of social structure and human action, the nature of the biophysical universe, and the interaction between human beings and their environments.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course reviews a diverse range of perspectives, approaches, and debates shaping research and explanation in contemporary human geography. Graduate students in various disciplines may find the course useful for their respective research projects.

**Prerequisite:** Graduate student standing, or permission of the department. Open to graduate students from all disciplines.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course provides students with opportunities to: (1) examine significant theories, concepts, and debates in human geography; (2) situate their research in relation to different geographical literatures and approaches; (3) support the elaboration and refinement of research interests and projects; (4) exchange ideas and discuss course content with fellow graduate students.

### **CLASS FORMAT**

The class meets once weekly for a 3-hour seminar. As a graduate seminar, this is a reading and discussion intensive course whose success depends on in-class engagement. Weekly seminars revolve around student presentations and discussions of course materials.

### **READINGS AND BRIGHTSPACE**

All required readings are available online through Brightspace and the ARES portal. Course readings have been chosen to: provide a general overview of significant approaches in human geography; represent new or enduring works in particular areas of geographic research; offer illustrations of different approaches to geographic inquiry; and to focus on specific themes or debates. Other course-related materials are also available through Brightspace.

### **EVALUATION AND ASSIGNMENTS**

#### ***Class Participation (20%)***

Class participation is based on attendance and meaningful engagement with the course materials, seminar discussions, and other in-class activities, including proposing specific readings for discussion in week 8. This requires that students complete the required readings *before* coming to class. More details to be provided in class.

#### ***Thinking Geographically (10%)***

What does it mean to think geographically? A brief reflection paper that includes considering your own goals for graduate studies. This topic will be discussed informally in week 2 and written papers are due by 11:59 pm on September 15 via Brightspace. More details to be provided in week 1.

#### ***Reading Commentaries (20%)***

For two weeks of the term, students are asked to prepare a written reading commentary that engages one or more of the weekly readings. Each commentary should be approximately 1,000 words and provide critical reflections related to important concepts, issues, or debates raised by the reading(s). More details to be provided in class.

#### ***Reading Discussant (20%)***

For two weeks of the term, students are asked to serve as the “discussant” of the weekly readings by preparing an *analytical* overview to share with the class, accompanied by a one-page handout. Discussants should focus on: important ideas, arguments, and/or concepts raised in the readings and elaborate on connections and/or tensions with other readings. Discussants should also develop two or three concise questions pertaining to the readings to lead class discussion and post these questions to the

class discussion forum on Brightspace the day before class by 18:00. A schedule of reading discussants will be compiled in week 1 and posted on Brightspace.

### ***Review Essay and Presentation (30%)***

This assignment requires students to conceptualize, research and write a 3,500-word review essay similar to those found in the “progress reports” in *Progress in Human Geography*. Students should discuss their proposed topic with the instructor before the fall reading week. The purpose of the review is to survey and critically assess recent geographical (and other relevant) literature in a specific thematic area of interest to a student’s research. Students will present their topics and assignment progress in a 10-15-minute informal oral presentation to the class in week 12 of the term. Final assignments should be uploaded to Brightspace by 11:59 pm on December 8. More details to be provided in class.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

- Week 1: Course Introduction (September 7)
- Week 2: Approaching Geographic Inquiry (September 14)
- Week 3: Space and Spatiality (September 21)
- Week 4: Place and Sense of Place (September 28)
- Week 5: Feminist Geographies (October 5)
- Week 6: Colonialism and Geography (October 12)
- Week 7: Racial Capitalism (October 19)
- Week 8: Reading Jamboree (November 2)
- Week 9: The Production of Space (November 9)
- Week 10: Mapping, Power and Politics (November 16)
- Week 11: Geographies of Care (November 23)
- Week 12: Class Summary and Presentations (November 30)
- Week 13: Final Reviews (December 7)

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXTENSIONS**

Late written assignments will be subject to a reduction of the overall mark at the rate of 5% for each calendar day past the due date, unless accompanied by adequate documentation for a *legitimate* reason. Assignment extensions will be considered for legitimate reasons beyond your control (e.g. illness). In such cases, contact me as soon as possible and preferably *before* an assignment is due to discuss possible accommodations. During the term, late submissions will *not* be accepted more than 7 days past the due date. Requests for a review of an assigned grade for a written assignment should take place by email *within* 7 days of the grade being posted on Brightspace. As per the Carleton University Academic Calendar, December 8, 2023 is the last day to submit written assignments for the fall term. In place of a doctor’s note or medical certificate, students are asked to complete the [self-declaration form](#) available on the Registrar’s Office website to notify the instructor of their absence in class or to request accommodation for late assignments.

### **DEFERRED ASSIGNMENTS**

Only official deferrals petitioned through the Office of the Registrar will be honored. Students who are unable to complete an assignment or final project because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, may apply within five working days to the Registrar’s Office for permission to extend a deadline. Permission can be granted only if the request is fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documents.

## LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES

To encourage a respectful and interactive learning environment, students are asked to put away their cell phones during class and to use laptops *only* for taking class notes.

## DROP DATE

Please check the Carleton University Calendar for the last day in the term to withdraw from a course with full fee adjustment.

## GRADES

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59	F = < 50
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56	
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52	

ABS = student absent from the final exam; DEF = Deferred; FND = failed, not deferred; GNA = grade not available; WDN = withdrawn from the course. Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the professor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are responsible for reading and familiarizing themselves with Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy, available here: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

### *Instructional and conduct offences*

Instructional offences include: plagiarism, submitting similar work in two or more courses without prior permission, and disrupting classes. Conduct offences apply in areas of discrimination and sexual harassment. Further information about university regulations which define and regulate these offences is available here: <https://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradregulations/>.

### *Plagiarism*

This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to: any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT); using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment; using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement; submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and failing

to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. The key to avoiding plagiarism is to learn how to do research and how to cite sources properly. For reference: [www.library.carleton.ca/help/avoid-plagiarism](http://www.library.carleton.ca/help/avoid-plagiarism).

### ***Prohibitions on the use of artificial intelligence tools***

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT) for the creation or submission of graded work is prohibited in this course.

### **STATEMENT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH**

As a university student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful: <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>.

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

*Informal accommodation due to short-term incapacitation:* "Short-term incapacitation" is illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstances beyond your control that can disrupt your ability to meet your academic obligations for five or fewer days. Depending on the circumstances, you may need to temporarily step away from your studies in order to take proper care of yourself.

If you are missing coursework or midterm work due to short-term incapacitation, you can contact your instructor(s) directly to request academic consideration. You are not required to submit a medical note if your absence lasts five or fewer days. If your instructor(s) requests that you provide supporting documentation, complete the [self-declaration form](#). Instructors have the right to determine appropriate consideration at their discretion.

*Pregnancy obligation:* Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation \(PDF, 2.1 MB\)](#).

*Religious obligation:* Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, please review the [Student Guide to Academic Accommodation \(PDF, 2.1 MB\)](#).

*Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam

requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

*Survivors of sexual violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit the [Equity and Inclusive Communities website](#).

*Accommodation for student activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, see the [Senate Policy on Accommodation for Student Activities \(PDF, 25KB\)](#).