

GEOG/ENST 2005 Geographic Inquiry  
Geography and Environmental Studies  
Fall Semester 2017

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**Office Hours:** Thursday 8:30 – 9:15; Mondays 12:30 – 2:15  
or by appointment

**Time:** Thursdays, 9:35 pm – 11:25 pm  
**Room:** Room 304, Southam Hall

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### Course Description

We live in a dangerous world. It is a world increasingly framed by uncertainty of facts and the popularization of 'alternative facts.' Today we are bombarded with information, ideas and opinions constantly, most of which we take for granted or at least do not question. But, how can we differentiate well-grounded knowledge or facts from speculation at best and outright lies at worst? Who can we trust? What can we trust as being truth?

An important source of knowledge is research. Research is about learning. It is based upon set ways of examining questions and engaging people. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the nature of research and the qualitative methods used in research. This inquiry will also lead us into questions of epistemology, being the theory of knowledge, and how knowledge is produced within society.

This is a core methods course for undergraduate degrees in geography and environmental studies, and therefore, the focus of this course will be on methods. However, we will be looking at the methods not just as tools used in research but critically to examine the challenges and pitfalls – as well as the benefits – associated with these various research methods.

**As a mandatory course for all geography and environmental studies students, this course compliments *GEOG/ENST 2006 Quantitative Methods*, focusing on qualitative methods and analysis. It also provides the foundation, along with GEOG/ENST 2006, for the third-year field camp (*GEOG 3000/ENST 3900 Honours Field Camp*) and is a pre-requisite for field camp.**

## Required Text

Aurini, J.D., M. Heath and S. Howells. 2016. *The How to of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

For those of you taking this course who are geography and environmental studies students, you will be taking more advanced methods in your third and fourth years. In addition, you will be expected to draw upon these various research approaches in many other courses. Because of this, I feel that you should obtain a basic book on qualitative methods. This book is the best (both practical and accessible) introductory book I have come across to date. Buy it! Use it in this and other courses!

## Course Calendar

Week	Lecture	Laboratory
Sept 7	Course Introduction; Situating Qualitative and Quantitative Research Approaches	No laboratory meetings September 7 and 8
<i>Section 1: The Nature of Qualitative Inquiry</i>		
Sept 14	Challenges of Qualitative Research	<i>Laboratory 1: Research Questions and Literature Searches.</i> Formulating a Good Research Question. <u>Reading:</u> Chapters 2 & 3 of your textbook.
Sept 21	Design and Rigor in Qualitative Research	Laboratory 1. Effective Literature Searches and Reviews
Sept 28	The Case Study in Research	Laboratory 1. How to Write an A-grade Assignment Submission
<i>Section 2: Engaging the Individual</i>		
Oct 5	Engaging People	<i>Laboratory 2: Engaging People.</i> Questionnaires and Survey Strategies <i>Laboratory 1 due prior to your laboratory session.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Chapter 4 of your textbook.
Oct 12	Exploring the Subaltern	Laboratory 2. Exploring Oral History
Oct 19	Foucault and Discourse Analysis	Laboratory 2. Analyzing Oral Histories
Oct 26	<i>Reading Week</i>	
<i>Section 3: Considering Groups</i>		
Nov 2	Empowering Approaches: Participatory Action Research	<i>Laboratory 3: Focus Groups.</i> Why Worry About Groups? Organizing a Focus Group <u>Reading:</u> Chapter 5 of your textbook.
Nov 9	Empowering Methodologies: A Look at Indigenous and Feminists Approaches	Laboratory 3. Conducting a Focus Group Exercise
Nov 16	Place-based Methodologies: Geographies of Engagement	Laboratory 3. Analyzing Information from a Focus Group
<i>Section 4: Observational Inquiry</i>		
Nov 23	Beyond People: A Look at Unobtrusive Methods	<i>Laboratory 4: Observing the World Around You.</i> Observation and Understanding <i>Laboratory 3 due prior to your laboratory session.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Chapter 7 of your textbook.
Nov 30	Thinking Outside the Box: Mental Maps and Other Interactive Approaches	Laboratory 4: Conducting a Visual Assessment and Interpreting Places and Spaces.
Dec 7	Understanding and Significance	Exam Review <i>Laboratory 4 due prior to your laboratory session.</i>

## Timetable

The course lecture is on Thursdays from 9:35 to 11:25, Room 304 Southam Hall. There are four laboratory groups to choose from:

Wednesday – *Laboratory A2*, 2:35 to 4:24, Room 410, Loeb Bldg;

Thursday – *Laboratory A4*, 2:35 to 4:25, Room 410, Loeb Bldg;

Friday – *Laboratory A1*, 11:35 to 1:25, Room 410, Loeb Bldg; and

Friday – *Laboratory A3*, 2:35 to 4:25, Room 410, Loeb Bldg.

You are required to attend the laboratory group you sign up for.

## Assignments

In this course, you will complete four laboratories (60% of your final grade) and a final examination (30% of your final grade).

The *laboratories* emphasize real methods used by researchers in the real world. The four laboratories are:

1. *Laboratory 1: Research Questions and Literature Searches* – In this opening laboratory you will learn how to both pose a focused, manageable research question, and how to conduct an effective literature search on your question. This laboratory will be valuable not simply for this course but in all courses where you are expected to write a term paper. The approach you will learn in this laboratory remains the same.
2. *Laboratory 2: Engaging People* – In this laboratory, you will be introduced to our primary research subject: people. You will look at how we engage with individuals through one-on-one interviews. The specific focus of this laboratory will be oral histories.
3. *Laboratory 3: Focus Groups* – From how we interact one-on-one with people, we will turn our attention to the notion of the group/community. You will learn of the various purposes and formats of different focus groups. The specific focus of this laboratory will be on the management of a specific focus group on a topic to be announced in class.
4. *Laboratory 4: Observing the World Around You* – Finally, you will shift away from engaging with people, individually and as a group, to look at unobtrusive methods of information gathering. This laboratory will centre on the creation of mental maps and then a comparison of the mental map against the real location, integrating sensory analysis (visual, smell and sound).

The *final exam* will draw from the lecture materials presented throughout the semester. There will be a short quiz following each week's lecture. These quizzes will provide you with examples of the types of questions that will be asked in the exam. The exam will be three hours in duration.

You are expected to attend both lectures and your laboratory session. Laboratory attendance is mandatory because of the interactive nature of your laboratories. Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your grade. Two (2) percent will be deducted from your participation mark for each absence unless you have informed me of your absence prior to the day and that the reason for your absence is deemed acceptable. Note: simply "not feeling well" is not a good enough reason for missing a class or laboratory.

## Evaluation

You will be evaluated based upon your submitted laboratory work, the final examination and attendance/ participation. Grades are determined as follows:

1. Laboratories	
Four Laboratories @ 15% each	60%
2. Final Exam	30%
3. Attendance/Participation	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Please note the following rules of engagement:

1. *Regarding laboratories:* All laboratory submissions are subject to a late penalty of 5% per day unless accompanied by *adequate* written documentation for a *legitimate* reason. Assignment extensions will be considered *only* for *documented* illnesses or *immediate* family emergencies. Late penalties will be enforced to ensure fairness in grading among students. A laboratory will not be accepted on week (seven days) after the due date unless approved in advance by the instructor.
2. *Regarding the final exam:* The date of the final exam will be set by the university. It is the responsibility of the student to attend the exam and, if unable to do so, to secure deferral from the Registrar's Office prior to the exam date.
3. *Completion of all assignments is mandatory:* To be eligible to pass this course you are required to complete all the laboratory assignments and the final exam.
4. *And a final, general caveat:* 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 instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

## Submission of Written Assignments

All assignments must be submitted through the course cuLearn site in Word format. If you use a Mac, please test your converted submission before submitting. If I cannot open your file, it will be considered late. (If you are uncertain and wish to cover your mark, send me a pdf version as well to my e-mail address.) Your submitted work should be clearly titled with your name in it as follows:

"GEOG-ENST 2005 Laboratory 1 John Smith.docx"

Note that it should not include your student number.

Written assignments must represent individual work completed on an independent basis. They must be typed using 11 or 12-point font, contain appropriate academic referencing and adhere to the instructions for written assignments distributed in class and posted on cuLearn. Students are asked to retain a hard copy (with electronic backup) of submitted assignments in the event of loss. Plagiarism will be monitored and treated as an instructional offence in accordance with university policy (see below). Requests for a review of an assigned grade must take place in written form (e.g. by e-mail) *within* 7 days of the grade being posted on cuLearn. Note that a review of a submitted work will consist of a complete re-grading. A word of warning here: marks do not automatically go up; they can go down.

If you feel you need assistance in improving your writing skills, you are encouraged to get in touch early in the term with the Writing Tutorial Service (Room 229, Patterson Hall, <http://www.carleton.ca/wts/>). I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this service as effective writing is an invaluable in the workplace.

### Some Common and not-so-Common Courtesies

1. **Communications:** Students should use their Carleton email account for all course-related correspondence, placing "ENST 3000" in the subject heading. Please note that I may not respond to emails over the weekend. Email is an acceptable medium for responding to simple inquiries, but not complex questions (e.g. "I was ill for class. What did I miss?"). If your question cannot be answered in a sentence or two, please come to my office hours.
2. **Laptops:** The use of laptops in class for note-taking is welcomed. However, students should *not* use their laptops to check email, Facebook or to engage in other non-course related activities. This is a distraction to students sitting around you.
3. **Smartphones:** Students are asked to mute or turn their cell/smartphones off during the class and refrain from texting.
4. **Preparation:** Knowledge of the content of the syllabus and the cuLearn course site is the responsibility of each student.
5. **No Oscars Please:** Audio or video recording of lectures is *not* permitted.
6. **Be on time:** Students entering the room during the course of the class is highly disruptive. Err on the side of caution and take an earlier bus in order to be on time, especially on those stormy Thursday mornings.

### Requests for Academic Accommodations

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

#### *Pregnancy obligation*

Write to me 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 Student Guide.

#### *Religious obligation*

Write to me 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 Student Guide.

#### *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the exam.

#### *Academic Standing and Conduct*

Students must familiarize themselves with the regulations concerning academic standing and conduct in the 2017/2018 Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar.

### ***Drop/Withdrawal Date***

Please refer to the 2017-2018 Undergraduate Calendar for the final day that one is permitted to withdraw from a fall term course.

### **Retain Copies of Work Submitted**

Students are strongly advised to retain a hard copy (and electronic backup) of all assignments and term papers in the event of loss for whatever reason.

### **Student Life Services**

Student Life Services, located in Room 501 of the Unicentre, offers a wide range of programs and services to assist students in adjusting to academic life, in improving their learning skills, and in making academic and career decisions.

### **University Regulations Regarding Cheating and Plagiarism**

University regulations stipulate that any allegation of plagiarism, cheating or violations of examination conduct rules will be thoroughly reviewed. Each case must be reported to the Dean, who investigates each allegation. If there is no resolution following this investigation at the Dean's level, a tribunal will be appointed by the Senate to review the case and make a final decision.

[A Note on Plagiarism:](#) Webster's Dictionary defines plagiarism as stealing. Plagiarism is the submission of someone else's writing/ideas/work as your own. All ideas presented which are not your own must be properly referenced. While forms of plagiarism may vary, each involves verbatim or near verbatim presentation of the writings or ideas of others' as one's own without adequately acknowledging the original source. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to) copying from a book, article or another student, downloading material or ideas from the Internet, or otherwise submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own.