Geog 3900
Geographic Thought and Methodology
Winter 2014

Course Times: Mondays, 6:05-8:55pm
Location: Loeb Building, Room A410
Instructor: Dr Matthew Kurtz
Mailbox: B342 Loeb Building
Office: B343 Loeb Building
Phone: 613.520.2600, ext 2563
Office Hours: Mondays, 5:00-6:00pm
(please call during office hours only; otherwise use email)

Prerequisites
Third year Honours Geography standing or permission of the department. Geog 3900 is a required course for Honours Geography BA students.

Description
Geog 3900 is fundamentally about research design in human and physical geography. The course helps students understand the links between the history of geographic thought, the changing social and environmental contexts in which geographers have worked, and the varied methodological approaches that they used to address the debates of their time. In this course, you will examine the history of our discipline as a contested field of inquiry, a shared community of practice, and an evolving field of study. You will also explore the changing relationships between research in physical and human geography. You will build on what you learned in Geog 2005, gaining a systematic and more detailed understanding of major approaches in geography, which you can then use to design a conceptually consistent research project for a potential thesis. Geog 3900 will also help you develop some practical skills. You will have a chance to put together some short research proposals as well as a literature review. Through its intensive integration of readings, long discussions, short lectures, and structured exercises, this course will help you develop your skills in research design.

Required Materials
The readings for GEOG 3900 are drawn from a variety of sources:

Packet: A reading packet for Geog 3900 will also be available at Octopus Books. The packet assembles the sole chapters used from seven different books for your convenience.
Library: Required readings will also include several articles from peer-reviewed journals. These readings are accessible in electronic form through the Carleton Library, where you can download them and print them out for your own convenience.

Objectives
With the completion of this course, you should be able to demonstrate the following:
• Solid knowledge of the history of human and physical geography over the last century
• A firm understanding of the links between theory, methodology, and data-collection techniques;
• A consistent ability to identify and assess a range of methodologies used in geographic research;
• Basic proficiency in the use of “methodologies” as an organizing framework for a literature review;
• The capacity, if given a topic and an audience, to design a research project and craft a proposal;
• Facility with transferable skills relevant to other courses and jobs – identifying appropriate research questions, thorough research, critical thinking & analysis, writing, presentation, and collaboration
Schedule

06 Jan  Introductions + What Does It Mean to be Critical? (Readings will be distributed in class)  
In Class -- Geog 3900 Syllabus  
In Class – Paul & Elder (2006). Critical Thinking: Concept & Tools (two select pages)

13 Jan  Bridging Human & Physical Geography + Top-Ranked Journals in Geography  

20 Jan  Geographies of Empire + History of Physical Geography (Part One)  

27 Jan  History of Physical Geography (Part Two)  
Inkpen & Wilson (2013) – Chapter4: “Forms of Explanation”  
Inkpen & Wilson (2013) – Chapter 8: “Change and Complexity”  

03 Feb  Understanding a Changing Discipline (Progress Theories) + Organizing a Literature Review  

10 Feb  The Berkeley School vs Environmental Determinism + Intro to Proposal Writing  
Oxford University (2011) “Guidelines to Writing a Research Proposal” Geography Website  

17 Feb  Winter Break

24 Feb  Is Methodology Methodical in Human Geography?  

03 Mar  Human Geography’s Quantitative Revolution  
10 Mar  Humanistic & Marxist Methodologies  
**Nayak & Jeffrey** (2011) – Chapter 3: “Humanistic Geographies”  
**Nayak & Jeffrey** (2011) – Chapter 4: “Marxist Radical Geographies”

17 Mar  Feminist & Postcolonial Methodologies  
**Nayak & Jeffrey** (2011) – Chapter 6: “Feminist Geographies”  
**Nayak & Jeffrey** (2011) – Chapter 11: “Post-Colonial Geographies”

24 Mar  Collaborative GIS (Guest Lecture) + Methodology Review  

31 Mar  Group Presentations of Research Proposals + Course Review

07 Apr  Understanding a Changing Discipline (Power Theories)  

Final Exam as scheduled by Carleton University, between April 13th and April 27th

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**Grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Total Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reading Engagements</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Journals (5 entries x 40 points)</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion / Participation (50 pts)</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary / Critique (50 pts)</td>
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<td>(30%)</td>
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<td>(subtotal)</td>
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<td>2. Proposal Writing</td>
<td>27 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Research Proposals (100 points)</td>
<td>31 March</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Presentations (100 pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bonus to Competition Winners (20 pts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(subtotal)</td>
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<td>(20%)</td>
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<td>3. Literature Review</td>
<td>24 January</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic Outline (50 points)</td>
<td>28 February</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography (100 pts)</td>
<td>04 April</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review Paper (100 pts)</td>
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<td>(subtotal)</td>
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<td>4. Tests</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Point-to-Grade Distributions:  
900-1000 = A+                     
850-899 = A                        
800-849 = A-                      
770-799 = B+                      
730-769 = B                        
700-729 = B-                      
670-699 = C+                      
630-669 = C                        
600-629 = C-                      
579-599 = D+                      
530-569 = D                        
500-529 = D-                      
400-499 = F
Late Penalties

Journal Entries will not be accepted after the in-class discussion of the relevant readings is complete. Each one that you submit should be finished by the start of class, in order to be useful during your break-out discussions with your class-mates. Once that discussion is completed, I will collect them in hard-copy. I will not accept any submissions after that point, and your recourse will be to submit an entry during a later week for your five required assignments.

For components of the Literature Review, the late penalty is five percent (5%) of the points attributed to that component for each day that it is late (including weekends). Assignments will not be accepted later than one week after the due date. For your team’s Research Proposal, the late penalty is 10% (that is, ten points) for each day that it is late, including weekends.

Evaluation Components

Reading Journals (20%)

Over the course of the semester, you need to deliver five (5) timely entries about the readings for the week. Those readings average at 30 pages per week (no more than 330 pages over the semester). I am beholden to offer engaging and relevant reading assignments. While you will be responsible for closely reading and discussing all the material, the Reading Journal offers you a chance to engage with more than half of that material in a very active and direct manner.

Your entry in a given week should be 1000-1500 words in length, consisting of well-written, double entry (two-column) pages in which you summarize what the author says on the left column while, in equal measure, responding with your insights, confusions, problems and assessments in the adjacent column on the right. Thus the journal assignment asks you to be open-minded in one column, yet critical of the reading in the other column of your journal. The most important component of your journal entry for the week comes at the end, where you will need to articulate two or three powerful questions or issues for in-class discussion. I will provide more details in a weekly handout.

Each entry is due at the beginning of class (see below). Each entry is worth 40 points. The dates for submitting your journal entries are as follows:
- January – At least one (1) weekly journal entry, and at most three, should be submitted; no particular week has a required assignment
- February – At least one (1) weekly journal entry, and at most three, should be submitted; a journal entry for February 24th (“Is Methodology Methodical?”) is a required assignment
- March – At least one (1) weekly journal entry, and at most three, should be submitted; a journal entry for March 24th (“Guest Lecture”) is a required assignment
- April – A reading journal entry for April 7th is entirely optional; those who need to complete a 5th journal entry for the semester, and those who wish to submit an extra assignment to drop an earlier lower grade, can submit a reading journal this week.

Given that the purpose of the Reading Journals is to prepare you for active discussion during class that week, no late material will be accepted. Again, the reading journal entries for February 24th and March 24th are required. Of course, you can submit more than five entries over the semester, in which case your lowest grade(s) for journal entries other than Feb 24th and March 24th will be dropped.

In-Class Summary, Discussion, and Critique (10%)

The Reading Journal is designed to acquaint you with the material before coming to class. This will provide the basis for discussion during the first hour of class, and 50 points (or 5% of your grade) will be based on your own contributions to good dialogue amongst your peers. This activity is designed to:
- ensure that you have a chance to engage with the readings in a more intensive way;
facilitate the development of social networks and intellectual connections in the class; and
enable your instructor to better assess your interests and questions regarding the material.

Note on Participation and Discussion -- Learning is about the collective work where we all learn from each other. Accordingly, I ask you to think, not just about the material at hand, but also about how you can cultivate opportunities where all of your colleagues – not just a few – ask questions and offer comments. Toward this end, I ask you to be supportive and open-minded, respectful, patient, and constructive, and at the same time, gently critical and challenging, so as to help your colleagues sharpen their thoughts and arguments. This also means you should moderate your contributions if you often have a lot to say, and that you will need to push yourself if you are normally reserved.

During the first 30 minutes, we usually will divide into smaller groups. I will circulate between groups. One student will be asked in advance to summarize the readings for a small group. Another student will be designated to serve as a scholarly critic. For 50 points (or another 5% of your grade in addition to the participation component), you will need to summarize two readings and critique two other readings for these small break-out groups over the duration of the semester.

We will also conduct an in-class reading and discussion exercise on various topics in geography. You will be provided with extracts from an article on a topic. You will be asked to read the extract in class, discuss the author’s research methodology, and identify the methodological approach. The articles (or extracts) in these exercises will be serve as examples of the methodologies that you will learn about.

Research Proposal (20%)

Starting on February 10th, you will begin to prepare short research proposals on various topics given in class. For these exercises, you will have access to some guidelines as well as several successful proposals in geography as models. Further details will be provided in advance of this assignment. In-class exercises will consist of a request for a proposal based on a scenario provided by an actual news story. You will be asked to outline a research project and a consistent methodology to answer some questions relevant to the story. Your work on these in-class exercises will be assessed for feedback purposes only; the results will not count toward your final grade. Note, however, that at least one question on the final exam will involve the writing of a very short (one page) research proposal based on a news-story scenario, similar to the in-class exercises.

A significant part of your grade (100 points or 10%) will be based on a project in which you co-author a proposal (4-5 pages) for funding to conduct some research. Again, the scenario and the relevant issues will be provided in advance. You will be asked to team up with four (4) other students in the class (including both human and physical geographers). Together you will be asked to outline the research that your team would propose to do, within the allotted budget and time-frame, to address pressing social and environmental questions invoked by the scenario that I provide. Your team should choose one delegate who will be responsible for submitting the proposal and for copying (cc’ing) all of the team members into the submission of that proposal. Your team will need to submit its research proposal by the end of the day on Thursday, 27 March.

There is also a competitive presentation component to this exercise. For 100 points, each team will be asked to present its research proposal in class on Monday, 31 March. Your team will have 12-15 minutes to present its proposal, after which you will have a chance to answer questions. Two or three local research professionals with training in geography will be serving as your assessment panel. To decide which team should win the competition, the assessment panel will score each team based on both the written proposal (due 27 March) and your in-class presentation (31 March). Members of the winning team will receive an extra twenty (20) bonus points toward their final grade.
Literature Review (25%)

In Geog 3900, you will have an opportunity to deepen your understanding and skills in regard to the functions and composition of a scholarly literature review in geography. Toward this end, you will be asked to submit a literature review on a geographical topic of your choice. This component is worth 250 points in total (or 25% of your final grade). There will be three steps involved.

Topic Outline – First you will need to identify and describe the geographical topic that you wish to investigate. You should choose your topic carefully: It should be broad enough to ensure that a considerable body of research has already been conducted on the topic, yet not so broad that you will be overwhelmed with material on the subject in the library’s collections and electronic databases. Ideally the topic will be one that you would wish to pursue as the subject of your honours thesis in geography at Carleton University. If you are a fourth-year student, however, I will ask you to identify a topic that is different from the research you conducting for your thesis. Your topic outline should be 200-300 words (½-1 full page). It should specify the topic in some detail, complete with 2-3 relevant scholarly references, and briefly describe why you are interested in the topic. It is due by the end of the day on Friday, January 24th (by email) and is worth 50 points (or 5% of your final grade).

Annotated Bibliography – Second, you will need to compile an annotated bibliography of 25-35 scholarly references. Most of your references should be peer-reviewed articles out of journals in geography or related disciplines, though you can also include several scholarly monographs (i.e. books), some grey literature, two or three websites from organizations that study your topic, and one or two newspaper / news-video stories (note that Wikipedia entries will not be accepted as one of your references). As part of this exercise, you will need to read or scan your references in their entirety so as to provide some brief annotation as to their content. You will also need to identify the top-ten (10) most useful references and briefly explain why you believe they will prove to be the most useful and relevant from those on your list of references. Your annotated bibliography is due by the end of the day on Friday, February 28th (by email). It is worth 100 points (or 10% of your final grade).

Literature Review Paper – Third, you will need to compose a literature review essay. The content of this paper will largely follow from your annotated bibliography, though its structure will not. You can also make some additions as you discover important new references. Your major task in this part of the exercise will be to organize what you want to say about the existing literature on the topic. You will then compose an essay that reviews that literature in an engaging and recognizably well-structured narrative. Rather than use a chronological framework to organize your paper, you will need to use a “methodological” framework (you will learn about this in class) to write up your literature review. In doing so, you will be comparing the different approaches that researchers have used to study your selected topic, the strengths of the various approaches, and their weaknesses. Your literature review paper should be 2000-2500 words (8-10 pages) in length, not including its bibliography. The paper is due by midnight on Friday, April 4th (by email). It is also worth 100 points (or 10% of your final grade).

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will include a number of essay questions. It will be comprehensive in coverage. It will be administered during Finals Weeks, at the time set by the University (which will be some time between April 13th and April 27th). Please note that, in order to be eligible to defer the final exam, you must be in good standing in GEOG 3900; that is, by April 8th, your current average in the course must be a passing grade (375 points or more), based on the all of the other evaluation components. The final exam will be worth 250 points and count toward 25% of your final grade.

There will be in-class exercises during the semester to help you prepare: example articles; matching abstracts to approaches; filling out a “methodological grid;” and writing short proposals. The exercises will be graded if you complete them in class, but will not and cannot count toward your final grade.
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. All assignments will be graded within two weeks and returned to you in hard-copy in a later class session.

Academic Honesty
The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

• 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;
• submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
• using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
• failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
• handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with 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. Any question of plagiarism in your assignments, essays, or exams will be forwarded to the Dean’s office for adjudication. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Deferred Assignments / Grades
Only official deferrals petitioned through the Office of the Registrar will be honored. Students who are unable to complete a final paper or write a final exam because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, or whose performance on an examination has been impaired by such circumstances, may apply within five working days to the Registrar Services Office for permission to extend a term paper deadline or to write a deferred examination. Permission can be granted only if the request is fully and specifically supported by a medical certificate or other relevant documents.

Important Dates
• January 17th is the last day for registration and course changes in the Winter 2014 term.
• January 31st is the last day for withdrawal from a winter term course with full fee adjustment.
• April 8th is the last day for an academic withdrawal from a Winter 2014 term course.

Requests for Academic Accommodations
You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and 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.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation

For Religious Observance:
Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic
requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by March 7th, 2014 for the Winter term.

For Pregnancy:
Pregnancy accommodation may involve a temporary modification of some elements of your academic program (e.g., laboratory, final exam, or field work). Please 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.

Written Assignments
If you feel you need assistance in improving your writing skills, you are encouraged to get in touch with the Writing Tutorial Service in the library (http://carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/).

Student Life Services
Student Life Services, located in Room 501 of the Unicentre, offers a 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.