

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University

Doctoral Core Seminar: Geography, Society and Environment (GEOG 6000), Fall 2024
“An Integrative Orientation to Problems in Geographic Thought”

Course outline

(preliminary version; last updated July 12, 2024)

Instructor / facilitator: Derek A. Smith
Email: dereka.smith@carleton.ca
Office hours by appointment.

Schedule: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:35 to 4:25 pm

Course objectives:

- To provide students with an appreciation of the intellectual history of geography, its current orientations, and its relevance for solving problems and informing policy;
- To enhance critical thinking about the production of geographic knowledge, including an ability to question and reflect on underlying philosophies, ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies.
- To enable students to locate their own geographical research interests within a broader intellectual context; and
- To cultivate an environment of interdisciplinary collegiality, mutual respect, and an openness to a broad range of geographical approaches to understanding social and environmental change.

Seminar format:

The course follows a seminar format, in which students will play active roles in introducing topics and discussing assigned readings and seminar themes. Students will also be given opportunities to present their own research plans and share advances in their own more narrowly defined fields of study. In addition to core themes, some content may be chosen in collaboration with students. One or more short field outings will provide opportunities to make connections between theory and “real world” locations and discuss how geographic concepts and methodological approaches can be put into practice to gain a better understanding of socioenvironmental phenomena.

Course assignments and evaluation:

The course grade will reflect the student’s overall performance and intellectual development. It will be based on short written commentaries (25 percent of final grade); contributions to seminar discussions (35); and a critical review paper (40 percent).