GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
Carleton University

COURSE OUTLINE - Winter 2026

Course website: https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/365775

COURSE:	**Masters Research Workshop – GEOG 5905A**
WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS:	**In person; Wednesdays 8:35 to 11:25; See 'Overview' for** where
INSTRUCTOR:	**Derek Mueller** Room A427, Loeb Building Email: derek.mueller@carleton.ca Phone: 613-520-2600 x1984
OFFICE HOURS:	By chance or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
A workshop which focuses on the challenges of research design in the various sub-fields of geography. The workshop will culminate with the development and defence of a thesis research proposal. (*from Carleton University, Graduate Calendar*)

The Masters Research Workshop is a course designed for you to plan and write your thesis proposal with instructor, supervisor and peer feedback. Insofar as your proposal is a road map for your thesis, this involves planning out your research and the remainder of your graduate program timeline. You will need to consider your theoretical approach and your methodology (including your research design, sampling strategy, field work sites and timeline). You will need to articulate the context and rationale for your research, anticipate its significance, and be aware of ethical codes of conduct and data management best practices. You will hone your oral and written communication and critical analytical skills through peer review of research proposals. You will be expected to interact and engage with both MA and MSc students and you will be exposed to many different types of geographic research and approaches. In addition to considering course materials and feedback you are expected to remain in close consultation with your thesis supervisor, who will be involved in the evaluation of your assignments and overall progress.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
- Develop a comprehensive and realistic research plan for your masters project with a well-articulated research question and appropriate methodology
- Demonstrate advanced scholarly and technical communication skills through written proposals and oral presentations
- Critically evaluate research proposals, approaches, methodologies, including your own
- Learn and apply research practices that are peripheral to your proposal, for example: community engagement, academic integrity, data management, and field safety protocols
- Contextualize your thesis topic within ongoing research projects across the discipline of Geography at Carleton

COMMUNICATION:
This course uses Brightspace, Carleton's learning management system to collect assignments, deliver quizzes, disseminate materials and for discussion. To access your courses on Brightspace go to http://brightspace.carleton.ca. For help and support, go to http://carleton.ca/students. Any unresolved questions can be directed to Information Technology Services (ITS) by phone at 613-520-3700 or via email at its.service.desk@carleton.ca.

Private correspondence with the instructor should be through a Carleton email account. If you have questions of a general nature, please post these to the discussion board in Brightspace so that others can benefit from the answers. The instructor will check email and Brightspace every 24 hours and do their best to respond to queries within 48 hours.

Information on Brightspace or sent via email will be considered to have been provided to all students within 24 hours of posting and students will be fully responsible for reading and responding appropriately to this information.

COURSE STRUCTURE:
A one term course in a workshop format (including instructor lectures, guest presentations, student presentations, seminar discussions, etc.) plus assignments. The course also entails consultations with the Instructor and your thesis supervisor as well as acting as a peer reviewer for other students

TEXTBOOK/READINGS:
Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course. Materials will be provided on Brightspace as a file or web link or placed on reserve at the library.

EVALUATION:
Thesis proposal (60%)
The goal of this course is to develop a Masters research proposal which will help to guide your graduate research throughout your degree program. Details on the proposal expectations will be distributed in class. The thesis proposal grade is broken down into several components to be submitted on Brightspace, by email or will be evaluated in class, including:

1) A 1-page thesis summary - **Due January 18**
2) Draft research question(s) (5%) - **Due February 3**
3) Draft proposal (15%) – **Due February 24**
4) Oral presentation of the final thesis proposal (10%) - **Due Mar 25 or April 1**
5) Final written thesis proposal (30%) – **Due April 8**

Participation (20%)
This course is run as a workshop, and thus its success relies heavily on student engagement and contributions of all participants to the class discussions. Students are expected to come to class well-prepared to actively participate and lead discussions of assigned readings. This includes doing the required readings, and reviewing your peers' proposal drafts. Student contributions also include participating in discussions, providing constructive feedback, and asking questions related to all presentations or discussions. The participation grade is broken down into several components, including:

1) Being a reviewer during the proposal development process for one of your peers (10%) - **ongoing**
2) Contributions to seminar discussions and small groups/pairs (10%) - **ongoing**

Additional learning (20%)
1) Thesis critique presentation (6%) – **February 4**
2) Integrity reflection (2%) – **February 13**
3) Plain language proposal summary (**March 9**) and oral presentation (7%) - **March 11**
4) Annex Assignment (5%) – **March 24**

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.

Late Policy:
There is a nominal late policy of 10% per day. Students with medical or other extenuating circumstances which cover the duration of the assignment period will be accommodated. However, students who anticipate missing course deadlines for these reasons must notify the instructor as soon as possible and, at least, within 24 hours of the deadline in question. See the accommodation policy below for more details.

Cell phones and social media:
Students must turn off their cell phones before each class. Interruption of classes by users of cell phones is disruptive and distracting for instructors and students alike. Consultation of social media during classes is similarly inappropriate.

Uploading of course materials:
Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).
Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Plagiarism:
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 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, art works, 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 follows a rigorous process for academic integrity allegations, including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

The university's full Academic Integrity Policy can be found here.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy:

In this course, AI can be used to assist students with the more mundane tasks of preparing a thesis proposal and other course deliverables, such as formatting, editing and searching for sources. It should be used in an ethical manner and in no way should it short-circuit the learning process or replace student ideas, critical thinking or writing.

Students are expected to write their own prose and do their own analysis of the literature. Students are fully responsible for the content of the coursework that they submit. They should have a full understanding of their work and should be able to explain decisions that they made on their submissions so it is clear that they did the work. Submissions should not contain fake references, hallucinations or other hallmarks of AI. If students use AI to assist in their assignments, they should properly document how they used it (see citing Generative AI on the MacOdrum Library website).

If a student is suspected of violating this AI policy, they may be interviewed by the course instructor and may be subject to an allegation under Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy.

Statement on Student Mental Health

As a 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. For more information, please consult https://wellness.carleton.ca/. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus):

- https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: https://carleton.ca/wellness/
- Health & Counselling Services: https://carleton.ca/health/
- Paul Menton Centre: https://carleton.ca/pmc/
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): https://carleton.ca/csas/
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: https://carleton.ca/equity/

Off Campus Resources:

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/
  Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, http://www.crisisline.ca/
  Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/
  Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, https://good2talk.ca/
  The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: https://walkincounselling.com

Academic Accommodation:

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (https://carleton.ca/FASS-FPA-teaching-regulations/accommodation/).

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

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances: Students must contact the instructor(s) as soon as possible, and normally no later than 24 hours after the submission deadline for course deliverables. Please be prepared to complete the Academic Consideration for Coursework Form.

Other Important Locations on Campus:
Writing Services https://carleton.ca/csas/support/ (4th Floor, MacOdrum Library)
Centre for Student Academic Support https://carleton.ca/csas/ (CSAS, 4th Floor, MacOdrum Library)

CLASS SCHEDULE/TOPICS (Subject to modification!!)

Note – Guest speakers will be invited to the seminar, which may lead to some adjustments to the schedule below.

Month	Day	Topic	Assignment due
Jan	07	01 – Course overview, expectations, introductions	
	14	02 – The research process and components of a research proposal; theoretical approaches	Select thesis to critique
	21	03 – Writing workshop	1-page thesis summary (Jan 18)
	28	04 – Refining your research question; grad. student experiences; tips on presenting	Peer edit thesis summary
Feb	04	05 – Thesis critique presentations	Thesis critique presentation Draft research question(s)
	11	06 – Finding sources and using them with integrity; Formatting your thesis	Integrity reflection (Feb 13)
	18	READING WEEK – NO CLASS	
	25	07 – Research ethics, permits and communications, EDI	Draft proposal
Mar	04	08 – Data and file management; Field safety; Refining your methods	Proposal peer review
	11	09 – Student plain language elevator pitches (3 min each, plus 3 min discussion)	Presentation and plain language summary/discuss draft thesis proposal
	18	10 – Oh, the places you'll go (with a Master's degree)	Annex Assignment
	25	11 – Final thesis proposal presentations/discussion	Proposal presentation
Apr	01	12 – Final thesis proposal presentations/discussion	Proposal presentation
	08	NO CLASS	Final thesis proposal due

Written assignments are typically due at 23:59 on Brightspace the day prior to class (or as noted in Brightspace); Oral assignments are due in class as scheduled

Please consult the course Brightspace page for an updated schedule plus details about each topic and readings.