

Fall 2026 – Honours Field Course – GEOG3900/ENST3000
Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
Carleton University

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1. Course description: The purpose of this course is to learn about the role of fieldwork in geography, environmental studies, and geomatics. This includes an examination of different approaches to doing fieldwork, learning data collection techniques, examining the strengths and limitations of different methodological choices, how to analyze and present field research data, and gaining a better understanding of how fieldwork fits into the broader process of generating knowledge about our changing world.

2. Prerequisites:

(1) GEOG 2005/ ENST 2005,

(2) GEOG 2006/ ENST 2006 and

(3) third-year Honours standing in Environmental Studies, Geomatics, or Geography (or permission of the Department).

3. Learning Outcomes:

- To learn different approaches to doing fieldwork and its role in the disciplines of geography, environmental studies, and geomatics;
- To examine different field research methodologies and gain an appreciation of the strengths and limitations of different data collection methods;
- To become familiar with the practicalities of doing fieldwork, including the importance of preparation, safety considerations, and conducting field research in an ethical manner;
- To gain hands-on experience collecting, compiling, and analyzing field data;
- To develop skills in how to present the results of field research in the form of a research report.

4. Texts:

It is important that students complete readings and any other assigned tasks before class so that they are prepared and ready to participate in group discussions and other activities. These materials will be provided on Brightspace in the weekly modules or directly by clicking on a hyperlink. No textbook purchase required.

It is expected that all students will have the prerequisites for this course. The reference materials below have been made available so that you may review these topics and to further your understanding of the research process, including how to write an effective research report. These books are available online through the university library (see links below).

Flowerdew, Robin and David Martin, editors. 2013. [*Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students Doing a Research Project*](#). Second edition. Essex: Addison Wesley Longman.

Hay, Iain and Philip Giles. 2012. [*Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*](#). Canadian Edition. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, Ontario.

Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada. 2014. [*The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing*](#). Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press in co-operation with Public Works and Government Services Canada Translation Bureau.

5. Course content (specific topics subject to change):

Class Format and Delivery: This course combines class meetings, independent tasks and required readings and other learning videos and other materials with a **mandatory** field camp at the Madawaska Kanu Centre (October 25-28, 2026).

This course is organized into three stages, as follows:

Stage 1 – Talking about fieldwork. During this first stage we will examine the role of fieldwork in geography, environmental studies, and geomatics. Topics include different approaches to doing fieldwork, methodological design (e.g., selecting your study area, sampling techniques), practical considerations, and how to address ethical issues. We will also be sharing stories from people who do fieldwork, to explore the rewards and challenges of being in the field. Each week class meetings will include a mix of lectures, class discussions, and group activities. Groups will be organized by the instructors early in the term. A short exam will come at the end of Stage 1.

Stage 2 – Doing fieldwork. This stage of the course will provide you with opportunities to get hands-on experience doing independent fieldwork as part of a group, under the guidance of the teaching team. Broader concepts and issues will be discussed, but the emphasis will be on collecting data and reflecting on the effectiveness of methods. This will include observations of the physical environment and conducting a small number of interviews (the latter is subject to change, depending on the recruitment of participants). Please note that this stage consists of a required, 4-day stay at our base camp in the Madawaska Valley. This time in the field is crucial for providing you with hands-on field experience. If needed, you will need to make arrangements (e.g., with an employer) so that it is possible for you to attend. Stage 2 finishes with the submission of your field data.

Stage 3 – Analyzing and presenting field research results. During this final phase we will provide instruction on how to compile and process your field data, present summaries of the data collected, and analyze your field data. Following these steps, we will shift our focus to writing a research report that presents the field research findings and their significance. Stage 3 finishes with the submission of your research report.

Tentative Schedule:

Lecture/workshop – Mondays, 14:35 – 17:25

Week	Lecture/Activity
W1. Sept 14	L1. Introduction and Logistics/What is Fieldwork?
W2. Sept 21	<i>No lecture this week</i>
W3. Sept 28	<i>No lecture this week</i> Sept 30: Deadline for payments and forms
W4. Oct 5	L2. Fieldwork methodologies & preparation / Field methods practice
W5. Oct 12	L3. Regional overview & map exercise / Field methods practice

W6. Oct 19	L4. In-class test / Field methods practice
Oct 25 - 28	<i>Field Camp at Madawaska Kanu Centre</i> <i>Oct 28: Field notebook due before return arrival at Carleton U</i>
W7. Nov 2	Mandatory workshop: Preparing group & individual datasets
W8. Nov 9	Mandatory workshop: Preparing group & individual datasets
W9. Nov 16	Mandatory workshop: Analyzing group & individual datasets
W10. Nov 23	L5. Writing the report
W11. Nov 30	<i>No lecture this week</i>
W12. Dec 7	<i>No lecture this week</i> Dec 7: Final research report due (midnight)

6. Evaluation:

Item	Weight (%)
Participation (in class and in the field)*	25
Stage 1 – Stage 1 test	15
Stage 2	
Field notebooks	15
Stage 3 – Research report	45

*Participation will involve formal activities including attendance, submission of surveys, datasets and other tasks by the posted deadlines and evaluation of your participation in class discussions and field camp activities.

Late Policy: All submissions are online at Brightspace. No late assignments will be accepted, with the exception of an approved academic accommodation below in section 9. To request an academic accommodation, you must normally make arrangements with the course instructors at least 24 hours prior to the submission deadline.

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.

7. Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Any use of generative AI tools (e.g. Chat GPT) to produce assessed content in this course is considered a violation of academic integrity standards. See also statement on plagiarism below.

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

8. Statement on Academic Integrity:

Collaboration is encouraged while working through the assignments, but each student must hand in their own individually prepared assignment.

It is not permissible to submit a substantially same piece of work more than once for academic credit.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students should consult the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

“The University Academic Integrity Policy 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, 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
- failing to acknowledge sources with 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.

7. 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/>”

Emergency Resources ([on and off campus](#))

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)
- 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: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

8. Requests for Academic Accommodations

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 (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).