APPROACHES TO GEOGRAPHICAL INQUIRY (GEOG 5000, F2026)

Department of Geography & Environmental Studies, Carleton University



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Class Meetings: Thursdays, 14:35 to 17:25
Office Hours: By appointment
Brightspace: https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/453324

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

A review of the major philosophical perspectives shaping research and explanation by geographers. Particular attention is paid to interpretations of social structure and human action, the nature of the biophysical universe, and the interaction between human beings and their environments.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course reviews a diverse range of perspectives, approaches, and debates shaping research and explanation in contemporary human geography. Graduate students in various disciplines may find the course useful for their respective research interests or projects.

***Prerequisite*:** Graduate student standing, or permission of the department. Open to graduate students from all disciplines.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course provides students with opportunities to: (1) examine important theories, concepts, and debates in human geography; (2) situate their own research in relation to different geographical literatures and approaches; (3) support the elaboration and refinement of their research interests or projects; and (4) practice oral presentation and critical reading and writing-as-thinking skills.

APPROACH

The class meets once weekly for a 3-hour seminar. As a graduate seminar, this is a reading and discussion intensive course whose success depends on in-class engagement. Weekly seminars revolve around student presentations, deliberations, and discussions of course readings.

ON BEING PRESENT AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS

Texting or reading emails during class detracts from class participation. Students are asked to put away cell phones during class and to use laptops or tablets *only* for taking class notes.

READINGS AND BRIGHTSPACE

All readings are available online through the ARES portal on Brightspace. Course readings have been chosen to: provide an overview of diverse approaches and perspectives in human geography; represent new or enduring works in particular areas of geographic research; offer illustrations of different approaches to geographic inquiry; and to survey specific themes or debates.

PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT) for the creation or submission of any written or oral assignments for this course is prohibited.

EVALUATION

Class Participation (10%)

Class participation is based on attendance and meaningful engagement with the course materials, seminar discussions, and other in-class activities. This requires that students complete the required readings *before* coming to class. Class participation will be evaluated by the instructor based on a qualitative assessment of contributions to class during the entire term.

Thinking Geographically (5%)

What does it mean to think geographically? How do you intend to think geographically? An initial reflection paper of no more than 500 words that considers your own research direction(s) in relation to an assigned reading of your choice in week 1 or 2. These brief reflection exercises are due by 11:59 pm on **September 18** via Brightspace. We will return to these papers in week 11 as part of an informal reflection exercise in class. These commentaries will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Students who submit a thoughtful response engaging an assigned reading will receive the full mark for the assignment. More details to be provided in the first class.

Reading Commentaries (2 x 15% = 30%)
For two weeks of the term, students are asked to prepare a reading commentary that engages at least two of the assigned readings (excluding any entries from the *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*). Each reading-based commentary should be approximately 1,000 words and provide your critical reflections on a concept, argument, debate or theoretical thread connecting the selected readings. Commentaries are due *after the class for your chosen week* by 23:59 via Brightspace. It is recommended that students submit one of their commentaries before the Fall reading week. More details to be provided in class.

Reading Discussant (2 x 10% = 20%)
For two weeks of the term, students are asked to serve as the "discussant" of the weekly readings by preparing an *analytical* overview of the readings, accompanied by a one-page handout. Discussants should focus on arguments and/or concepts raised in the readings and elaborate on connections and/or tensions between the readings. Students should also develop two *succinct* overarching questions pertaining to the weekly readings to steer class discussion. These should be posted to the discussion forum on Brightspace the day *before* class by 18:00. A schedule of reading discussants will be compiled in week 1 and posted on Brightspace. More details to be provided in class.

Review Essay and Workshop-Presentations (35%)
This assignment requires students to conceptualize, research, and write a 3,500-word review essay similar to the "progress reports" in *Progress in Human Geography.* The purpose of the review essay is to survey and critically assess recent geographical or other relevant literature in a specific topical or thematic area related to your research interests. Students should discuss their proposed topic with the instructor *before* the Fall reading week.

During the *Reading Jamboree* in week 8, students will be asked to briefly present a related reading of significance to their chosen topic. Students are asked to review at least two of the posted readings (not including their own) and serve as a "discussant" for one of them. In this role, students offer some analytical comments on the reading and then ask questions of the presenter. These readings should be posted to the discussion forum in Brightspace by **October 27**.

Students will also present their progress on the review essay in week 12. While these informal class presentations are part of "workshopping" this assignment, marking will focus on the written review essay. Review essays are due and should be uploaded to Brightspace by 23:59 on **December 11.** More details to be provided in class.

All written assignments should adhere to proper spelling, grammar, the consistent use of academic referencing (https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/citing-your-sources) and the assignment guidelines discussed in class. Please retain a hard copy (with electronic backup) of submitted work.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Week 1: Introducing Approaches to Geographic Inquiry (September 10)
Week 2: Space and Spatiality (September 17)
Week 3: Place and Sense of Place (September 24)
Week 4: Intersectional Feminist Geographies (October 1)
Week 5: Colonialism and Geography (October 8)
Week 6: Racial Capitalism (October 15)
Week 7: The Production of Space (October 22)
Fall Reading Week (October 26-30)
Week 8: Reading Jamboree (November 5)
Week 9: Anthropocene? Capitalocene? (November 12)
Week 10: Infrastructural Turns and (Im)mobilities (November 19)
Week 11: States, Mapping and Territories (November 26)
Week 12: Review Essay Presentations (December 3)
Week 13: Makeup Class (December 10, only if needed)

GRADES

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59	F = < 50
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56	
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52	

ABS = student absent from the final exam; DEF = Deferred; FND = failed, not deferred; GNA = grade not available; WDN = withdrawn from the course. 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 professor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

LATE OR DEFERRED ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment turned in late without an approved extension will be subject to a reduction of the overall mark at the rate of 5% for each calendar day past the due date. Assignment extensions will be considered for medical and extenuating circumstances. Please consult the *Academic Consideration Policy* below for details and then contact the instructor. If you are unable to serve as a reading discussant for your assigned week, please email the instructor at least 24 hours *before* class. If you are unable to submit assignment(s) before the end of the term, please follow the official deferrals process managed by the Office of the Registrar.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY

Students should familiarize themselves with the university's regulations in the *Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar* (http://www.carleton.ca/calendars/ugrad/current/), including the *Academic Integrity Policy* (https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/). The *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, artworks, research results, diagrams, 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, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- 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 conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. The key to avoiding plagiarism is to learn how to cite sources properly.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Students may need support or special arrangements to meet academic obligations during the term. There are several ways to access support and/or request accommodations, as outlined below.

Learning and writing support is available through the Centre for Student Academic Support (https://carleton.ca/csas/).

The ***Carleton Library*** offers access to individual and collective study spaces and research support (https://library.carleton.ca/).

A listing of ***all student support services*** available at Carleton is available here: https://students.carleton.ca/student-services/.

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances affecting coursework: according to the *Academic Consideration Policy* (https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-policy/), if students encounter extenuating circumstances that temporarily hinder their capacity to fulfil in-class academic requirements/coursework, they can request academic consideration. Students who require accommodation for missing a course deadline for medical or other extenuating circumstances should consult the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances* (https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/sites/158/Academic-Consideration-Policy-for-Students.pdf), and if appropriate, complete the *Self-Declaration for Academic Consideration Coursework Form* (https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-policy/) and contact the instructor as soon as possible or within 24 hours of a missed course deadline.

Pregnancy and family-status related accommodation: write to the instructor with requests for academic accommodation during the first few weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details about the accommodation policy, visit the Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) website.

***Religious obligation*:** write to the instructor with 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, visit the Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) website.

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 for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, please request your accommodations for this course through the Ventus Student Portal 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*). Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For final exams, the deadlines to request accommodations are published in the University Academic Calendars.
After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with the instructor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of sexual violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services.

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. 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 information, refer to https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf.

Statement on Student Mental Health
Students may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available to support students both on and off campus. For more information, consult the university's *Wellness Services Navigator* (https://wellness.carleton.ca/) or the options below:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus)
Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Carleton Resources
Mental Health & 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 & 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/.
Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, https://good2talk.ca/.
The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: https://walkincounselling.com.