

**GEOG 7101: Research Design  
SP 2021**

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**Course overview**

This is a class in the practice of geography and geographic inquiry. Research design necessarily involves reading broadly in one or more subfields of the discipline, connecting often disparate ideas and concepts, and devising methodological approaches to examine various geographic phenomena to draw your own conclusions. Central to this work is the ability to harness your thinking to clear, concise and compelling writing. In addition to proposal writing, you will have opportunities to present your ideas, learn from your peers about the discipline, and set yourself up for success in our graduate program.

You will work on identifying compelling research questions that contribute to ongoing discussions and controversies in relevant literature, in formulating approaches to gather evidence, and in communicating the significance of your research to a broad set of audiences. Critical to this class is the building of a mutually supportive, interdisciplinary community.

**Course objectives**

The successful completion of the course will result in:

- A thoroughly-workshopped proposal suitable to submit to the National Science Foundation or other funding agencies;
- A plan for research and writing along with measurable outcomes to carry you through your time in our program;
- Practice in critically evaluating research proposals written by others; and
- The ability to situate your research in conversation with other scholars in your subfield.

**Readings**

There are two required texts for PhD students and one recommended text (all texts are simply recommended for MA students). Other selected readings are available on Carmen.

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

## Grading

Carmen writing prompts	10 points each (4 total)	40
Presentations		
	Research interests	5
	Individual workshop	10
	Final presentation	10
Proposal		
	Ugly draft	5
	TROT bibliography	5
	Final draft	5
	Final proposal	10
	Total	100

### *File naming convention*

Please name all of your files accordingly: lastname\_assignment.doc, e.g., munroe\_uglydraft.doc. This helps me keep your work organized.

*Carmen writing prompt* There are four assignments during the semester, denoted in green on the schedule, for which you will write approximately 500 words (2 double-spaced pages).

1. Who are your allies? Search blogs and gray literature to identify 3-4 organizations who have direct stakes in your research. Due Jan 27.
2. Proposal writing plan. Using the worksheets in Belcher Week 1, you will develop a writing plan for your proposal. Due Feb 10.
3. Faculty reflection. Choose one faculty member in our department who is a possible committee member. Interview them on their research process. Due March 10.
4. Share your bibliography with annotations in Mendeley or Zotero format. Due April 14.

*Presentations* You will present your research interests on February 3. Students will also sign up to workshop their project, with two students presenting in Feb 17, March 17 and April 7. Finally, everyone will give a 10 minute presentation on their proposal on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Everyone will be assigned a more senior graduate student “buddy.” This student will share their research proposal with you. You should meet to discuss their research process sometime before February 17<sup>th</sup> (be ready to report and write a reflection that day). You should also share a draft of your final proposal with them for comment no later than March 17<sup>th</sup>.

*There’s Research On That* (TROT) A very popular Sociology blog ([The Society Pages](#)) has a section [There’s Research On That](#). You will locate a popular story (in news media or similar) that your chosen subfield can address, and collate a bibliography of 8-10 academic journal sources, providing synthetic annotations of roughly 500-1,000 words total. (See examples on that site). Due March 3.

*Mendeley or Zotero bibliography* If you are not already using one of those reference tools, please download and begin using. We will discuss note-taking strategies early in the semester, and incorporate some of these techniques into your bibliographic referencing. You will share the full bibliography for your proposal (with a narrative on your note-taking and analysis process that follows) on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

*Proposal* MA or PhD proposal writing will be broken down into four steps: ugly draft, TROT bibliography, final draft, and final. Students will give each other written feedback on the final draft, and you will be graded on how you incorporate that feedback into your final proposal.

### **Policies**

We will be online the first two weeks, and in person the rest of the semester, pending any changes to OSU COVID policies. Please obtain weekly COVID tests and complete the health-check in every day that you come to campus.

In the case of illness or other extenuating circumstance, you are expected to make up any work missed within one week of your absence. Please notify me by email within 48 hours of missing class or missing a deadline.

**Course schedule** (subject to change)

Date	Topic	Due	Articles	Book chapters	Discussion
13-Jan	Introduction to class				
	<b>Applied geography</b>				
20-Jan	Which conversation do you want to join?		Watts	Belcher Wk 1	Reading
27-Jan	What is your field?	Who are your allies?	NRC		Note taking
3-Feb	Ethical commitments in research	Ugly draft	Castree		Presentations
	<b>Research application</b>				
10-Feb	What makes a proposal competitive?	Proposal writing plan	Campbell et al.	Belcher Wk 2	Synthesis
17-Feb	Writing good research questions	Grad buddy meeting	Crane & Pearson	Stein 1	1, 2
<b>24-Feb</b>	NO CLASS			Stein 2	
3-Mar	Ethical commitments in publishing	TROT	Wainwright		Publication models
	<b>Proposal mechanics</b>				
10-Mar	Writing a theoretical framework	Faculty reflection	Kelsky	Belcher Wk 5	
17-Mar	Writing the empirical context	Proposal to grad buddy		Belcher Wk 10	3, 4
24-Mar	Writing your own research methods			Belcher Wk 11	External funding sources
<b>31-Mar</b>		Final draft			
	<b>Research skills</b>				
7-Apr	Outward facing research	Peer review	Lane	Stein 5-7	5, 6
14-Apr	Navigating an IRB application	Mendeley or Zotero		Belcher Wk 6	Human subjects
21-Apr	Final proposals DUE				Presentations