

# GEOGRAPHY 4101

## Undergraduate Research and Professionalization Seminar

AU 2021 / #13684 / 3 credits

Instructor: Dr. Kendra McSweeney

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Office hours: Student office hours: Tuesdays, 10 am - 12 pm or by appointment

Class: M W 11:10-12:30, Derby Hall 1080

### Disability Services

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's **request process**, managed by Student Life Disability Services. 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. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. 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. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### Overview

This course has two complementary foci:

- 1) to encourage you to reflect on your undergraduate experience, particularly in terms of content and skills developed. In this respect, the course should be equally useful to geography majors and minors, regardless of specialty;
- 2) to help you marshal that experience as you embark on the process of developing a career, in whatever field you chose.

In both respects, the course demands introspection: you will be asked to systematically think through your learning and skill development to date, articulate professional aspirations and the path required to achieve them. This applies to all students, whatever your plans are after graduation.

In our classroom meetings, the focus will be on reviewing and understanding the required readings, and on engaging with each other and with guests. Outside the classroom, the course asks you to explore the career resources in and around Ohio State, build your networks, and engage career-related concerns such as salary negotiation and ethical issues. Built into the course throughout are multiple moments to think about research, writing, spatial thinking, and other skills that will benefit you no matter what you plan for your future.

## Course Format

This seminar meets twice a week. Success in the course relies on coming to class and engaging in class discussion (as much as health precautions allow), and responding to the online readings, which must be completed by 9 am on the morning prior to the class meeting. This allows me to read your responses before we meet.

In the event that the pandemic requires classes to go fully online, expect to meet synchronously on the days/times that we would have met in-person.

## Readings

There is no textbook. All required readings and other materials can be found in Carmen.

## Policies

### Instructor availability

I have set aside Tuesdays from 10-12 pm for meetings with you. Please talk to me in class or email me so I know when to expect you. Consider this an exercise in networking—I can best help you with your professional journey if I get to talk with you a bit outside the classroom. If you cannot make the Tuesday time slot, we can arrange another time. **IF YOU EXPECT TO ASK ME FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION OR A JOB REFERENCE, YOU MUST MEET WITH ME AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE SEMESTER.**

Teaching is only one of my job duties. My time is also spent on research and administrative activities. I can usually respond to your emails within 24 hours.

### Due dates

Due dates for assigned work are noted in Canvas. Response to readings are due by **9 am** on the morning of the class and will not be available after that time. Other assignments are due by midnight on the due date. If you require more time for an assignment, please contact me at least a week in advance of the due date to organize an alternative schedule.

### Classroom etiquette

Success in this course requires discussion of topics that are occasionally sensitive, and will require that you reflect on, and talk about, personal experiences and aspirations, and support others' ability to do the same. Respect for others' ideas is essential to generative classroom discussions. I will insist on cordial and respectful discussion at all times.

Keep personal screens off during class except for note-taking or review of readings. If you are consistently distracted by your phone or laptop this will be reflected in your participation and attendance grades.

### **Misconduct**

Any academic misconduct, such as plagiarizing, will be immediately reported, as required, to the [Committee on Academic Misconduct](#).

### **Health & Safety Requirements (COVID-19 policies)**

All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (<https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu>), which currently include wearing a mask in any indoor space. Non-compliance will be met first with a warning; repeated offenses will be met with disciplinary actions.

A more detailed description of expectations, testing, vaccinations and more can be found here: <https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu/current-students>

## **Evaluation**

	GRADE %	DUE DATE
Attendance/Class participation	15	-
Response to readings	35	Before each class meeting
Resume and rec letter request	5	W Sept 8
Post-graduate training comparison	5	W Sept 29
LinkedIn profile (3) & peer review (2)	5	W Oct 13
Informational interview	20	M Nov 1
Self-evaluation: plan (5); report (10)	15	Plan: Nov. 10 (in-class) Report: Dec 13

There are no exams. Instead, evaluation is spread out quite evenly over the semester but is slightly front-loaded. Most assignments are due on Mondays. PLEASE BE SURE TO PUT ALL DUE DATES IN YOUR CALENDAR.

### **Attendance/Participation (15%)**

This is a seminar: participation in class discussion is required. If you are unable to attend a class in person (or synchronously, if the campus is closed), for any reason, please email me prior to class. Doctor's notes and/or details of your other appointments are required. Excused absences will result in your participation grade being weighted accordingly.

The participation grade is based on my subjective assessment of your participation over the semester. If for any reason you do not expect to be able to participate fully in class discussion even when you are present, please let me know early in the semester and I'd be happy to find ways to accommodate you.

### **Response to Readings (35%)**

The course includes 22 opportunities to respond to the readings, case studies, videos, etc. 35% of your grade is distributed across those posts, with each worth 1-2% of your grade. THESE ADD UP QUICKLY. You CANNOT post responses to the readings after the day on which they are discussed, so please get used to regularly posting. The materials combine academic and non-academic articles, news reports and other sources. Remember: you cannot post responses after 9 am on the day of class. It will not be possible to complete them retroactively; I have to be able to review your responses in order to tailor our in-class time.

### **Resume and reference/rec letter request (5%)**

It's never too early to start preparing or polishing your resume, which you will do following OSU-Career Center best practices (3%). You will also script a text asking a faculty member to act as a reference for you OR to write a letter of recommendation for you (2%). Many students underestimate the importance of having faculty vouch/advocate for them after graduation. Now is the time to start practicing how to best request that help.

### **Post-graduate education/training Comparison (5%)**

Many students pursue formal education and/or training after their Bachelor's degree. This assignment is your chance to look into a training program/certification/master's/license/language that you think you'd like to explore within 5 years of graduating. Compare two programs by requirements, cost, schedule, and more and produce a brief summary of what you found.

### **Linked-In Profile & Peer Review (5%)**

Networking is essential no matter what your post-graduate plans are. 5% of your grade is based on you setting up (or updating/maintaining) a LinkedIn profile with substantive information about yourself, your skills, and your interests. Please 'Link' to my account by the due date. The remaining 2% will be earned by your constructive critique of a colleague's LinkedIn profile, sent to them and to me.

### **Informational Interview (20%)**

As a group, we will practice 'interviewing' various guests. Through your networks, LinkedIn, and in discussion with the Instructor, you will identify and describe FIVE people currently working in a field that you are interested in; they must span at least three different market sectors (5%). You will then set up and conduct an informational interview with ONE of those people to learn more about them, their career trajectory, and the demands of the job. You'll record/transcribe it and write up your experience (15%).

### **Self-Evaluation Assignment (15% total)**

This course is designed, in part, to help you prepare for the next professional stages of your life. But we can't cover everything, or go into the depth that you may want on some topics. This assignment gives you a chance to (1) identify a career-oriented activity you'd like to complete before the end of the semester; (2) pitch that activity (and its assessment) to the instructor as a plan that you'll execute before the end of the semester (5%), and (3) following feedback, execute that plan, and submit a report (10%). The assignment is built to be flexible with regard to reporting and evaluation.

### **Extra Credit**

A maximum of 5 points (5%) of extra credit is available to students who actively pursue on- and off-campus opportunities for career exploration during AU21 and report briefly on their experiences to the class. Other opportunities come up throughout the semester. You may also get extra credit for completing an [appointment with a Career Coach](#) in Arts & Sciences. Should you choose one of the latter, book your meeting ASAP, as advisors get busier as the semester progresses. You must describe your experience to the class to get credit for it.

### Grading Scale

93 - 100 (A); 90 - 92.9 (A-); 87 - 89.9 (B+); 83 - 86.9 (B); 80 - 82.9 (B-); 77 - 79.9 (C+); 73 - 76.9 (C); 70 - 72.9 (C-); 67 - 69.9 (D+); 60 - 66.9 (D); Below 60 (E).

If you are taking this course as a requirement for your major, **you must achieve a C- or higher**. Every year, some students fail the class because they do not complete the required readings and assignments in time. Please put due dates on your calendar, because much of the work cannot be 'caught up' later.

### COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

Date	Topic	Assignments assigned/due
8/25	Intro to course (no prep required)	
8/30	What is Geography Again?	Resume & letter <b>assigned</b>
9/1	What is Geography Again?	
9/6	LABOR DAY	
9/8	What have I learned in College?	Resume & letter <b>due</b>
9/13	Research as Life-long Practice	Post-graduate education <b>assigned</b>
9/15	Research Projects	
9/20	Professional Networking	LinkedIn profile <b>assigned</b>
9/22	Internships	<i>Guests: Recent 4191 students</i>
9/27	Informational Interviewing	Informational interview <b>assigned</b>
9/29	Post-graduate Education/Training	Post-graduate training comparison <b>due</b>
10/4	Grad School: What, Why	
10/6	Grad School: How	<i>Guest: OSU Geography grad student</i>
10/11	Alternative Routes after Graduation	<i>Guest: Hannah vanLaningham, AmeriCorps volunteer</i>
10/13	NO CLASS: PROFESSOR ABSENT	LinkedIn Profile & peer review <b>due</b>
10/18	The Ethical Geographer	
10/20	Thinking Sectorally	<i>Guest: Andrew Gerberry, Del-Co Water</i>
10/25	Going Public I: Careers in Local & State Government	
10/27	Going Public II: Careers in the Federal Government	<i>Guest: Pat McMahan, USFS; Rachel Beery, FEMA</i>
11/1	Careers in the Private Sector & Self-Employment	Informational Interview <b>due</b>
11/3	Private Sector (continued)	<i>Guest: Claire Mercer, Woolpert; Dan Ransberger, Location Intelligence, Nationwide</i> Self-evaluation plan <b>assigned</b>
11/8	The World of Non-Profits & Advocacy Work	<i>Guest: Dr. Madhumita Dutta</i>

11/10	Self-Evaluation: What do I need to work on most?	Self-evaluation plan <b>done in-class</b>
11/15	Gender in the Workplace	<i>Guest: Sara Moya, Geography PhD student</i>
11/17	Talking Money: Loans, Salaries, Wages	
11/22	Course Assessment (online only; no class meeting)	
11/24	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
11/29	(Geography) Communication: Why	
12/1	(Geography) Communication: How	
12/6	Presentations	
12/8	Presentations & Course Wrap-Up	
12/13		Self-Evaluation Report <b>due</b>