

GEOGRAPHY 4101

Undergraduate Research and Professionalization Seminar

AU 2023 / #20474 / 3 credits

Instructor: Dr. Kendra McSweeney

E-mail: mcsweeney.14@osu.edu

Office hours: Office hours: Thursdays 3 - 5 pm or by appointment

Class: T Th 12:30-2:05, 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; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Overview

This course has two complementary foci:

- 1) to encourage you to reflect on your undergraduate experience, particularly in terms of content learned and hard/soft skills developed. In this respect, the course should be equally useful to geography majors and minors, regardless of your 'track';
- 2) to help you marshal that experience as you embark on the process of planning for and developing life after graduation, 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 with 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, and responding to the online readings, which must be completed by 11 am on the morning prior to the class meeting. This allows me to read your responses before we meet.

Readings

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

Policies

Code of conduct

In this seminar-style format, I will be encouraging discussion rather than lecture. We will be talking about themes related to your background, education, and aspirations. We must take special care to conduct ourselves in class with care and attention. For example:

1. Polite interjection is welcome. If there's something you don't understand, or want to push back on, please feel free to jump in.
2. Debate is welcome; we all bring different perspectives. But we must debate respectfully. We can all develop our skills at negotiating different ideas, seeing multiple sides of an argument, and holding different ideas in productive tension.
3. If you are comfortable talking and contributing on-the-spot, be sure to leave time and space to those who may take longer to articulate their thoughts or may be less quick to speak out.
4. Active listening is expected. Phones/devices should be silent so you can be maximally present. Consider taking notes by hand rather than on a laptop.
5. Academic integrity is upheld in all course activities. I will be clear when I am unsure of something, and I expect you to do the same. The idea is to create an environment where we can all learn from each other and acknowledge and appreciate others' contributions to our learning.

Misconduct

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

Instructor availability

I have set aside Thursdays 3-5 pm for meetings with students (aka 'office hours'). Please talk to me in class or email me so I know when to expect you. Get used to coming and talking with me. 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 Thursday time slot, we can arrange another time. You MUST meet with me IF YOU EXPECT TO ASK ME FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION OR A JOB REFERENCE.

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, and longer on weekends.

Due dates

Due dates for assigned work are noted in Canvas. Responses to readings are due by **11 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, but most assignments have flexible deadlines that should be set by you. ALL COURSEWORK must be done by Dec. 12.

Health & Safety Requirements

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>)

Evaluation

	POINTS/100	DUE DATE
REQUIRED		
• Attendance/Class participation	15	ongoing
• Leading class discussion	10	variable
• Response to readings (ALL)	20	ongoing
• Resume/CV	5	In-class, Sept.12
• Informational Interview	10	Before Nov. 2
CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN Choose from the menu of assignment options	40	All work must be turned in by Dec. 12

This course features a **flexible evaluation system**. Below are the tasks that are REQUIRED, followed by an assignment 'menu' from which you can choose the ones most useful to you. If you would like to pursue an activity beyond the options presented here, please talk to me in advance.

Attendance/Participation (REQUIRED) / 15

This is a seminar: participation in class discussion is required. If you are unable to attend a class in person for any reason, please email me prior to class. Doctor's notes and/or details of your other appointments are required.

Meaningful participation means being present, actively listening to others, not being distracted by a screen, and regularly participating in discussion. 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 and I'd be happy to find ways to accommodate you.

Class Leadership (REQUIRED) / 10

You will be assigned to present the readings and set up a debate question for the class. If there is a visitor that day, you will be assigned to introduce them. You will likely be assigned to work with a partner.

Response to Readings (REQUIRED) / 20

Most readings come with prompts to stimulate discussion. PLEASE RESPOND TO THE READINGS AT LEAST AN HOUR BEFORE CLASS (i.e., **by 11 am**). This gives me time to read them and be able to tailor the class content in response. In addition, responding to the readings encourages you to: a) come to

class with the readings done; b) offer a 'first take' on the material that you may want to revisit following in-class discussion. In other words, I ask you to read and write before class so that you can set a baseline against which you will subsequently revise, reinforce, or reject your existing understanding of the material. I've chosen the readings in part based on their readability. They combine academic and non-academic articles, news reports and other sources.

Resume (or CV) (REQUIRED) /5 points, due in class Sept. 12

It's never too early to start preparing or polishing your resume, which you will do following OSU-Career Center best practices and which you will bring to class for peer review.

Informational Interview REQUIRED / 10 points, due before Nov. 2

As a group, we will practice 'interviewing' various guests. Through your networks, LinkedIn, and in discussion with me, please identify people currently working in a field that you are interested in; ideally in three different sectors. Expect to reach out to at least four in order to secure an interview. Once you get a response, 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.

'MENU' of ASSIGNMENT OPTIONS

(CHOOSE ANY COMBINATION TO ACCRUE 40 POINTS)

Informational Interview /10 points (can do twice; max. points 20)

You may want to do more than one informational interview. For each, record and transcribe it and write up your experience as you did for the required interview. Read the assignment for more details.

Post-graduate education/training comparison / 5 points

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 certificate that you think you'd like to explore within 5 years of graduating. Compare two programs by requirements, cost, and schedule and produce a brief summary of what you found.

'Workplace' visit or In-person Networking Event/ 5 points

Are you and (an)other member(s) of the class interested in going somewhere off-campus to scope out a work setting, fair, or something else? Report on your joint excursion to the class.

Grad School Personal Statement / 15 points

Graduate school applications typically require a personal statement (also called a research statement). The statement is an important part of the application, because it signals the type of research you'd like to do and why. Please find two SUCCESSFUL personal statements that existing grad students used in their applications. Ask professors for help identifying current grad students studying in an area you're interested in. Then, draft your own and submit for my feedback.

Linked-In Profile / 10 points

Networking is essential no matter what your post-graduate plans are. IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY HAVE ONE, please set up (or MAJORLY update) a LinkedIn profile with substantive information about yourself, your skills, and your interests. Please 'Link' to my account by the due date. Link to at least three other students in the class, and ask them to endorse you for specific skills.

Peer Review a Colleague's Linked-In Profile / 5 points

Already have a LinkedIn page? Frequent user? Please offer to give substantive feedback to another student who is just beginning to set up theirs. Meet in-person to offer tips and feedback.

Self-Evaluation PLAN: What Do I Need to Accomplish by December? / 5 points

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) in a detailed one-page plan that lays out how you'd accomplish that goal by the end of the semester, with a justification for why accomplishing it would be worth either 5 or 10 points.

Completion of Self-Evaluation REPORT / 5 OR 10 points

If you complete the plan you proposed, submit a report demonstrating that accomplishment according to the criteria you laid out.

"Extra Credit" / 5 points (repeatable, max. /10)

OSU is a big place. There are all kinds of Career Fairs, Grad School Fairs, talks and other events going on all the time that may be helpful to you in preparing for life beyond college. Extra credit is available to students who actively pursue on- (and sometimes off-) campus opportunities for career exploration during AU23 and report briefly on their experiences to the class. Other opportunities come up throughout the semester. The Arts & Sciences Career Center also has tons of resources for you; for example, you can complete 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. Alert me at the beginning of class so I can set time aside.

Grading Scale

C- is required to pass the class (recall that for most of you this is a required course). To achieve that, please ensure you complete 30/60 points from the REQUIRED assignments, and 20/40 from the optional assignments.

To achieve grades above C-, the number of points you accrue will correspond to the following scale:

- Over 90 (A)
 - Over 80 but < 90 (B+)
 - Over 70 but < 80 (B)
 - Over 60 but < 70 (C+)
 - Over 50 but < 60 (C).
-

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change)

This fall, we will meet 28 times in person and once asynchronously.

Date	Topic	Assignments Guests
Tues 8/22	Intro to course and each other	
Thurs 8/24	What is Geography Again? 1	Department tour
Tues 8/29	What is Geography Again? 2	Paths into geography
Thurs 8/31	What have I learned in College? 1	
Tues 9/5	What have I learned in College? 2	
Thurs 9/7	Professional Networking	
Tues 9/12	Workshop: <i>Resume / CV, asking for rec letter</i>	Resume due in class
Thurs 9/14	Internships	<i>Guest</i>
Tues 9/19	Informational Interviewing	
Thurs 9/21	Graduate School: What, Why	
Tues 9/26	Graduate School: How	<i>Guest</i>
Thurs 9/28	Workshop: <i>Applying to grad school</i>	
Tues 10/3	The Ethical Geographer	
Thurs 10/5	Careers in State and Local Government	<i>Guest</i>
Tues 10/10	Workshop: <i>Who will I interview?</i>	<i>Guest</i>
Thurs 10/12	AUTUMN BREAK	
Tues 10/17	Careers in Federal Government	<i>Guest</i>
Thurs 10/19	Geography & the Military	
Tues 10/24	In-class Debate	<i>Guest</i>
Thurs 10/26	Careers in Private Sector /Self-Employment	<i>Guest</i>
Tues 10/31	Going Global: Careers Overseas	<i>Guest</i>
Thurs 11/2	Careers in Non-profits	Informational Interview due <i>Guest</i>
Tues 11/7	Careers in Education & Outreach	<i>Guest</i>
Thurs 11/9	Writing for Different Audiences	
Tues 11/14	Gender in the Workplace	
Thurs 11/16	Talking Money	<i>Guest</i>
Tues 11/21	[Asynchronous] TBA	
Thurs 11/23	THANKSGIVING	
Tues 11/28	Job vs. Career; Work/Life; What vs. Where	
Thurs 11/30	Presentations, as needed	
Tues 12/5	Course Wrap-Up	
Finals week		ALL OUTSTANDING ASSIGNMENTS DUE BY DEC 12 @ midnight