

GEOG 350.00 Geography Research Methods & 701.54 -Research Design in Geography -
Spring 2025; Weds, 1730 to 2020

Instructor: William Solecki
Office: 1003D North Building
Email: wsolecki@hunter.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Weds from 4:00-5:30pm (except for days at Hunter Senate) or by appointment.

Course Description

The course is designed to be an advanced undergraduate and graduate student exposure to the process of doing geographic research. Basic epistemological and ontological approaches will be reviewed through the use of readings on research methodologies and selected readings from the geography and environmental studies literature. Class discussion will focus on the identification of research problems, construction of hypotheses, and development of research design. The course is designed to have the students learn from the instructor, other faculty, the reading material, and from each other. The course is divided into three major topic areas.

- Section 1: Introduction to the process of scientific research - questions of epistemology and ontology, research methods in geography and environmental studies, conceptualization of the research problem.
- Section 2: Research operationalization - introduction to basic methods, choosing a research method, sampling, positivist, post-positivist, and non-positivist approaches, qualitative and quantitative approaches
- Section 3: Critique and evaluation of research methods - review of current research within the fields of Geography and Environmental Studies, and student presentation of research project and research proposals.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes

This class includes both undergraduate students and graduate students. The learning outcomes are mostly similar between the two groups, except for the fact that the undergraduates will have an opportunity to do a group project or develop a research proposal while the graduate students will be asked to develop a research proposal individually. While there will be overlap between the two activities, each will have slightly different learning outcomes. Overall, the course is designed to facilitate the following set of learning outcomes for students:

1. Translate concepts into operationally measured variables and indicators
2. Understand the connections between different epistemologies and ontologies and different research design protocols
3. Define criteria to evaluate research proposal
4. Practice a variety of data gathering techniques
5. Gain facility with different types of data including qualitative and quantitative
6. Develop and detail a research project or proposal

7. Develop from theory to research question, appropriate methodology, data, analysis, appropriate interpretation, and formal presentation of results
8. Demonstrate the structure of scientific writing

Grading

Your grade will be based on following set of assignments and responsibilities.

	<u>% of Grade</u>	
Assignment 1	5	- Ethics and Research - Citi Training Assignment
Assignment 2	5	- Census and archival data search, secondary data
Assignment 3	10	- Questionnaire and survey, primary data
Assignment 4	10	- Content analysis
Group Research Project 30	OR	- Final project report and presentation
Research Proposal	30	- Final draft of your proposal, and presentation
Mid Term Exam	20	- April 30 th in class
Participation	20	- leading discussion and class participation
	100	TOTAL

Four assignments will be given out during the course of the semester. Each assignment will focus on a different topic and have associated supplemental readings.

For undergraduate students, student teams will be asked to develop a research project on attitudes and behavior toward urban sustainability practices at home, school, and at work. Students will be presented with basic information on urban sustainability and then will be allowed to develop a group project with a research design protocol of their choosing. A series of benchmark products will be due over the course of the semester. Teams will consist of 2-3 students each. Undergraduates also can choose to do a research proposal as described below.

For graduate students, the research proposal will include the submission of a single page introductory outline sheet, an annotated bibliography, a rough draft, and a final draft. Research topics and paper drafts will be critically reviewed during class discussions. You also will be expected to publicly present your research proposal before your classmates. The final draft of the proposal is expected to be a polished piece of writing - complete and coherent from beginning to end. You will work on this project throughout the semester. Half-digested treatments will receive poor grades. It is expected that each of you will work closely with a faculty member(s) in the department who define themselves as an expert on the topic of your proposal.

Class attendance and class participation are a critical part of the semester grade. This means that you must be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for the day. Other specifics as to the nature of the assignments, term paper and the participation grade will be discussed in

class. Late assignments will receive a reduction in grade. No grades of "incomplete" will be given except in cases of extreme circumstances.

Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity:

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

Hunter College's Policy on Students with Disabilities:

In compliance with the American Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational parity and accommodations for all students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is recommended that all students with documented disabilities (Emotional, Medical, Physical and/ or Learning) consult the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1124 to secure necessary academic accommodations. For further information and assistance please call (212- 772- 4857)/TTY (212- 650- 3230).

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct

In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College affirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationship. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, on contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444)

All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) of Colleen Barry 5 (colleen.barr7@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.

Policy on Sexual Misconduct can be found

at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/diversityandcompliance/title-ix>

Preferred Gender Pronoun

All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, we will have the chance to indicate the name that we prefer to be called and, if we choose, to identify pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support classmates in doing so as well."

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

If changes are made to the syllabus, I will notify you via email through Blackboard. It is essential that you have your correct email linked to your Blackboard account and that you check your Hunter or other Blackboard-linked email regularly. Bounced emails will not be an acceptable excuse for not being aware of changes or any other communications to the class.

Required Text

Clifford, N. (2023). *Key Methods in Geography* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications, Ltd. (UK).

Optional Text

John W. Creswell. 2009. *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage, 3rd edition.

Nicolas Clifford, Shaun French and Gill Valentine. Eds. *Key Methods in Geography*. Washington DC; Sage Publishing.

Daniel Montello and Paul Sutton. 2013. *An Introduction to Scientific Research Methods in Geography and Environmental Studies*. 2nd Ed. ISBN: 978-1-446200759. Paperback.

Basil Gomez and John Paul Jones. Eds. 2010. *Research Methods in Geography: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN: 978-1-4051-0711-2.

The books are available at the Hunter College bookstore, or can be purchased online.

Other readings are available via email from the instructor or via the Hunter College blackboard. The readings are to be read for the week they are listed. Additional readings might be assigned on a weekly basis.