The purpose of this course is to provide a forum for first year masters students to discuss and develop their thesis or research project proposal. Readings, seminars and guest speakers will also expose students to various approaches to research and to methods in geography. Through class activities and assignments, students will refine a research question, identify their research objectives and describe their methods, and write and orally present their research proposal. By the end of the semester students should be able to:

- identify and discuss key areas and approaches to geography and in geographical research;
- formulate research questions that appropriately reflect their sub-discipline and are reasonable given objectives and analytical approach; and,
- effectively and efficiently communicate a research proposal in written and oral form.

**Course Format and Requirements**

Our class will take place in Hutt 234 on Friday afternoons; regular seminars are **1:30-3:30pm**. Please see schedule on next page for weekly topics, activities and **required preparations**. Students must attend all seminars and active participation is expected. If you must miss a class, please inform and discuss with Jen in **person or over the phone** at least one week prior. Guidelines for the proposals and proposal presentations, and the course policies follow the schedule.
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>TOPIC &amp; ACTIVITY</th>
<th>Required Preparation</th>
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| 1 Jan 13 | **TOPIC:** Intro to the course; proposal structure; what research methods will you be using and why?  
**Activity:** (1) Students discuss their proposed methods and example papers; (2) Sign-up for data collection/analysis workshops |                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2 Jan 20 | **Concurrent Data Collection Workshops (Students will choose one)**  
a. Surveys and semi-structured interviews  
b. Field experiment design and sampling | **Complete** any preparations requested by workshop leader.                                                                                       |
| 3 Jan 27 | **TOPIC:** Broad overview of contemporary research and thought in geography; Brief overview regarding research ethics  
**Activity:** Small group work-shopping the question-objectives-methods of your research. | **Read:** pp. 112-145 from Walliman (2005).  
**Bring** a hard copy of draft research question(s), objective(s), and method(s). |
| 4 Feb 3  | **Concurrent Data Analysis Workshops (Students will choose one)**  
a. Grounded theory & Qualitative analysis  
b. Time series analysis | **Complete** any preparations requested by workshop leader.                                                                                       |
| 5 Feb 10 | **TOPIC:** Reflecting on methods and thinking about the logistics of data collection  
**Activity:** Introduction to fieldwork and data organization  
**Submit hard copy of proposal outline to Jen, and if you wish, your supervisor** | **Bring one reference** (i.e., article or chapter) that describes a data collection method you will use; be prepared to summarize and discuss how you would implement it. |

**READING WEEK (Feb 20-24)**

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| 6 Feb 24 | **TOPIC:** Tips for year 2 of grad school ... and life beyond!  
**Activity:** Senior grad student panel (panelists TBA) | **Bring** questions for panelists                                                                                       |
| 7 Mar 3  | **TOPIC:** Faculty tips and approaches to the writing process  
**Activity:** Faculty panel | **Bring** questions for panelists                                                                                       |
| 8 Mar 10 | **Activity:** Today’s class time will be devoted to a writing workshop, following the style discussed last week.  
**Submit draft of written research proposal between March 10-20** | **Plan and prepare** for what you will work on during the writing workshop |
| 9 Mar 17 | Research Proposal Presentations |                                                                                                         |
**TENTATIVE: SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

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<tr>
<th>10 Mar 24</th>
<th>Research Proposal Presentations</th>
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<td>11 Mar 31</td>
<td>Research Proposal Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Apr 7</td>
<td>Research Proposal Presentations</td>
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**Final research proposal due by 7pm on April 9**

**Evaluation**

The final grade for the course will be determined by the course instructor in consultation with the student’s supervisor/committee and other faculty. The evaluation will consider the oral presentation (25%; evaluated by all faculty attending presentations) and final research proposal (75%; evaluated by supervisor, the course instructor, and where deemed appropriate by the supervisor, the committee). The course instructor will also take your attendance and participation throughout the semester into account; absences that are unannounced to Jennifer and/or not appropriately documented will affect the student’s final grade.

To keep your progress on track, a series of non-negotiable deadlines are scheduled throughout the semester. They are as follows:

**February 10:** Submit hard copy of proposal outline (if possible, also share and discuss with your supervisor)

**March 10-20:** Submit draft word doc. of written proposal to supervisor/committee and Jennifer. Drafts will be reviewed and feedback returned by Jennifer in the order that they are received.

**March 17 – April 7:** Proposal presentations (scheduled according to supervisor/committee availability and taking into account order from last semester)

**April 9:** Final copies of proposal due over email to supervisor/committee and Jen by 7pm (no extensions)

**Research Proposal Guidelines**

The primary objectives of the thesis research proposal are:

1. To briefly contextualize and define the area/problem to be studied;
2. To articulate how you will approach this area/problem through a research question;
3. To identify the broad aim and specific objectives of the research that will address this question;
4. To describe the particular approach to the research (data sources, methods of data collection, methods of analysis, etc.) to enable completion of the objectives; and,
5. To identify the expected scholarly and practical contributions of the research, including the timeline that will be followed.

The proposal should be developed in consultation with your supervisor, committee, and where relevant, other faculty. A full draft of the proposal must be submitted to Jen and your supervisor/committee between March 10-20; Jen will review and provide feedback according to the order in which proposals are received. Final copies of the proposal must be submitted to Jen and your supervisor/committee by 7pm on April 9.

**Structure:**
The proposal should begin with a brief review of the relevant literature -- sufficient to provide a rationale and context for the area/problem to be addressed. This section should be kept relatively short and to the point since you have already presented a detailed literature review in the context paper. The introduction should lead into a clear statement of the motivation/problem that inspires the research, ideally phrased as a research question. This should be followed by an explicit statement of the aim and objectives of the study -- this need only be a couple of pages long, but it is the critical part of the proposal, and is worth careful consideration. Following this, you will outline your research approach, including some discussion of study area, data sources, methods of collection and analysis, study timing, etc. A concluding section should indicate the scholarly and practical contributions you expect your research will make to Geography (or related sub-fields). The written proposal must meet the same professional standard as the context paper (e.g., clear structure, section headings, references, careful editing, etc.). **Length:** aim for 4,000 - 5,000 words + bibliography.

**Presentation Guidelines**
Twenty-five minutes will be set aside for each in-class proposal presentation. The formal presentation should take a maximum of 20 minutes, allowing for 5 minutes of questions, discussion and suggestions. Remember, most of the people at the seminar will not have seen your proposal, so clear organization and visuals will help to communicate your points efficiently and effectively. Ultimately, the objective is for you rationalize your research and research approach and for the audience to ask questions that will help to extend your thinking, to raise possible limitations, and to make suggestions that will improve the potential of your proposed study.
Instructor Policies for the Course

**Attendance.** Attendance is required; students must inform and discuss any necessary absences with the instructor in person or over phone at least one week in advance.

**Academic Integrity.** Students are expected to pursue their course work with honesty and integrity and to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Refer to the Academic Calendar for university policies.

**Communication.** Please check your university email account and the 'news' section of the GEOG*6091 CourseLink page frequently. Any important information arising throughout the semester will be communicated by these means and students are responsible for monitoring them. I will do my best to respond to emails within 1-2 working days; emails sent after 3pm on Friday will not be responded to until at least the following Monday.

**Late assignments.** A penalty of 15% of the total assignment grade will be deducted per late day (excluding Saturdays and Sundays). The proposal presentation will only be accepted/valid on the final assigned date. Any students who encounter problems due to a medical or personal reason should speak to the instructor as soon as possible, and definitely on or before due dates. A note may be required.

University of Guelph Standard Statements for Graduate Courses

E-mail Communication
All students are required to check their University of Guelph e-mail account regularly. E-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement
When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course in writing, with your name, id#, and email contact. See the graduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:
http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1415.shtml

Drop Date
The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is Friday, March 11, 2016. Two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of the add period in the second semester. Refer to the Graduate Calendar for the Schedule of Dates.

Academic Misconduct
The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic
integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University’s policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar:

www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1687.shtml

Recording of Materials
Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded in any electronic media without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer.

Resources
The Graduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations that apply to graduate programs:

http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current