Dr Anna Stanley

**Lectures**: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4-5:20pm  
Location: MINS 103

**Labs** (HUTT 240B):  
Wednesday 10:30am-12:20am  
Thursday 7:00pm-8:50pm  
Friday 8:30-10:20am

**Office Hours** (350 HUTT): I am in my office Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. If my door is open, I am available to meet, or you can make an appointment  
Email: asta@uoguelph.ca

Teaching Assistants:  
Evan Gravely egravely@uoguelph.ca  
Erich Keyser ekeyser@uoguelph.ca

**Introduction & Course Overview:**

Human Geography is an increasingly important, interdisciplinary field that examines the complexities of environment-society relations. Human geographers work at the intersection of fields like ecology, anthropology, politics, economy and sociology and investigate a diverse range of important topics including for instance climate change, food security, city life, environmental justice, resource rights, community livelihood, and environmental sustainability. Their research draws on a wide range of insights and methodological practices from what might appear to be very diverse fields. This course is designed as an applied, practical introduction to qualitative research in human geography, and aims to expose students to the basic elements of research design, research methods, field-work and critical thinking in the field. Through a combination of fieldwork, hands on exercises, lectures, and a group research project we will: consider how to craft and operationalize a research question; critically explore a range of qualitative data gathering and analytical techniques; and reflect on some of the theoretical assumptions, approaches, and issues that underwrite geographical research and knowledge production.

**Course Aims & Learning Objectives:**

The focus of this course is on qualitative research in human geography, and uses a combination of experiential, field based, and community engaged approaches to advance course aims and leaning objectives. This course aims to: (1) familiarize students with the
methods and techniques used in human geography, as well as their limitations; (2) develop a basic set of skills with which to conduct geographical research; (3) promote thoughtful, critical, evidence based engagement with geographical issues and problems; (4) develop the ability to critically evaluate geographical research, arguments and information; and (5) develop an understanding of community engaged research and scholarship in which the imperatives for research are grounded the realities of communities. More specifically, upon completion of the course it is expected that students should have gained the ability to:

- craft and operationalize a research question
- make informed choices about research design and development
- design an environmental research project
- understand and incorporate ethical concerns and responsibilities into research
- understand and address positionality in the research process
- identify and critically evaluate different primary data gathering techniques
- identify and critically evaluate different techniques for analyzing and interpreting data
- conduct basic fieldwork
- understand the relationship between evidence and argument
- critically assess the strengths and limitations of environmental research
- critically evaluate environmental arguments and information
- write a research proposal
- clearly and concisely communicate research results in oral and written form

Course Structure & Format:

This course culminates in the completion of a group research project in which each group is required to design and then conduct primary research on geographical topic related to food access in the city of Guelph. As a class we will be learning about community engaged research and scholarship and will therefore be engaging community partners in our research. It the context of your group project this means that your research topic will need to be grounded in the concrete concerns, priorities and issues raised by our community partner organizations (Organizations TBC) who are working on the front lines of food access and food security in the city of Guelph. The course structure and lecture content have been designed to complement this “hands-on” community engaged approach and facilitate student progression through the development of this research project. Your research project begins with a fieldwork assignment based on a research instrument that I have designed for you, and consists of you going out and conducting some preliminary (“pilot”) qualitative fieldwork at a specified site. More details on this assignment can be found in the assignment sheet, and will be discussed in detail in your assigned lab. As a preliminary step in your group research project, this individual fieldwork assignment will expose you to fieldwork, the realities of interacting with people (“human participants”) for the purposes of research, some different ways to collect and analyse data, and some of the questions you could ask about the broader theme of food access in Guelph—It is meant to be exploratory and introductory. As a stand-
alone assignment, it is designed to familiarize you with some basic fieldwork issues and introduce you to data collection and analysis. Based on this “pilot research” your group will then have something (perhaps a set of questions, basic awareness of some of the challenges associated with fieldwork, a sense of what is and is not feasible, as well as some familiarity with a potential research site) from which to build a proposal for research (guided also by insights from community partners). Your group will then use this proposal to develop a research project that you will present as a poster (and discuss orally) in class and in a final written report. Lectures, in class activities, readings and weekly 2 hour labs are meant to support the skills you will need as well as complement and contextualize the skills you will develop. As we move through the course, readings, lecture materials, and course activities will deepen your practical “hands-on” engagement by exposing you to a series of contextual, methodological and theoretical questions related the practice of geographical research.

This course is also designed to incorporate class discussion directly into the lectures and labs. At times you will be asked to discuss and share your understandings of the assigned readings, as well as to describe and evaluate arguments and insights contained in them. Each meeting you will be expected to attend class prepared to discuss the readings with your peers. You will be expected to attend all lectures and participate in in-class activities. This is your class and I want you to get as much out of these meetings as possible. Please feel free to raise questions and topics for discussion, and contribute your understanding of course themes, arguments, concepts and connections during the discussion. Participation also involves listening to other people’s comments, thoughtfully engaging with their views, not interrupting, and letting other people express themselves. There is a distinction between contributing to discussion (where your comments build off of others’ comments, generate further discussion, and contribute overall to the class achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the issues) and making self serving or arrogant comments that embarrass others and shut down lines of communication. The purpose of class discussion and in-class activities is that we learn from each other and come to a deeper understanding of the topics and issues pursued in the class. You have a responsibility to your classmates to be prepared, to actively contribute to discussions and to be courteous and respectful; you also have a right to expect the same of them.

Assignments:

1. Consultation meetings (15%).

Over the course of developing and operationalizing your group project your group will meet 5 times with your TA during scheduled lab times to present your group’s progress to date and discuss any issues you are facing in your research. Please see the course schedule below for scheduled time. Each meeting will be 15 minutes approximately, and you will be expected to prepare an outline of your progress and identify challenges you are facing. Students will be assigned an individual grade for their preparedness, organization and participation in these group consultations. Each meeting will have an assigned agenda (e.g.: research design) that you must come prepared to address.

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2. **Field-Work/Pilot research Assignment** (20%).
   This assignment is in week 4 at the beginning of your assigned lab. Your fieldwork assignment is an independent field-work exercise in Guelph, completed outside of class time. This assignment is meant to: (1) complement materials examined in class by providing you with basic, hands-on experience with primary data collection, and (2) generate “pilot” data and basic familiarity with a research topic to help you in the development and design of your group research project. This assignment will begin to familiarize you with: a range of issues and types of questions you might wish to examine in a more in-depth project; how (and how not) to conduct research about them; the feasibility of certain types of research and so on. The assignment is in no way meant to tie you to doing the same type of research as in the pilot assignment, rather to open up questions about the sites you might choose for the group project and about the types of themes and relationships your group might want to investigate. Like all good pilot research it is also meant to alert you to what might or might not work, and to help you craft a research proposal. This assignment will be discussed in your lab and is described in detail in a separate assignment sheet.

3. **Group Research Project** (45%).
   This assignment has 3 main components, please note the respective due dates for each component.

   By the third week of class students will sign up (or be assigned) to a group of no more than 5 students. Students who have not signed up so will be randomly assigned to groups by the start of their week 3 Lab. In your groups you will reflect on your fieldwork experience, the community partner organizations presentations (in lecture) and complete a research proposal, which will form the basis of your group research project. This project will require you to engage in primary research on a topic of your choice related to food access in Guelph that is grounded in the concerns, issues and priorities outlined by one or more of our partner organizations. The project cannot involve research with vulnerable populations (more on this in class). You will be required to design a credible research project, justify your choice of methods and design, collect, analyze primary data, and discuss and contextualize your findings in relation to the literature. Each group will present their project, and final results in a poster presentation to be displayed and discussed during an in-class symposium in which your peers and the community partner organizations will be in attendance, as well as in a final written report. Detailed instructions are provided in the assignment sheet. The project will be discussed in your assigned lab

   **A) Research proposal** (10%) Due in week 7 in your assigned lab
   **B) Poster presentation** (10%) presented in class week 11 (March 27 & 29)
   **C) Written report** (25%) due 4pm Thursday April 5 (start of class)

   *please note:* at my discretion an adjustment may be applied to a student’s grade for the group work (up to ± 5 points). Students who fail to fulfil their commitments to the group will lose points, those whose contribution is outstanding (above and beyond the call of duty) will have points added. This will be determined through the peer
and self assessment process (to be discussed in class). Students who do not participate in the group work or otherwise fail to contribute may receive a grade of zero.

4. **Final Exam** (20%)
The exam will review all course content covered during the semester.

**Course Textbook:**

**Additional Required Readings:** Peer reviewed journal articles and other materials will be made available on the GEOG 2260 course link page.

**Lecture & Lab Schedule:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 1 (January 9&amp;11)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday:</strong> Course Overview &amp; Introduction to Qualitative Research in Human Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>No readings</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday:</strong> Producing Geographical Knowledge</td>
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<td>• Epistemology, ontology and research practice</td>
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<td>• Philosophy, critical theory, methodology</td>
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<td>• the politics of research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• methodology: theories of research</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Qualitative research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings: Chapter 1</td>
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**LABS:** No Labs this week. Instead complete the CORE Tutorial at: [http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/)
When complete, save and upload your certificate to DropBox. This is due January 18th at 9am.

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<th>Week 2 (January 16 &amp;18)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday:</strong> Power &amp; Positionality</td>
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<td>Readings: Chapters 3 &amp;4</td>
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**Thursday:** Research Ethics (Guest Lecture: Sandy Auld, Director of Research Ethics)

Readings: Chapter 2
CORE certificate due (Note: assignments of students who have not submitted their certificate will not be accepted for grading.)
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<th>Week 3 (January 23 &amp; 25)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday: Community Engaged Research</strong> (Guest Lecture—Lindsey Thompson CESI)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday: Food Access / Food Security in Guelph: Community Partner’s Panel</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Labs:</strong> Fieldwork/Pilot Assignment Support</td>
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<td>(TAs will be available during lab time for troubleshooting and advice, or use the time to complete the assignment.)</td>
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<td>LAST DAY TO SUBMIT GROUP LISTS; GROUPS FINALIZED BY END OF WEEK</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 4 (January 30 &amp; February 1)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday: Placing Qualitative Research</strong></td>
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<td>- Asking qualitative research questions; sampling; data; data collection;</td>
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<td>- Epistemology and ontology in qualitative research</td>
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<td>- Navigating the divides: inductive/deductive; qualitative/quantitative…</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Qualitative fieldwork</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Readings: Review Chapter 1</em></td>
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<td><strong>Thursday: Research Design &amp; Data</strong></td>
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<td>- Asking and operationalizing research questions (issues of design)</td>
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<td>- The research processes</td>
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<td>- Evidence and robustness</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Readings: Chapter 6</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Labs:</strong> Group Research Project &amp; Proposal Writing; First Group Meeting</td>
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<td><em>Fieldwork/pilot assignment due</em></td>
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<td><em>Readings: Chapter 5</em></td>
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<th>Week 5 (February 6 &amp; 8)</th>
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<td><strong>Tuesday: Food Access/ Food Security</strong> (Guest Lecture: Sarah Rotz)</td>
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<td><em>Readings: TBA</em></td>
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<td><strong>Thursday: Field work de-brief</strong></td>
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<td><em>No Readings</em></td>
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<td><strong>Labs:</strong> Proposal Writing Workshop (groups will workshop topics, questions, objectives)</td>
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<th>Week 6 (February 13 &amp; 15)</th>
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<td><strong>Tuesday: Qualitative methods I</strong></td>
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(Interviewing, Oral History, Focus Groups, & Questionnaires)

*Corresponding Readings: Chapters 8, 9, 10, 12*

**Thursday: Qualitative methods II**
(Archival Research, Visual Methods, New Media)

*Corresponding Readings: Chapters 11, 13 & 16*

**Labs:** Consultation Meeting 1

**READING WEEK**

**Week 7 (Feb 27 & March 1):**

**Tuesday: Qualitative Methods III**
(Case Studies, Observation, Participatory Action Research)

*Corresponding Readings: Chapters 7, 15, & 17*

**Thursday: Analytic Methods I: Content Analysis**

*Readings: Chapter 18*

**Labs:** Consultation Meeting 2

*Project Proposal Due*

**Week 8 (March 6 & 8):**

**Tuesday: Analytic Methods II: Discourse Analysis**

*Readings: Chapter 14*

**Thursday: Analytic Methods III: Semiotics and Deconstructive Methods**

*No readings*

**Labs:** Consultation Meeting 3

**Week 9 (March 13 & 15)**

**Tuesday: Contextualizing research I: Theory & Theorizing**

*Readings: Chapter 19*

**Thursday: Contextualizing research II: Literature & The Lit Review (guest lecture-University Librarian)**

*No Readings*

**Labs:** Consultation Meeting 4
### Week 10 (March 20 & 22)

**Tuesday:** Report Writing  
*Readings: Chapter 20*  

**Thursday:** No class scheduled: use this time to work on your final project

**Labs:** Consultation Meeting 5

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### Week 11 (March 27 & 29):

**Tuesday:** Symposium I (poster session)

**Thursday:** Symposium II (poster session)

**Labs:** Project Report—drop in TA support

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### Week 12 (April 3 & 5):

**Tuesday:** No Class scheduled.  
Use this time to complete your report. TAs will be available during class time for advice & support.

**Thursday:** Exam Review!

**Labs:** no labs this week.

*Final reports & peer/self evaluation forms due 4pm (beginning of class) Thursday

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**Additional Resources you May Find Useful:**

This is an excellent (but advanced) text designed specifically for research in environmental studies. It is most appropriate for a senior undergraduate or graduate level course, but you may find parts of it useful now or in the future.


The following are advanced resources that critically address theoretical and methodological questions related to research and are meant to supplement the material from the course text. You might find these helpful in this course or as you develop your research skills in later years.


For an excellent overview of different methods (qualitative and quantitative) and techniques used in human geography:


For a focused discussion of theory and methodology (theories of research) in relation to research techniques and design:


Course/ Department/ University policies

Note Taking: Students are responsible for taking their own notes during lectures. Materials, such as powerpoint slides, provided on courselink are incomplete and are not intended to replace student notes. I will not provide lecture material for missed lectures. Please coordinate with other students if you need notes for missed classes – a discussion board will be available on Courserlink to facilitate student communication.

Communication: As per university regulations, all students are required to check their uoguelph e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students. Please also check Courserlink regularly; important information will be made available here. For any questions related to course content or requirements, please use the discussion boards on Courserlink. For any individual/confidential concerns, please email your TA. If your TA cannot help you they will direct you to the instructor. I will respond to emails sent on weekdays within 24 hours; emails sent after 4pm Friday will be responded to on Monday. You are also welcome (and encouraged!) to visit the instructor during her office hours or to make an individual appointment with your TA.

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 your TA in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the undergraduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration

Late Policy: late assignments will lose 5% per day they are late including weekends.
In Lab consultations: If you miss one of these activities you will receive a mark of zero unless the Instructor excuses you from the activity ahead of time due to extenuating circumstances. Without a valid reason, you will not be provided with an opportunity to make up this grade.

Extensions may be granted in certain circumstances, and will usually require the student to produce valid medical (doctor’s note) or personal (note from Counseling Services) documentation. Late assignments/exams will not be accepted once graded assignments have been returned officially to the class at large unless circumstances permit and alternative arrangements have been made.

Copies of out-of-class assignments: Keep paper and/or reliable electronic back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments (including those submitted on Courselink!): you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility:
The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community’s shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. For more information, contact CSD at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or refer to the CSD website.

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

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.
**Recording of Materials:** Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

**Drop Date:** The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty, is March 9. For [regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses](#).