Syllabus
Seminar in Geographic Thought and Inquiry
Geography 6961, Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Phil Dennison
E-mail: dennison@geog.utah.edu
Office Hours: Mon 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, Wed 11:40 PM-12:40 PM, or by appointment
Office: Building 73, Room 215

Class Time and Location: Wednesdays, 8:35am-11:35am, Building 73, Room 111

Course Description
Success in an academic graduate program is largely based on your ability to carry out original research. Developing your research abilities gives you a chance to move beyond classroom learning, but it can be a daunting experience. This course has two objectives: 1) Expose students to the breadth and depth of research within the Department of Geography through faculty presentations and discussion with faculty; 2) Provide critical research skills needed to complete a graduate degree. This is a discussion-based course, and through interactions with other students and faculty you will gain a better understanding of how to effectively create and communicate research within your field.

Learning Outcomes
• Understand the research process
• Be able to formulate your own research ideas
• Understand how to communicate your research to others through presentations and a literature review
• Become acquainted with Department of Geography faculty and learn about their areas of research

Canvas
Required readings will be made available on Canvas (http://utah.instructure.com). When appropriate, students will be directed to turn in assignments using Canvas. Chapters of a book, Geography, History and Concepts: A Student’s Guide (4th edition) by Arild Holt-Jensen will be assigned. The instructor will have two copies of the book available for use by the class.

Assignments
Weekly assignments are listed in the course schedule. Some assignments involve specific deliverables (e.g. a presentation), while other assignments involve preparation for class discussions. All assignments are to be completed or prepared for by the beginning of each class meeting. For presentations, students will be required to submit their electronic media to Canvas by 8 AM the morning of class. Presentation time limits will be strictly enforced.

Participation
The instructor will be evaluating student contributions to class discussions. Preparation for discussions as indicated on the syllabus is strongly recommended. The following scale will be used to evaluate participation in each class:

3 Active participation, contributed insightful comments or questions to discussion, came to class prepared to participate
2 Moderate participation, made some contributions to discussion, may have come to class underprepared
1. Poor participation, made very minor contributions to discussion and/or came to class unprepared

0. No participation, did not contribute to discussion

**Final Presentation**
The final presentation is intended to help you establish historical and present-day context within your research field. All students will give an in-class presentation less than 10 minutes in length. All final presentation work must be done individually. Presentations should cover the following material:

1. The historical researchers who have had the largest impact on your field, and their contributions
2. Three major advances in scientific understanding within your field (can overlap with 1)
3. Three present day researchers who are having an important impact on your field, and their contributions
4. Three “big picture” research questions that capture the future direction of your field
5. Three potential research questions for a thesis or dissertation in your area of research interest.
6. Any background necessary for non-experts (i.e. the rest of the class) to understand 1-5.

**Literature Review**
The literature review is intended to help you start the process of becoming an expert in your field and improve your ability to synthesize findings from the research literature. All literature review work must be done individually. Your literature review should total at least 2000 words (a 500 word introduction plus a 1500 word review), not including references. A references section must be provided. Your initial literature review will be due mid-way through the semester. A review of your initial review will first be conducted by your peers, and then by the instructor. Your final literature review is due at the end of the semester. All literature reviews will be checked for plagiarism.

Your final literature review will be provided to your prospective advisor, along with an evaluation of your writing and research skills as demonstrated by your literature review.

**Evaluation**
The following weights will be assigned to labs and exams to determine grades for the course:

- Assignments: 45%
- Participation: 15%
- Final Presentation: 15%
- Initial Literature Review: 10%
- Final Literature Review: 15%

**Plagiarism Policy**
Students are expected to do individual work except where group collaboration is specifically encouraged by the instructor. Work by others included in assignments should be cited. Coursework that is partially or wholly plagiarized will be assigned a zero grade. Plagiarism is defined in the section below.

**Academic Misconduct Statement and Definitions**
Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Penalties may include failure of an assignment, the entire course, and/or the filing of formal charges with appropriate university authorities. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, and plagiarism:
- Cheating involves the unauthorized possession or use of information in an academic exercise, including unauthorized communication with another person during an exercise such as an examination.
- Misrepresenting one’s work includes, but is not limited to, representing material prepared by another as one’s own work or submitting the same work in more than one course without prior permission of all instructors.
- Plagiarism means the intentional unacknowledged use or incorporation of any other person’s work in one’s own work offered for academic consideration or public presentation.

**Disabilities Statement**
The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**Class Schedule**
The following table provides the schedule for the class. Department professors will be giving presentations on their research in most weeks. The professor giving the presentation each week is in *italics*.

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<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discussion Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>Introduction, transitions</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td><em>Faculty 1</em></td>
<td>Read <a href="http://jameshaytonphd.com/how-to-choose-a-thesis-topic/">http://jameshaytonphd.com/how-to-choose-a-thesis-topic/</a> 1) Come prepared to discuss your area of research interest 2) Come prepared to discuss questions for faculty presentations. Your questions will be given to faculty beforehand, so they can be prepared to answer your questions. Example question: What types of data analysis are used in your field?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sep  7</td>
<td>History of Geography</td>
<td>Come prepared to present and discuss an assigned chapter from Holt-Jensen <em>Geography History and Concepts</em> (last name A-C Ch 1, D-N Ch 2, O-Z Ch 3)</td>
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| 4  | Sep 14 | Campus library resources & Reference searches | None  
Meet in Computer Lab AEB 330                      |
<p>| 5  | Sep 21 | <em>Faculty 2</em> Journal articles      | 1) Turn in a 2 page report describing a) the key search terms important in your field of research; b) the most cited papers in your field of research. Make sure you define the field covered in the report, describe the process by which you searched, and describe the journals that provided the most consistently pertinent papers. The references section must be formatted using EndNote or similar reference software, using the style for the journal <em>Professional Geographer</em>. 2) Come prepared to discuss which journals in your field of research are top tier, which are lower tier, and why. Consultation with faculty recommended. 3) Read a journal article before class. Note the structure of the article, which papers are cited by the article, and how they are cited. |
| 6  | Sep 28 | <em>Faculty 3</em> Literature reviews    | Read the two assigned example literature reviews. Come prepared to discuss the example literature reviews in class. |
| 7  | Oct  5 | <em>Faculty 4</em> Data                 | Bring a representative journal article from your field to class. Come prepared to present on the data that were used in the article. |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 1</td>
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<td>Fall Break (No Class)</td>
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<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Faculty 5</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Faculty 6</td>
<td>Initial literature review due</td>
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<td>Methods</td>
<td>Bring a representative journal article from your field. Come prepared to present the analysis methodology used in the article.</td>
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<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Faculty 7</td>
<td>Review peer literature review assigned by instructor and return feedback</td>
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<td>Visualization</td>
<td>Bring two examples of visualizations from journal articles in your field. Be prepared to present and explain the visualizations to the class.</td>
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<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Faculty 8</td>
<td>Submit revised initial literature review to instructor for evaluation</td>
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<td>Professional presentations</td>
<td>Interview another grad student about a professional presentation they gave. Find out what worked and what didn’t. Be prepared to discuss what you learned from your interview.</td>
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| Nov 12     | Conferences Thesis/dissertation proposals | 1) Come prepared to discuss conferences in your field. Which conferences are important? What are the audiences for different conferences, and how are they different? Consultation with faculty recommended.  
2) Read Graduate Handbook proposal requirements, assigned student proposal(s). |
| Nov 13     | No Class    | Work on final project presentation and/or literature review           |
| Nov 14     | Faculty 9   | Read Graduate Handbook thesis and dissertation requirements            |
|            | Theses and dissertations | Come prepared to discuss advisor expectations for a thesis/dissertation. Consultation with faculty required. |
| Nov 15     | Faculty 10  | Final literature review due                                            |
|            | Thesis and dissertation committees | Bring a list of potential committee members, and be prepared to discuss why you think each committee member is a potential fit |
| Finals Week (date and time TBD) | Final presentations | Final presentations due |