Fall and Spring Graduate Geography Seminars

The following graduate-level seminars in geography will be offered during the 2017–18 academic year. Additional information will be added as it becomes available.

Fall 2017

**GEOG 520: Seminar in Human Geography: Cities, Protest, and the Age of Crisis**

*Section 001*

Instructor: Melissa Wright

[Download flyer](#)

Class number: 26031

Meeting Time: Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m.-noon

Prerequisites: None

Description: Over the last three centuries, an “urban revolution” has transformed the planet in social, economic and cultural terms, and much of this process has taken place in the global south since the 20th century. The process of urbanization is intimately tied to processes of capital accumulation, community formation and social resistance. This course investigates the intersection of these processes in relation to the concept of crisis that accompanies the contemporary neoliberal era. Central to the course will be the exploration of geographic scholarship in critical urban, feminist and race studies. Included will be discussions of rights to the city; feminist and Marxist analyses of space and social reproduction; studies on racism, incarceration, urban ecologies and urban resistance. Examples for discussion will draw from an international context.

**GEOG 520 Seminar in Human Geography: Economic Geography for Everyone**

*Section 002*

Instructor: Christopher Fowler

Class number: 28340

Meeting Time: Mondays, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Prerequisites: None

Description: Economic concepts are crucial to understanding processes as local as individual livelihoods and as broad as globalization. Economic principles guide policy on everything from health services and housing to crop rotation and foreign aid. Most geographers will be aware of tensions among neoclassical economics, Marxist political economy, and feminist and poststructuralist critiques of both, but the details of these framings and their contradictions are buried in texts that are often cited but not always read. Moreover, much of the writing in this area can be tough going with vast areas of assumed knowledge that can discourage students from beginning the project of wrestling with economic ideas.

This seminar offers a curated introduction to key writings in economics, political economy, and economic geography intended to give a solid foundation in ideas about the economy for those whose primary focus is not economics. Readings will be set, to some degree by the interests of enrolled students, but will include works by key authors from each of the traditions referenced above including (in alphabetical order): Gibson-Graham, Harvey, Kahneman, Krugman, Marx, Ostrom, Polanyi, Smith (Adam and Neil), and Stiglitz. Topical areas for consideration will include: Development, Financialization, Gender, Globalization, Macro- and Micro-Economics, Money, and Urban Economics.

**GEOG 560 Geovisual Analytics**

Instructor: Anthony Robinson

Class number: 8728

Meeting time: Thursdays, 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Prerequisites: None

Description: Geovisual Analytics is the emerging science of analytical reasoning supported by interactive geographic visualization systems. New spatio-temporal data sources and a corresponding desire to support decisions to solve complex real-world problems
are driving the development of new geovisual analytics systems. The development of these systems requires significant advances in new cartographic techniques, technology platforms, and analytical methods, as well as a deep engagement with understanding users, their needs, and their capabilities. This course focuses on the range of research challenges associated with designing, developing, and evaluating Geovisual Analytics systems. Engagement with the core and contemporary literature in Geovisual Analytics will be complemented by hands-on exercises and a collaborative term project which will focus on emerging application domains.

---

**Spring 2018**

**GEOG 508/WMNST 508 Feminist Methodologies**
Instructor: Lorraine Dowler  
Prerequisites: None  
Course description: The objective of this course is to examine feminist critiques of traditional research design through the animated and contentious debates among feminist scholars about what constitutes a feminist method. Although there is no single feminist method, this diverse academic community is searching for techniques consistent with their convictions as feminists. For this reason, the course will distinguish between methods, as tools for research, and methodology, as theory about the research process. The course reviews methods such as ethnography, interviewing, oral history, field work, discourse analysis, visual analysis, and mixed method approaches.

The methodologies explored in this course are focused on destabilizing the power relationships between the researcher and those researched: the academy and the field and promote a research process, which is fluid and is not bounded by locations such as the developed versus the developing worlds. For this reason, we will explore methodological frameworks that help understand the intersectional power dynamics of gender, race, sexuality, class, location, etc.

**GEOG 510 Foundations of Landscape Ecology**
[Download flyer](#)
Instructor: Erica Smithwick  
Prerequisites: None  
Course description: As a discipline, landscape ecology can bridge several areas of study, including geography, ecosystem ecology and management, spatial analysis and modeling, and conservation management. Its potential utility is rooted in a focus on understanding the causes and consequences of spatial pattern at multiple scales, and metrics and models of landscape pattern and process are now broadly applied. However, to fully understand how and why such broad concepts as “pattern” and “scale” have become so prominent in contemporary understandings of landscape dynamics, it is necessary to explore the antecedents of the discipline. In this course, we will read early papers by geographers and ecologists (e.g., Berg, Sauer, Watt, Levin, Paine, Bormann), explore foundation papers in the discipline (e.g., Forman, Risser, Turner, Legendre), and focus on key papers that ground contemporary applications in the area of, for example, network connectivity, disturbance ecology, and agricultural ecology (e.g., Peterjohn, Naiman, Costanza, Urban, McRae). By linking the key papers of yesterday with the emerging papers of today, this course will provide students: (1) a central understanding of what landscape ecology was and is (and what it’s not) (2) a framework for understanding how the tools of landscape ecology can inform individual research projects, and (3) a forum for discussing new frontiers in research in the area of landscape ecology and management.

**GEOG 520 Seminar in Human Geography: Race, Space and Power in the Age of Ferguson**
Section 001  
Instructor: Joshua Inwood  
Meeting Time: Thursdays noon-3:00 p.m.  
Prerequisites: None  
Description: Despite decades of scientific research and policy action aimed at managing water resources equitably and sustainably, it remains that the world’s water resources continue to be severely polluted, pose grave hazards to lives and infrastructure, and be obstinately unevenly distributed in space and time. Moreover, an estimated four billion people experience severe water scarcity for at least one month every year. Although such challenges have long been approached with technical expertise (e.g. hydro-engineering, economic models), this course examines the social and political dynamics that underpin these problems. This seminar examines key concepts, major approaches, and current debates regarding water governance in various regions of the world. Course topics include the privatization of water, water as a human right, and human vulnerability to water hazards. In viewing water provision and management as not solely a technical concern but as inherently political, the course seeks
to provide a set of analytical tools that is both critical and constructive.

**GEOG 597  BIG DATA & PLACE: Putting Big Data in its Place and Place in its Big Data**

*Download flyer* [6]

Instructor: Alan MacEachren

Prerequisites: None

Description: A tension exists in the discipline of Geography between the concepts of space and place. Most research and development in Geographical Information Science (GIScience) has been focused on the former, through methods to formally structure data about the world and to systematically model and analyze aspects of the world as represented through those structured data. People, however, live and behave in socially constructed places and what they care about happens in those places rather than in some abstract, modeled space. Study of place, by human geographers (and other social scientists and humanist scholars), typically using qualitative methods and seldom relying on digital data, has proceeded largely independently of GIScience research focused on space. There have been recent calls within GIScience to formalize place to enable application of Geographical Information Systems methods to place-based problems, but progress has been rudimentary and incremental.

An opportunity exists, through big data and related technologies that leverage it, to address the nearly infinite complexity of place and its multifaceted connectedness. In this seminar, we will leverage thinking from social sciences and humanities related to understanding place as a complex and dynamic concept/phenomenon as well as that from GIScience, Data Science, and Visual Analytics focused on leveraging place-based big data to understand the world. More specifically, the seminar will address two core topics: (1) what are the implications of Big Data for creation of and behavior in places? (2) what are the application of Big Data for understanding and making decisions about places?

For information about each seminar, contact the instructor as noted above.

For general information about enrollment, contact Denise Kloehr [7]

**Source URL:** http://www.geog.psu.edu/news/events/fall-and-spring-graduate-geography-seminars

**Links**

[7] mailto:dak28@psu.edu