

	Research Design and History of Geographic Thought Geography 501, Fall 2019 Dr. Christopher Brown
Course Location:	Breland Hall 194
Meeting Time:	Tuesday, 1:30-4:00 PM (13:30 to 16:00)
Instructor:	Dr. Christopher Brown
Office:	Breland Hall, Room 149
Office Telephone:	505-646-1892
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Office Hours:	Monday, 11:00am -12:30 pm, Tuesday – 4:00-5:00 pm; Thursday, – 1:15-3:15 pm, & by appointment.

Required readings: In the past, I have had difficulty finding a textbook that works for the class. Many of the texts available have a very heavy focus on post-modernism and deconstructionist approaches to geography. Although this is a part of modern geographic thought, this strong focus on these areas of our discipline misses the mark on giving students a background in more applied areas, the focus of our program. Accordingly, readings will be an “online reader,” with relevant articles posted to Canvas in a manner that tracks well with the course schedule and outline.

I have also pulled together a few support materials that will help students write a solid research proposal, an important outcome of the class. The first of these, *The Elements of Style*, is a style manual that I suggest all students purchase, consult, and keep in their library for the future (any edition will do). The second is a book that helps students in proposal development. I have placed the Punch book on reserve in Zuhl Library, and students may also purchase this from the NMSU Barnes and Noble Bookstore or an online.

- Strunk, W. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Longman Publishers. (Any edition will do).
- Punch, K.F. *Developing Effective Research Proposals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (Any edition will do).

Related course materials: Throughout the course of the term, students will be doing a good deal of independent Library research to support the development of a topic paper, a formal literature review, a problem statement and methods section of a thesis or dissertation, and yes, the thesis or dissertation proposal, one of the reasons you are taking this class! More details will follow in separate handouts.

Course Objectives - There are three primary learning objectives for the course. At the end of the class, you will be able to

- demonstrate your knowledge about the history of geographic thought, the manner by which the discipline of Geography developed, and various approaches to research and the type of science they support;
- demonstrate your ability to develop and clarify research questions in the discipline of geography, questions with a spatial dimension, or questions in both areas; and
- develop a thesis/dissertation topic and complete a draft of a related thesis or dissertation proposal.

The former of these objectives helps us build the theoretical foundation on which we do contemporary geographic research. A good part of this exercise is to help students realize that “geography is more than GIS or tree ring analysis.” The latter of these objectives help students develop the skills, perspective, and good research habits needed to write and implement a research proposal. This in turn requires students to know how to articulate research questions that can be asked and answered, gather and analyze spatial data, and write up the results of the work you will do in your graduate program. To accomplish the course goals, you will read a range of published works in the areas of geography and geographic research, and also research in your area of interest. You will also write a series of documents that build on each other and culminate in a successful research proposal.

Canvas and Web Support for this class - This class is offered as a "Web-supported" class, which means that we meet "live and in color" as in a traditional class every Tuesday afternoon, but assignments, readings, and other helpful material will be provided via Canvas, NMSU's learning management system (learn.nmsu.edu). The Canvas page for this class contains all materials and assignments for the class, and the Graduate Handbook we will discuss in class. Most students at NMSU have had experience with Canvas, and new comers to this should have no problem picking this up. NMSU also provides extensive online support.

NOTE: Although I DO use the “Announcements” tool in Canvas as a means to post news blasts to students, I take email at my campus email address, brownchr@nmsu.edu. Please use my NMSU email address if you want to contact me. **Also, if you take your mail at a non-NMSU email address, NMSU policy requires that email sent to your NMSU email address is forwarded to this off-campus address.**

Course format - The class is predominantly designed in a seminar/discussion format, although I will also share some of the research basics we explore in a more traditional lecture mode early in the term. As noted above, a good portion of class activities will be focused on reading the basics of geographic thought and theory, and research articles in your area of interest, and then discussing these readings as a means of “getting the message” about how spatial science is conducted. Students will then write, discuss, and rewrite documents, including a topic paper, a formal literature review, a problem statement, and a methods section of a thesis/dissertation proposal, all of which build to the overall research proposal that is the end goal of the class.

Grading and Evaluation - Due to the nature of the class, there are no exams. WHOOOHOOOO! Students are required to attend class, participate in class discussions, do the required readings, and write the papers that drive the development of the proposal. All written assignments must be word-processed or similarly computer-generated and **handed in on time** using the Assignment Tool in Canvas. I will then grade via Speedgrader so the assignment and my marks are all archived and available for review if needed. Course work turned in late for reasons other than excused absences will be **grudgingly** accepted; however, 10% of the full credit will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. The final grade for the class will be determined according to a “90/80/70/60” evaluation of work completed, subject to the weighting below:

Activity	Value
Topic paper and presentation	10%
Field trip presentation on select thesis	10%
Thesis critique (presentation)	10%
Literature review (paper and presentation)	10%
Problem Statement & Methods (paper and presentation)	10%
Thesis proposal, including final written paper and in class oral presentation	30%
Class participation (oral presentations in class and field trip)	20%

NOTE -NMSU uses a differential or fractional grading system, whereby “+/-” grades earn more or less GPA points than a straight grade of A/B/C/D earned in the past. The following link provides detail on how this grading system generates the GPA points students will receive for the grade they earn in class (please note that I **DO** use “+/-” grades):

- <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/#newitemtext>

NOTE ON WITHDRAWALS AND INCOMPLETES - Withdrawals from this course are students' responsibility, and I will not withdraw or drop students from this class **under any circumstances**. If circumstances arise that prevent your continued participation in class, you must take steps to drop the class. Incomplete grades will not be given except in the case of extraordinary circumstances related to serious illness, bereavement, or personal crises. The granting of an "Incomplete" grade will be solely at my discretion, and documentation will be required in these limited cases.

Academic Integrity - As stated in the NMSU Student Code of Conduct (ARP, 5.10), "NMSU students are expected to maintain high academic, ethical, and professional standards of conduct, which requires honesty in all academic matters." I expect all work submitted in this class to represent each student's own individual efforts, and any student found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will be subject to the strictest disciplinary action, including issuance of a failing grade. Please note, NMSU has purchased "[Turnitin](#)," a plagiarism detection tool, and I will deploy this as needs arise. As stated by the NMSU Student Code of Conduct, plagiarism is defined as follows:

“Plagiarism is the use of another person’s work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one’s own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other source must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. The prohibition of plagiarism applies irrespective of the origin of the material, including the Internet, another person’s work, unpublished materials, or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct.” (NMSU Student Code of Conduct 2019).

Please note – direct quotes must be set within quotation marks, with page #s noted; direct quotes should also be limited in number.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the honesty or integrity of work being done by you or a classmate, please feel free to talk to me. Further information concerning the University's Code of Conduct can be found at the following URL on the NMSU Webpage:

- <https://arp.nmsu.edu/5-10/>

Further information on plagiarism can also be found at the following NMSU Library website:

- <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>

Students with disabilities and discrimination issues - I subscribe to and fully support university policy on students with disabilities and special needs in meeting class requirements. Students with physical, psychological, or learning disabilities are encouraged to contact the office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS) concerning issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please advise me of this soon. For more information about the programs and services available, including academic accommodations for students with disabilities, contact the office of SAS, at 646-6840, sas@nmsu.edu, or at <http://sas.nmsu.edu/>. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from class in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, please discuss this with me at the earliest opportunity. All information shared with me in this area will be treated confidentially.

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, gender, spousal affiliation, and protected veterans’ status. Furthermore, Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. I fully support and abide by these policies to support a work and study environment free of harassment and discrimination. Please feel free to contact me to discuss any issues or concerns you have in this area. Laura Castille, NMSU’s Director of the Office of Institutional Equity, can also be contacted at 575-646-3635 or castille@nmsu.edu with any questions you may have about NMSU’s Non-Discrimination Policy or concerns you have related to discrimination or harassment.

Policy on attendance and due-dates for assignments ~ Timely attendance in class is required and forms a portion of your grade. Failure to meet course requirements due to illness or other excused reasons will require documentation for alternate arrangements to be made. If you have a scheduling conflict or personal situation that will cause you to arrive late to class or leave early on a regular basis, please show the courtesy to advise me ahead of time. As noted previously, coursework turned in late for reasons other than excused absences will be **grudgingly** accepted; however, 10% of the full credit will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. No make-up arrangements will be made for missed oral presentations unless prior arrangements have been made with me or documentation of an illness is provided.

Seeking help and access to faculty ~ If you feel that you are having difficulty keeping up with class requirements or in completing class assignments, please see me **as soon as possible!** I very much want students to succeed and do well in class, and I am willing to work with you to help meet this goal. Please note the office hours posted at the beginning of the syllabus. If you cannot make these office hours, please contact me via EMAIL or phone to make an appointment. If you need assistance, track me down, and I will find time to help you.

The “flow of the class” - At various class meetings, you will be asked to share with your peers and me a verbal update on your progress in finding and developing your research topic. You will probably change or refine your topic several times – this is normal. As noted in Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (1997, p. 995)¹, the definition of research includes, “revision of accepted theories or laws in light of new facts or the practical application of new or revised theories or laws.” **Put simply.....to search, refine, and search again!** NOTE – Please remind me to tell you the “Henry Kissinger dissertation story,” ok? However, to gain the most benefit from this class and increase the likelihood that you will develop a workable research proposal by the end of the class, you should develop your topic for the class as soon as possible. Ideally, the topic you choose in this class will become your thesis or dissertation topic. That said, the process is of considerable value no matter how “final” the topic and proposal you develop end up being.

The final word....cell phones - With the widespread use of these devices, etiquette issues arise in class & professional situations. Put simply, I ask that you “watch your ringer.” If you own a cell phone, please turn it off or mute it prior to entering class. Outside of **real emergencies or legitimate work-related obligations**, people should not be taking calls in class. Also, please refrain from texting, checking your EMAIL, Tweeting, Facebooking, Instagramming, or surfing the Web while in class; “you paid your money; enjoy the show!”

¹ Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition, 1997. Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam Webster, Incorporated.

