**Geog696 Directed Graduate Research**

19:00 – 21:45 Th

**Instructor:** Yifei Sun  
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**Office:** Sierra Hall 130E  
**Office Hours:** 14:00 – 15:30, Tuesdays and Thursdays  
**Meeting Room:** Sierra Hall 106

**Textbooks**

- **Required:**

- **Optional:**

**Course Goals and Outcomes**

**Goals**

The major goal of this class is to teach students how to conduct research. Topics covered in this class include selection of researchable topics, search and conduct literature reviews, quantitative and qualitative approaches, data and methodology, and how to set up theses. Students will be guided through the process of research design through lectures, discussion of sample projects, presentations of colleague members, and their own exercises.

**Outcomes**

Students will prepare a research proposal in this class. It is expected that students will be able to initiate their own research project and write a proposal in the future.

**Tentative Class Schedule**

Week 1 (Feb 2)

**Lecture:**

1. Introduction to the course and general discussion of the different approaches to research. (Chapter 1), particularly the quantitative approach.

**Assignments:**

1. Go to the library and quickly go through the titles of the Master Theses by students from this department. Select one that most interests you, check it out and write a review. Pay attention to the length, the organization,
introduction, and particularly the selection and justification of the topic and research questions.
2. Preview Chapters 1 and 2.
3. Think about three potential topics of your interests (These three topics should be significantly different). For each topic, list three major questions that you want to explore. If you have no topics in mind, pick up an major academic geography journal and quickly go through the table of contents and see what articles seem to interest you. Then read the abstract, if possible the introduction to see what questions the author(s) try to examine.

Week 2 (Feb 9)
Lecture:
1. Research topic and literature review (Chapter 2).
2. Discuss with the class the thesis you reviewed.
3. Discuss the articles that you went through their abstracts and the potential topics that you have chosen for this class

Assignments:
1. Continue research on the three topics you have chosen and choose the one of your most interest, and feasible.
2. Use the library search engines to search related articles on the topic from academic journals. Include one recent review article and this review article should summarize the progress and major themes on the topic.
3. Read the review article on your topic and summarize the major themes on the topic and get ready to discuss them in class.
5. Preview Chapter 3. Get ready for discussion in the next meeting.

Due:  Thesis review (10)
Three topics and related research questions of your proposal (10)

Week 3 (Feb 16)
Lecture:
1. Discussion on writing the research proposal (Chapter. 3)
2. Discussion of the review piece on your topic
3. Discussion of the article by Daniel Gade

Assignments:
1. Review two articles of your own topic
2. Read the article by Richard Florida, 2002. “The economic geography of
talent.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 92 (4): 743-
755.
3. Choose a tentative topic and make the justification

**Due:** Review on the review piece (10)  
Reference list (10)

Week 4 (Feb 23)
Lecture:
1. Guest speakers
2. Review the article by Richard Florida
3. Discussion of your research topic.

**Assignments:**
1. Review two journal articles of your own
2. Preview Chapter 4&5
  “Concerns, Attitudes, and Abilities of Early-Career Geography Faculty.”  
4. Prepare your research topic and justification. Get ready for presentation to 
  class about the topic

**Due:** Two article reviews (10)

Week 5 (Mar 2)
Lecture:
1. Guest speakers
2. Discussion on Chapters 4&5
3. Discussion of each individual’s topic
4. Discussion of the article by Solem and Foote

**Assignments:**
1. Review two more articles
2. Choose an advisor and have a discussion with your advisor about your 
  topic and research questions
3. Preview Chapter 5-6: Purpose Statement, Research Questions and 
  Hypotheses
4. Prepare your own Purpose Statement, Research Questions and Hypotheses

**Due:** Two article reviews (10)  
Research topic and justification (10)

Week 6 (Mar 9):
   **No Class, Chicago AAG Annual meeting**

**Assignments:**
1. Review two empirical studies
2. Prepare Purpose Statement, Research Questions/Hypotheses  
3. Draft your literature review

Week 7 (Mar 16):  
Lecture:  
1. Guest speakers  
2. Literature review  
3. Discussion of your purpose Statement, Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

Assignments:  
1. Review two more articles.  
2. Prepare the literature review and be ready to report to the class (with reference to Chapter 2)

Due: Four article reviews (20)  
Topic and Justification, Purpose Statement and Research Questions/Hypotheses (20)

Week 8 (Mar 23)  
Lecture:  
1. Graduate advisor visits, paper works and committee  
2. Data and methodology  
3. Discussion of your literature review

Assignments:  
1. Read Chapters 9-11  
2. Prepare your data and methodology

Due: Literature review (Combined) (10)

Week 9 (Mar 30): No meeting

Assignments: Continuing working on your proposal.

Week 10 (Apr 6)  
Lecture:  
1. Thesis organization  
2. Discussion about your proposal

Assignments: Continue working on your proposal
Week Apr 13: No meeting, Spring Break.

Assignments:
1. Prepare your thesis outline (TOC)
2. Prepare your draft proposal

Week 11 (Apr 20)
Lecture:
1. Discussion about your proposal
2. Discussion about your thesis outline

Due:
1. Thesis outline (10)
2. 1st draft of your proposal

Week 12 (Apr 27): No meeting
Assignments:
1. Revising your proposal
2. Prepare proposal presentation

Week 13 (May 4): No meeting
Assignments:
1. Revise your proposal
2. Prepare proposal presentation

Week 14 (May 11)
Due: Final version of proposal

Presentations

Week 15 (May 17)
Presentations

Grades for the course will be based on class participation (20%), assignments (60%), and presentation and proposal (20%). No incomplete is given for the class, and the student has to complete the research proposal in order to pass the class. Attendance at all class meetings is mandatory.