



THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY

Course Outline

Department of Environment, Culture, and Society
Faculty of Arts

GEOG 4990: 3 Credits
Special Topics: Empowering Geographies (3,0,0)
Winter, 2023

Tuesdays 2:30-3:20 A&E 104 and Thursdays 8:30 – 10:15 OM 2742

Instructor:

Dr. Robin Westland

Contact Information: rwestland@tru.ca

Office Hours: AE125

Online Fridays 12:00 – 1:30*

**Students are welcome to email me to set up alternative meeting times.*

1. Course Description and Importance:

Over the last few decades, critical self-reflection in the field of geography has led to the birth of Indigenous, feminist, black, queer, more-than-human, animal, and other geographies that seek to empower the disempowered, giving voice to that which had been historically silenced. This course will explore these avenues in geography and will provide students in the course the opportunity to direct and adjust the focus of the material.

The second half of the course will be project-based. Students will be engaged in a community-engaged art project with the visual art course ST: 3830 Making Art with Community, or opting to do a different form of project on their own or in groups. For those partnering with the VISA course, students will be going out into the community and engaging, through art, with community organizations dedicated to supporting marginalized groups.

All GEOG 4990 students will be required to prepare a tangible outcome from their chosen project. For this outcome, students are encouraged to use creative means; however, they may

also opt for a standard final paper. Regardless, the outcome of their choosing must be framed within the geographical literature – whether that be through a presentation to the class or within something written and submitted to the professor.

This course is about learning and reflecting on issues of power and how power is reflected in places and spaces. It is about self-reflection and recognizing one's own positionality. It is also about empowering students to direct their learning; as a result, the course begins with a number of unknowns and flexibilities. It will be a process of discovery for us all how it turns out!

2. Course Assessments and Assignments

Assignment	Category	% Grade	Assessed Via	Due Date
Positionality and Reflexivity Reflections	Participation	18%	Submission via Moodle	January 12, 19, 26 and February 2, 9, and March 2 by 11pm
Discussion Prep #1	Assessment	10%	Submission via Moodle	January 25 by 11pm
TCPS2 Completion	Participation	2%	Submission via Moodle	January 30 by 11pm
Discussion Prep #2	Assessment	10%	Submission via Moodle	February 8 by 11pm
Participant Observation Practice	Participation	5%	Submission via Moodle	February 27 by 11pm
Discussion Prep #3	Assessment	10%	Submission via Moodle	March 8 by 11pm
Places, Power, and Reflection Project <i>Parts 1 and 2</i> : Proposal, Participant Observation and Reflection	Assessment	10%	Submission via Moodle	Project proposal due March 6 by 11pm and chosen project place-based participant observations submitted within 24 hours of observation period.
Places, Power, and Reflection Project <i>Parts 3 and 4</i> : Material Outcome, Presentation, and Digital Story	Assessment	35%	Submissions via Moodle and Presentation in Class	Material outcome due March 30, 11pm. Presentations March 30 th in class. Digital story due by April 3, 11pm.

3. Course Timeline

Below is a brief and general timeline for the course.

As this course involves overlapping with another course, student-lead learning, as well as the engagement with community for those who pursue that avenue, timelines are subject to change. A detailed plan for each week will be added to the timeline on Moodle at least one week ahead of time.

Week 1: Introduction to GEOG 4990
Weeks 2-5: Grounding Empowerment in Geographical Theory. Reflecting on Positionality
Weeks 6 and 7: Research Methods, Ethics, and Introduction to the Term Project
Week 8: Mid-Term Break
Weeks 9 and 10: Participant Observation and Community Engagement

Week 11-14: Places, Power, and Reflection Project Preparation, Presentation, and Celebration

4. Textbooks/Readings

The textbook for this course is:

Feminist Geography Unbound: Discomfort, Bodies, and Prefigured Futures, edited by Banu Gökariksel, Michael Hawkins, Christopher Neubert, and Sara Smith. 2021.

This course will also rely on journal articles to supplement the textbook.

5. Grading Method

In this course, students will be assigned numerical grades that correspond to the letter grades, grade points, and definitions as outlined in TRU policy ED 03-5.

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade	Grade Points	Letter Grade Definitions
A+	90–100	4.33	Excellent. Superior performance showing comprehensive, in-depth understanding of subject matter. Demonstrates initiative and fluency of expression.
A	85–89	4.00	
A-	80–84	3.67	
B+	77–79	3.33	Very good. Clearly above average performance with knowledge of principles and facts generally complete and with no serious deficiencies.
B	73–76	3.00	
B-	70–72	2.67	
C+	65–69	2.33	Satisfactory. Basic understanding with knowledge of principles and facts at least adequate to communicate intelligently in the discipline.
C	60–64	2.00	
C-	55–59	1.67	Pass. Some understanding of principles and facts but with definite deficiencies.
D	50–54	1.00	Minimal pass. A passing grade indicating marginal performance. Student not likely to succeed in subsequent courses in the subject.
F	0–49	0.00	Unsatisfactory. Fail. Knowledge of principles and facts is fragmentary.
DNC	Did not complete the course; less than 50% of course work completed or mandatory course component(s) not completed. No official withdrawal.		

6. Late Policy

The late policy for this course is on a case-by-case basis. In general, 2.5% will be lost per day without supporting documentation to justify a late submission.

7. Location and Timing of Final Examinations

There is no final exam for this course.

8. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.

Please see TRU policy BRD-10 for the University policy on accommodations for students with disabilities. All TRU policies can be found here: <https://www.tru.ca/policy/allpolicy.html>

9. Academic Consideration for Students with Extenuating Circumstances

Sometimes, things happen in our lives that are beyond our control. If you need to request academic consideration for this course due to extenuating circumstances, please email the instructor to open that discussion.

Instructor Name: Robin Westland

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