



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY UNDERGRADUATE COURSE GUIDE

This document provides generic information for all undergraduate (100, 200 and 300 level) courses in the Department of Geography. It should be read in consultation with course handouts.

Course Resources

Learn and email

Much information for Geography courses, including handouts and a whole host of useful resources, will be supplied through Learn (learn.canterbury.ac.nz) and email. You should regularly look at the specific course Learn homepage and check your university email. If you have problems with your account or web access, see Paul Bealing, the Department's web administrator. Email paul.bealing@canterbury.ac.nz or phone 3642987 ext 6929.

Learning Skills Centre

If you are at all unsure about your skills of written expression, you should consider enrolling for a writing and study skills course. It is also possible to book an appointment with a tutor from the Learning Skills Centre for targeted help with a specific assignment or thesis chapter (book early as appointment times fill up fast around assignment due dates). Email learningskills@canterbury.ac.nz or, preferably, phone **364 2314** to make an appointment for a consultation between 9 am and 5 pm, or drop in with a quick query between 10 am and 2 pm. Further information is available from the Learning Skills Centre (currently at 77 Clyde Road) or from www.uco.canterbury.ac.nz/lsc/.

Online resource modules

There are a number of online learning resource modules available on the Web. These are available on individual course web pages within Blackboard by clicking on *Common Resources for Geographers* and then the *Online Resource Modules* link. The resources address topics such as essay writing, excel use, referencing and survey design. If you are unsure about, or would like help with study skills, we recommend students consider enrolling at the Learning Skills Centre.

Disabilities and medical conditions

Students with disabilities should speak with someone at Disability Resource Service (currently located in room 317 of the Rutherford Building). Email disabilities@canterbury.ac.nz or telephone (03) 364 2350. Office hours are from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and further information can be found at <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/disability/>. If you have a disability or medical condition that a fieldtrip coordinator should know about, please contact them at least a week prior to any trips offered in your course.

Course feedback

Class representatives

Each course elects a class representative. Class Reps are student representatives who provide an important link between classes and lecturers by acting as a liaison. The class rep is the first point of contact for students to help resolve class issues at a low level, and thereby help to avoid bigger problems later. Class Reps also provide the UCSA with student views and help them keep in touch with pressing student issues and concerns. Class reps are determined on a volunteer basis in the first few weeks of a new course. Nominated reps must sign up with the UCSA (www.ucsa.org.nz/classreps) and undergo a short training course.

Course and teaching surveys

From 2012, all undergraduate courses will be surveyed annually through an online system. In addition, all lecturing staff are expected to have their major teaching contributions surveyed every 3 year period. These teaching surveys are included in the decision making process when a staff member applies for promotion. Many staff also use other methods, such as focus groups and peer observation, to gather information on the quality of their teaching and courses. This information is used to guide developments in the content and teaching of courses in Geography.

Assessment and grading

Grading

A uniform grading scheme is used for courses in Geography:

Grade	GPA (Grade Point Average)	Marks	
A+	9	90-100	Exceptional, superb!
A	8	85-89	Excellent
A-	7	80-84	Very good
B+	6	75-79	Good
B	5	70-74	Competent
B-	4	65-69	OK
C+	3	60-64	Satisfactory
C	2	55-59	Pass
C-	1	50-54	Very marginal pass
D	0	40-49	Fail
E	-1	0-39	Pretty Awful!

A pass is 50 marks and over.

Aegrotats

If you are prevented from sitting an examination or consider that your performance in an examination has been impaired by illness, injury, bereavement or any other critical circumstance, you may apply for aegrotat consideration (see <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/acad/exams/aegrotats.shtml>). An aegrotat may also be granted where a student is prevented from completing any major item or items of work for assessment in a course, or if a student considers that his or her performance in completing any major item or items of work for assessment in a course has been impaired by illness or injury or bereavement or any other critical circumstance.

(For more detailed information on this see p.79-80 in the [general course and examination regulations section](#) of the the university calendar).

Deadlines and extensions

Extensions are not given except in exceptional circumstances, such as serious illness, accident or bereavement. To apply for an extension, you should use the official yellow 'Extension Request' form, available either from level 5 in the Geography Department or [online](#), and take or email this to the relevant course coordinator(s). Only the course coordinator(s) can give extensions.

Late work penalties

For major pieces of coursework (those worth more 10% of the final mark), work handed in late without an approved extension will be subject to the following penalties:

- Up to 1 week late 2 grade penalty (e.g. A to B+)
- More than 1 week late but before coursework handback 4 grade penalty (e.g. A to B)
- After coursework handback 8 grade penalty (e.g. A to D)

It is important to complete all coursework, however late, as it is a requirement to be eligible to pass most courses. Specific details for particular courses are available in the relevant course handouts.

Questions about marks

If you would like further explanation of a mark you have received for a piece of assessment, you should contact the marker in the first instance. If you feel that a piece of your assessment work has not been marked fairly, you should contact the course coordinator. If there are appropriate grounds for doing so, the coordinator can have the assignment reassessed.

Academic Integrity

You are encouraged to discuss your reading, ideas, and assignment plans with others, but you must write up your essays or reports in your own words. The Department's interpretation of what constitutes dishonest practice follows that of the College of Science. It prohibits the following:

1. *Plagiarism*, being the presentation of any material (text, data or figures, on any medium including computer files) from any other source without clear and proper acknowledgment of the source of that material. (Guidelines for appropriate acknowledgement will be provided with assignment handouts). The Department uses the American Psychological Association (APA) system for referencing the work of others. See the [university APA guide](#) for detailed guidance. The [online resources](#) page of the Learning Skills Centre has further relevant information.
2. *Collusion**, being work performed in whole or in part in conjunction with another person or persons, but submitted as if it had been completed by the named author alone (or joint authors if a group item of work).
3. *Copying*, being the use of material (in any medium, including computer files) produced by another person or persons, with or without their knowledge and approval.
4. *Ghost writing*, being the use of another party (with or without any form of payment) to prepare all or part of an item of work submitted for assessment.

* This interpretation of the dishonest practice of collusion is not intended to discourage students from having discussions with each other about how to approach a particular assigned task, or incorporating general ideas coming out of such discussions into their own individual submissions.

Under the University Regulations, evidence of any of the above (or other) forms of dishonest practice by any student(s) represents grounds for disciplinary action and may result in penalties ranging from denial of credit for the item of work in question to exclusion from the University. Under these circumstances, students have the right to appeal to the Head of Department.

Turnitin

Many Geography courses now require you to submit your work online through Learn and to make use of the Turnitin software (www.turnitin.com) as part of this process. You will be able to see on LEARN if your course is registered for Turnitin. The Turnitin software is able to identify sections of written work which are copied, or closely paraphrased, from other sources without [appropriate acknowledgement](#). It enables personal review of your work in these respects before final submission, so that any issues can be addressed. In this way, Turnitin is able to support the development of good referencing practice.

Concerns and complaints

If you have a general concern or complaint relating to a course in Geography, the University encourages students to follow an [informal resolution process](#). In the first instance, this means you should attempt to resolve the issue through discussion with your lecturer (possibly via the class representative) or the Course Coordinator (if this is a different person than the lecturer). If these discussions do not resolve the issue, you are then advised to contact the Head of Department, whose details are listed on the [Geography website](#). If after presenting your concerns to a member of staff and the Head of Department, the issue remains unresolved, this is when you can talk to the [University Grievance Advisor](#). The University Grievance Advisor will advise on options available to you to address your concerns at that point.

Computer access

Geography has purpose built computer laboratories on the 6th floor of the department for

research and teaching purposes: a research lab, unix lab and a teaching lab. These are prioritised for GIS teaching and research, and are often booked for class use. There is also a significant number of general access [computer laboratories across campus](#) and wireless networking is available in many locations.

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