

## **So you think you want to do a 4900.....**

### **Who?**

Any 4<sup>th</sup> year Geography Honours student – Specialization or Double Major

### **What?**

An independent (but supervised) research project done over two terms and culminating in a written thesis. It includes a review of relevant background literature, compilation / collection of primary or secondary data or information, analysis and interpretation of results *i.e.* more than an extended essay or literature review.

Written theses are typically 40-60 pages long.

= 1.5 credits

### **Why?**

Are you:

- Looking for some hands on experience with data collection and analysis
- Interested in applying your course knowledge and skills to a larger, in-depth project or practical problem
- Looking for something more challenging than prescribed course or lab essays and projects to follow your own interest
- Tired of sitting through lectures and seminars
- Really interested in a particular research issue or case study
- Thinking of applying for grad school but not sure if research is for you
- Good at (or wanting experience) managing time to complete a long-term project
- Self-motivated with good initiative to follow through on your own

### **How?**

**Most important....you must have a supervisor.**

Any full time member of Geography faculty can supervise 4900 thesis projects.

With your supervisor you develop the topic and project and do all of the data collection, analysis and write up. Your success may depend a lot on your choice of supervisor (see below).

### **When?**

- See time line below
- Start thinking and doing now
- You must have a preliminary supervisor and topic before the end of April and confirm this at the beginning of September.
- Completed theses are handed in for marking in the middle of March 2012.
- It is well worth getting something done over the summer if possible.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task</b>
<b>Third Year:</b> February-March	Conduct a literature search on perspective topic(s) and then discuss them with potential supervisor(s).
March-April	Finalize a topic with a supervisor. Discuss the research problem, develop an initial outline and your plans to collect and analyze data.
Summer between third and fourth year	Register for GEO 4900/01E. Read relevant literature. Ideally use the summer to do at least some of your data gathering and background reading.
<b>Fourth year:</b> September	Continue or complete all data gathering. Continue background literature searching and reading.
October-November	Complete data analysis. Develop final thesis writing outline.
December	Begin draft major thesis chapters.
January-February	Focus on writing and revising the body of the thesis and getting feedback from your Supervisor. Preparation of graphics and references.
March	Final editing, proofreading. Submission.
April	Do thesis corrections suggested by examiners. Hand in final copy for course completion and binding

### **Finding a supervisor and topic:**

Which courses and subjects have interested you most?

Are there Professors you know (like?!) better than others?

Have you talked to TAs and grad students about their research topics and Supervisors?

Look on the Department website – who has projects and grad students doing things that look interesting

Do Professors have funded research projects and are interested in having undergraduate students involved

Are Professors hiring undergraduate research assistants or work study students – these can be good vehicles for learning and for getting ideas and data

### **Some questions to ask potential supervisors;**

- Are you interested in supervising 4900 theses?
- Are you interested in supervising *me*?
- What are your current research interests and projects?
- Are there research assistant opportunities?
- What kind of supervision can I expect?
- How can I cover any direct costs of my research?
- Will you supervise this project that I'm thinking of or can you suggest something similar?

**Be prepared** to say something about your background, courses, grades, work experience, skills (specific and generic) possible topics for a thesis, examples of work and academic experience related to aspects of thesis research.