

GEOG 3416f – Urban Culture of Public Spaces: Course Outline: Section 001 – Fall 2023

This course is taught in person unless circumstances necessitate going on-line. All students must mask in class. Those who are unable or unwilling to do so can view the lecture synchronously via Zoom.

Students must complete and submit to the department both an *'Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risk'*, and an *'Emergency Information'* form, provided at the end of this syllabus.

1. Course Information

1.1. Important Dates

Classes Start	Fall Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 7	Oct 30- Nov 5	December 8	December 9	December 10-22

September 15, 2023: Last day to add a first-term half course

October 9, 2023: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 13, 2023: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

1.2. Contact Information:

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Hopkins

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 3:00 -4:00 via email, phone or Zoom

Email: jhopkins@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: Anthony Sangmen

Office Hours: Email as needed unless specified otherwise.

Email: asangmen@uwo.ca

2. Calendar Description

2.1. Course Description

Geographic investigation of urban culture focusing on the human behaviour/built environment relationship. The effects of urban lifestyles on the urban environment and the effects of urban lifestyles are systematically investigated: concepts, theories, and field methodologies applied in urban settings

2 lecture hours, 2 take-home tutorial hours, 0.5 course

Prerequisite(s): Two full courses in Geography and third- or fourth-year status at the University. Third- or fourth-year status.

Prerequisite checking and registration are the student's responsibility

2.2. Senate Regulations

Senate Regulations state, "unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to

your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

3. Course Introduction

“We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.” - Winston Churchill

At the human scale of ‘everyday geographies’ is there any human creation more complex than the urban environment? Cities are a seemingly eclectic mixture of coffee shops and public parks, skyscrapers and shopping malls, automobiles and private houses, pedestrians and cyclists, hospitals, parents, children, senior citizens, various ethnic identities and so on. What sense can we make of a setting as diverse and seemingly chaotic as the people who are its occupants? Does chaos rule the urban environs, or are there patterns and structures to its built forms and the behaviours of its inhabitants? How might we systematically study the city and city-dwellers? Using the everyday, observable evidence in the public places that surround us here in London, Ontario—as well as a variety of readings, lectures, discussions, video bytes and films—we will attempt to answer these and other questions about the human-urban environment relationship. In this course we examine ‘*urban culture*’ and the processes that create, recreate, challenge and modify its constitution at the scale of the everyday, lived world in the shared public spaces of cities: those spaces widely accessible and used by the urban inhabitants .

‘Urban culture’ may be loosely defined—and arguably so—as *the ongoing outcome of our organized activities that create a built environment high in material and human densities, diversities, and complexities*. As you will see, this working definition is far from complete. On a global scale, the urban setting has become the most dominant form of human habitat—over half of the world’s eight+ billion people are urbanites. On a human scale, it is the environment most of us—certainly all of us in this course—experience everyday as we go about living our lives. Where we live affects how we live and who we are. The urban environment is part of the set of processes that shape our experiences, and in turn our beliefs, attitudes and values: it both constrains and enables us. We, in turn, shape the urban environment. This ongoing dynamic—one that commences with individual actions at the local level—is the process that sustains, modifies and challenges that aspect of the human-urban environment relationship we conceptualize as ‘*urban culture*’.

4. Textbook, Lab Assignments and Additional Course Materials

Mandatory course textbook:

Clay, Grady (1980) *Close Up: How to Read the American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago. (Book store: \$49, plus tax). ISBN: 9780226109459. It may be available online new or used, as well.

Lab Manual: The lab exercises are available to download as a single document, ‘**Lab Exercises**’, in the Resources folder of the course OWL site. Please do so prior to the first lab assignment.

Additional Readings: Additional readings that compliment and inform both the lecture and labs are assigned weekly. These are available in the Resources folder of the course OWL site by lecture number and date of lecture (E.g., **Lecture #1 Readings Sept 13**).

Optional Readings: Included in the lecture reading list below are 'optional' readings. Should you find a particular topic interesting, or want to explore more materials for you essay, these works should prove useful. You will need to retrieve these works yourself, be it online or in Weldon Library.

You should be prepared to discuss these readings in the class immediately following the one in which they were assigned.

Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox are the preferred browsers to optimally use OWL; update your browsers frequently. Students interested in evaluating their internet speed, please click [here](#). [Using the right browser is important, especially when using different features integrated with OWL]

If students need assistance, they can seek support on the [OWL Help page](#). Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#). They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

5. Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

5.1. Course Objectives

This course has three primary aims: 1) to explain and critique urban culture theoretically, conceptually and experientially 2) by way of systematically observing, recording, evaluating and writing about the built environment and human behaviour toward 3) recognizing the ways the built environment impacts behavior, how behaviour impacts the environment we build, and how we might improve our urban public places and the social relations of their users. The material covered is intended to increase your knowledge of the human-urban environment relationship, challenge your existing views about urban life, and encourage you to develop your own thoughts about urban culture. The fieldwork, conducted through lab assignments, will introduce you to and develop your observation skills, and promote your abilities to synthesize concepts and theory with 'real-world' observations and personal experiences of public places. In effect, this course is premised on the idea of the 'inverted classroom' and 'experiential learning': what you learn outside the classroom you critically reflect upon, and then bring those insights to share with your peers in class. The class discussions and written assignments in this essay-designated course will exercise, strengthen and test your critical thinking and communication skills. The final examination will evaluate your comprehension of the course material (*lectures, readings, labs, class discussions, videos and films*) and provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to think critically and independently about urban culture and the construction of successful public places.

In keeping with the *Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations* of our programs, this course promotes several of these objectives to varying extents:

- i. Demonstrate informed awareness of geographical diversity through knowledge of different places and understanding of the processes that shape them spatially and over.

- time.
- ii. Demonstrate informed awareness of geographical diversity through knowledge of different places and understanding of the processes that shape them spatially and over time.
- iii. Combine breadth of knowledge of Geography with understanding of selected sub-fields (*i.e., Cultural, Economic, Political, Social Geographies*).
- iv. Synthesize and evaluate geographical information from diverse sources.
- v. Collect, analyze and interpret geographical data in relation to social systems.
- vi. Analyze real-world problems and policy applications using geographical concepts, skills and understanding.
- vii. Communicate geographic ideas and understanding effectively to a variety of audiences in writing, orally, and graphically.

Among the generic skills practiced and enhanced are as follows:

- i. Spatial thinking, spatial analysis and spatial processes of human interactions (*e.g. cultural, social, political, economic, scientific*).
- ii. Literature and secondary data sources; information search and retrieval, meta-analysis of published data, synthesis of information sources and literature, annotated bibliographies.
- iii. Critical and reflective reading, listening, thinking.
- iv. Writing education and practice in writing essays.
- v. Oral communication: structured class discussions (seminars, small-group interaction, debates).
- vi. Project planning, management and design: time management, independent major research project.
- vii. Interpersonal skills: leadership, team facilitation.

5.2. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, should be able to better observe first-hand and critique the human-urban environment relationship at the level of everyday geographies of urban public places and express your opinions and positions concerning urban life in a more knowledgeable and theoretically grounded fashion. These skills are directly transferable to 'real world' issues of urban design and social interaction in public places; matters of importance to business, government, households and private citizens alike. This course just may help you to identify the elements of urban design and public life that you prefer and why. We all live, work and play somewhere: why not be well-informed and critically astute when making personal decisions about where to do so?

More specifically, the students should leave the course with the following:

- 1) Be more mindful of their own human-environment relationship and its role creating and sustain successful public places.
- 2) Appreciate the primacy of their own agency in that relationship.
- 3) To understand and appreciate the larger economic, political, social, psychological and geographical processes giving rise to public places and the vital role they play in urban life.

6. Course Format, Content, Lecture and Lab Schedules

6.1. Format

The course format will be a mixture of lectures, video bytes, and group discussions, with a particular emphasis on lab exercises designed for experiential learning. It is designed as an 'inverted classroom': topics are introduced in class; real-world observations of sample public places in London, Ontario, are visited in person and assessed by the student through systematic observations and relevant readings; results, ideas and questions are shared in class discussions the following week, and the cycle repeats itself.

6.2. Content, Lecture

The course pursues such questions as:

- Why do urban public places matter?
- What makes for a 'successful' public place and how might we make such an assessment?
- What labels or terms might we employ to help us interpret or 'read' the urban environment?
- What does the plurality of public places urbanites create tell us about the needs and preferences of people?
- What are some of over-arching or major collective human behaviours we might identify that help to explain the urban morphology of contemporary North American cities?
- What kinds of public place do you personally enjoy and what is it about them that draws you to them?

6.3. Lecture Schedule

#	Lecture Topics	Dates
1	Reading Urban Cultural Landscapes	Wed., Sept. 13
2	Critical Observation: Fresh Views of our Everyday Geographies	Wed., Sept. 20
	Field Camp Week – No Lecture or Lab	Wed., Sept. 27
3	Public Parks as Epitome Districts	Wed, Oct. 4
4	Public Streets and Pedestrian Space	Wed., Oct 11
5	Auto Strips and Front of Decay and Growth	Wed., Oct 18
6	Beats: Urban Pace, Pulse and Rhythms	Wed., Oct 25
	Reading Week - No Lecture or Lab	Wed., Nov. 1
7	Stacks, Sinks, Turfs & Territoriality	Wed., Nov 8
8	The 'Hardening' of Public Space	Wed., Nov 15
9	Indoor and Underground Cities	Wed., Nov 22
10	Placeslessness, Fantasy and Elsewhereness	Wed., Nov 29

#	Lecture Topics	Dates
11	Post-Carbon Urban Culture: Looking Back & Beyond	Wed., Dec 6

6.4. Lab Schedule

Considerable emphasis in this course is placed upon improving your methodological and observation skills. Labs are not optional: they are a foundational component of the course: With the major exception of sharing your fieldwork observations and experiences with others in class, most of the time spent on these exercises will be conducted at your leisure during the week they are assigned. A regular in-class lab is two hours, plus two or more hours writing up the exercise. The period you choose to do this lab during the week it is assigned is entirely your own choice.

The labs are of two types: 1) field labs that require you to actually visit and systematically observe various public spaces in London (*e.g.s, Victoria Park, city streets, a shopping mall*); and 2) in-house labs that do not require 'field' work per se (*e.g., map the routes you normally take in any one week*). **The data you collect and the conclusions you draw will provide the basis of our weekly class discussions.** You are encouraged to select a permanent field research partner with whom you will conduct the field labs; you are each responsible for taking your own field notes and completing your own labs.

The eight lab exercises are assigned and submitted as scheduled below. Each lab is graded out of 5 marks for a total value of 40% of your final course grade. Failure to complete each lab will 1) make for a particularly boring class discussion, and 2) seriously lessen your likelihood of obtaining the course credit. To be clear, if you take this course, you are committing yourself to engaging in the lab exercises and the class discussions thereof.

Lab Schedule	Assigned On	Due Date*
The Cultures of U.C.C. Plaza	Wed., Sept. 20	Tues., Oct. 3.
Field Camp Week – No Lecture or Lab Week of Sept. 25		
Victoria Park: An 'Epitome' District?	Wed., Oct. 4	Tues., Oct. 10
Critiquing Un/Successful Sidewalks	Wed., Oct. 11	Tues., Oct. 17
Strips of London	Wed., Oct. 18	Tues., Oct. 24
Beats: Personal and Collective	Wed., Oct. 25	Tues., Nov. 7
Reading Week - No Lecture or Lab Week of Oct. 30		
Turfing and Spatial Identities	Wed., Nov. 8	Tues., Nov. 14
Cracking a Hardened Public Place	Wed., Nov. 15	Tues., Nov. 21
Sites of Placelessness & Elsewhereness	Wed., Nov. 22	Tues., Nov 28

*11:59 pm OWL Dropbox

7. Communication

Please read this course outline and all assignments thoroughly and completely before asking questions, the answers to which may well be found in the outline or assignment itself. If you have long and complex questions—and we hope you do—we will be delighted to address them during the lecture or our office hours. Please take advantage of the office hours posted on the front page of this outline. Both the instructor and the TA want to help you succeed.

Please read all announcements posted via OWL.

Please use e-mail judiciously. Short answer questions are welcome; longer and more complex questions may require a phone call or a Zoom meeting, both of which can be arranged by email.

Please do not expect an instantaneous response to your email, particularly if it is not sent during office hours: it may take 24-36 hours. We are unlikely to respond to emails after 5:00 pm and rarely to never on weekends. Please use proper English in your correspondence. Communication, like politeness, is a two-way street, and we shall extend to you the same courtesies. Thank you for respecting these boundaries.

8. Evaluation

8.1. Assignments

Assignment	Weight	Assigned On	Due Dates
Lab Assignment	40%	See table above	See table above
Research Paper	30%	Wed., Oct. 11	Wed., Nov 15
Final Examination	30%	TBA	Dec 10-22, 2hours

8.2. Assessment

Your evaluation is based primarily on your ability to fulfill the three primary objectives of the course as evidenced in the lab exercises, research paper and final exam. Your final standing in the course is based upon eight graded lab exercises, one written research paper, and one final examination. The eight labs are worth 5% each (4-8 pages each) and the research paper, worth 30%, will be 2,000-2,500 word/8-10 typed, double-spaced pages (*format specifics, content requirements and means of evaluation to follow*). The final exam, worth 30%, will cover all course material, particularly the assigned readings. Although the precise format of the final, two-hour examination will be explained well in advance of its sitting on campus, testable material may include all aspects of the course content—lectures, readings, films, labs, and discussions—and all or some of the following formats: essay questions, short answer, multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank.

The evaluation methods described here are essential requirements for the course. **Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures, including any in-class videos, as well as the assigned lab exercises and all accompanying assigned readings.** A final cumulative grade of 50% or more is required to pass this course, and students must achieve a mark of 50% or more on the final examination.

How do I grade? A mark below 50% reflects an unacceptable level of content and/or presentation. A mark between 50%-59% shows minimally acceptable content and/or presentation. Marks between 60%-69% indicate competent work meeting requirements. I regard the mark of a low 'B' (70% - 73%) indicative of average work, both competent and acceptable. You have completed all of the assignments and readings and demonstrated a general understanding of the course material as evidenced in the essays, labs and final exam. A grade of mid to high 'B' (74%-79%) reflects evidence of an above average performance. Not only have you fulfilled the assignments in a more meticulous fashion, but you have also demonstrated a more thorough understanding of the material and gone a few extra steps beyond the average student as evidenced on the test and in your written work. An 'A' (80%-89%) is reserved for outstanding effort and achievement. Exceptional diligence, a thorough knowledge of the course material, and the ability to apply and convey concepts in an effective, logical and literate fashion are clearly evident. Hard labour and exceptional effort are necessary but not, by themselves, sufficient to warrant an 'A.' An 'A+' (90%+) is rare but is certainly possible. An exceptionally outstanding performance on the examination, essay and labs demonstrating a superb command of English and a critical mind capable of synthesizing complex facts and ideas to arrive at particularly astute conclusions, will earn this prestigious grade.

All assignments are due in the student's OWL drop box on the date noted by 11:59 pm EST unless otherwise specified.

Written assignments might be submitted to Turnitin at the instructor's discretion.

Students are asked to wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator. If you have questions or concerns about your evaluation, please seek assistance within seven days of having received the graded assignment.

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

8.3. Use of AI

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their *own* ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding *plagiarism*. Essays, written assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g.,

graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. ***By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and all of them to produce original written contributions.*** The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

9. Make-up Examinations, Late Submissions, Extensions

Makeups will be granted with approved documentation only. All documentation for missed exams must be provided to the Academic Counselling Office within 48 hours of the scheduled exam, otherwise the instructor will assign a grade of zero.

The format and content of make-ups may differ substantially from the scheduled test or examination.

Lab Assignments are assigned on Wednesdays during the lecture and are due in your OWL drop box no later than 11:59 pm the following Tuesday--six days after the Wednesday they are assigned. Late labs will lose 1 of 5 marks of the assignment's value each day. Assignments submitted after three days late--post-Friday at 11:59pm--will receive zero but will be graded for your educational benefit

You are all granted an automatic three-day extension on the research paper (but not the lab assignments). No research paper will be accepted after 11:59pm, Saturday, Nov. 18th, 2023, and will be given a mark of zero.

10. Appeals

Requests to have an examination or assignment formally re-evaluated must be done within one week of receiving the graded assignment. In this concisely written request to me or the Teaching Assistant you will specify the aspects of your work that you would like re-visited and the justification for doing so. ***Please be aware that disliking or disagreeing with your grade is no grounds for re-assessment.***

Should you feel that your final grade in the course is biased, inaccurate or unfair, you do have the right to appeal your final mark. Please refer to the *Western Calendar* prior to doing so (see web site below). In an attempt to avoid such time-consuming and stressful procedures for all, be assured that each and every piece of work is graded carefully and thoroughly. ***Be aware that marks may be raised--as well as lowered--through an appeal process.***

You are advised to read the course calendar to familiarize yourself with Western's regulations and procedures concerning appeals, grades, regulations, penalties and such at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Alternative Examination Dates, Dropping the Course

The date of the final examination is set by the Office of the Registrar and will not be changed. If you consider that you have grounds to write a final examination on an alternate date, you must follow the procedure established by the Dean's Office and complete the appropriate forms. The same holds for dropping the course

11. Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Illness may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. The University further recognizes that medical situations are deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic accommodation for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course shall be granted only in those cases where there is documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet their academic responsibilities.

[Policy on Academic Consideration for Medical Illness - Undergraduate Students](#)

[Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

12. Electronic Devices

Never record digitally or otherwise any part of the class lectures or tutorials/labs without prior and specific permission from the instructor or Teaching Assistant (*i.e., do not take photos with your phone of the PowerPoint slides*). If you are observed doing so you will be expelled from that lecture or tutorial. If you are caught a second time, you will be expelled from the course. Note taking is highly encouraged. If you wish to engage in personal or recreational use of your phone, laptop or any other distraction during the lecture, please quietly leave the classroom.

13. How to Be Successful in this Class:

Students enrolled in this class should understand the level of autonomy and self-discipline required to be successful.

1. Attend class: 80% of success is showing up.
2. Invest in a planner or application to keep track of your courses. Populate all your deadlines at the start of the term and schedule time at the start of each week to get organized and manage your time.
3. Make it a daily habit to log onto OWL to ensure you have seen everything posted to help you succeed in this class.
4. Take notes as you go through the lesson material. Keeping handwritten notes or even notes on a regular Word document will help you learn more effectively.
5. Connect with others. Try forming a study group and try meeting on a weekly basis for study and peer

support.

6. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you are struggling with a topic, check the online discussion boards or contact your instructor(s) and or teaching assistant(s).
7. Reward yourself for successes. It seems easier to motivate ourselves knowing that there is something waiting for us at the end of the task.

14. Continuity of Education Plan

14.1. In-Person Class Pivoting to Online Learning

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the university to direct courses move away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

14.2. Zoom Format and Etiquette

If lectures go synchronous—live via Zoom—they will be held during our regularly scheduled lecture time on Mondays, 12:30-2:20. You can download the Zoom app to your laptop or phone at the following address: <https://wts.uwo.ca/zoom/index.html>. The weekly Zoom address will be posted on OWL.

Delivering and receiving lectures in this format is far from ideal, and we need to be patient with one another. Toward minimizing problems, below are several participant expectations we must all respect. Students who do not follow these guidelines will be removed from the Zoom meeting if necessary.

- Mute your microphone if you are not talking
- Use your real name
- Be on time
- Only post chat messages relevant to the lessons
- If you have a question, please raise your 'hand' in the 'reactions' icon at the bottom of your screen or post a chat message to me.
- I would prefer to see your face and you mine, rather than turning off your video. I won't demand this of you but seeing your reaction would certainly help me 'read' the audience and assist me to better convey the material.

15. Information on COVID-19, Influenza and Colds

Masking Guidelines

Given the instructor's compromised immune system, students must wear a triple layer, non-medical, paper mask at all times in the classroom. Students who are unable or unwilling to wear a mask can access the lecture live via Zoom at the address posted in the OWL Resources folder. This remains an 'in-person' course, so students are strongly encouraged to attend in person.

Students are not permitted to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

16. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

17. Western's Commitment to Accessibility

The Department of Geography and Environment strives at all times to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website.

More information about "Accessibility at Western" is available.

18. Mental Health

If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are several resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit Western's Health and Wellness website for more information on mental health resources.

19. Support Services

Western's Support Services
Student Development Centre

20. Important Dates

September 7: Classes resume
September 15: Last day to add a first term half course
October 9: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed
October 30-November 5: Fall Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)
November 13: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty
November 30: Last day to drop a full course without penalty
December 8: Classes end
December 9: Study day
December 10-22: Examination Period

21. The Importance of Writing your Own Papers

While solely relying on AI, such as Chat GPT or Google Summarizer, to 'write' your papers, may result in you getting high marks, it will not serve you well in the long term when you are required to think and write on 'your own' for employers. Using AI to assist in researching will greatly improve the idea-generating process. However, a key question is "How will you effectively communicate these ideas, especially if they are based on your own original research?" After graduating from Western employers may ask what is the 'added value' you bring to them, especially if you are over-relying on AI to do the writing and thinking for you?

Your courses offer you the opportunity to develop your thinking and writing skills. Take advantage of the opportunity before you hit the job market!!! Read below and find out why writing is more important than ever, and resources available at Western should you wish to further improve your writing skills.

See what one of our recent Undergrad Alumni said about the importance of Writing: [Alannah Dharamshi - Social Science - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Why is it important to improve your writing skills? (Copied from the University of Arizona Global Campus: [*The Importance of Writing Well & How to Grow as a Writer*](#) / [UAGC](#))

1. Writing has become the #1 way we communicate with others.

We do more writing as a society than ever before. It has now become the primary way we gather information and interact and connect with others. Improving your written communications allows you to confidently communicate with everyone. Writing is often the first impression that others have of us. Writing is often the first impression that others have of us.

2. People judge you based on your writing.

Our writing is often the first impression that others have of us. People often read our writing before ever meeting us face to face. Errors or disorganized or incomplete thoughts in our writing lead others to make assumptions about our intelligence and our character.

3. You're more likely to get what you want with clear and direct writing.

Writing is a form of communication. We often communicate in order to request something of someone. If the one reading your request cannot fully understand or locate what you need from them, you are not likely to get your request fulfilled.

4. Writing is an essential job skill.

Even if you don't do a lot of writing on the job (which is rare), you still communicate in other ways. Improving your writing helps you to become a better communicator overall and it also improves your reading, which is another essential job skill. And your ability to write a well-crafted application, resume, and cover letter is the first step to getting a job.

5. Writing expresses your thinking skills.

Disorganized writing could indicate that your thinking is disorganized. If your writing is not fully developed, it could indicate that you have not fully developed your thoughts. Improving your writing skills will improve the way you think about your topic and help you explain or discuss it with others.

Where to get support for improving your writing at Western

On-line tips to improve your writing: :

[Effective Writing Skills - Anthropology - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/learning/writing-skills/anthropology)

In-person assistance:

Western Writing Support Centre [Writing Support Centre - Western Libraries - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/learning/writing-support-centre)

Essay Exam Essentials:

Western Learning Development & Success: [Presentations & Workshops - Learning Skills Services - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/learning/presentations-workshops)

Other Academic Skill Development (e.g., time management, effective learning habits,...)

Western Learning Development & Success [Learning Development & Success - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/learning/learning-development)

22. Mutual Expectations

This course is an intellectual forum wherein we share our thoughts and ideas. We all must respect the thoughts and opinions of one another. Our classes are a safe space to explore ideas from a geographical perspective; everyone's voice and interpretations are welcome. Respecting each other and being sensitive toward one another, and if need be, forgiving toward one another, is not only the mature way to learn, but is also vital. As the course instructor, I will provide you with a set of theoretical concepts, models and various interpretations of the issues raised, as I understand them. Using these models and concepts, you will be encouraged and challenged to develop your *own* interpretations of these various issues. ***Your grounded interpretations and opinions in no way whatsoever need parallel my own, or those of your peers, to succeed in this course.*** Freedom

of thought and expression is strongly encouraged, and please do so in a courteous, responsible, and respectful manner.

We should expect each other to come prepared for, and attend, all lectures regularly and punctually. We should strive to promote a collegial atmosphere of mutual respect conducive to the exchange of ideas and learning. If we all abide by this code of civility, we set the stage for a mature, safe and stimulating intellectual forum. Included below is the *Code of Conduct for Students, Staff, and Faculty for the Department of Geography. The University of Western Ontario Code of Student Conduct* is available at <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>: please familiarize yourself with both of these documents.

Finally, if you have problems, questions, ideas or concerns with any aspect of the course, please raise the matter before, during or after class, or during my office hours. I welcome your questions and constructive criticisms. I am approachable and want to assist you to succeed.

23. Safety

Safety is a shared responsibility. The potential hazards of a city make it imperative that everyone behaves responsibly in order to reduce the risk of accidents. Personal safety must be a personal responsibility. Complacency, inattention, lack of preparation and/or training will all increase risks to health and safety. Ultimately each individual must act in a reasonable manner in order to ensure their safety and the safety of others. (For more information, please see our departmental web address on 'Health and Safety' - http://www.geography.uwo.ca/resources/health_and_safety/docs/2014-Fieldwork%20Safety%20Policy.pdf).

It is strongly encouraged that you do these field lab assignments with a partner.

Please review, complete, and submit the '*Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risk*' and '*Emergency Information*' forms below. Hard copies will be available in class during our first lecture.

24. Code of Conduct

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Affiliation with the Department of Geography presumes mutual respect among students, staff, teaching assistants, and faculty. A positive atmosphere of professionalism and collegiality is essential for everyone to perform to the best of his or her abilities. This requires respect for the opinions and questions of others and behaviour that is, at all times, courteous, and conducive to creating a pleasant and productive environment for learning and working.

As members of a Department of Geography, we are expected to show special respect for our environment, being individually responsible for promoting a clean and safe work environment within the facilities of the Department and the Social Science Centre, including classrooms, laboratories, the Map Library, offices, hallways, washrooms, exterior grounds, and the facilities and vehicles used in field courses and field trips.

It is inevitable that misunderstandings will occur from time to time. However, it is in everyone's interest to try and resolve problems in a non-confrontational manner. Threatening, violent, or abusive behaviour, harassment (including sexual and racial harassment), rudeness (in person, in writing, or on the telephone), and abuse of authority, for whatever reasons, corrode good working and learning conditions.

Incidents that cannot be resolved amicably may be reported to the Chair of the Department (661-3653). The Chair will consider appropriate actions for resolving the problem, usually after consultation with the parties involved. If required, contact with university services (e.g., Police, Equity) or civil authorities will be invoked.

Student Use of University Facilities and Classroom Decorum:

Students are expected to comply with the authority of University staff and faculty on all matters relating to access to facilities (offices, classrooms, laboratories, and Map Library) and to use of equipment and resources.

Students are expected to attend all lectures and laboratory sessions regularly and punctually.

Instructors are responsible for maintaining an appropriate academic atmosphere in all class activities; students are expected to cooperate in this effort.

Actions that impede instruction deter the ability of students to learn, or show disrespect for instructors and fellow students, will not be condoned in Geography classrooms and labs. Such actions include reading during lectures, disturbing consumption of food or drink, use of Walkman's and radios, and disruptive conversation. Serious disrespect for classroom decorum should be reported to the instructor and, if required, to the Chair of the Geography Department (SSC 2429, Telephone 661-3653).

Students are expected to adhere to University standards of academic honesty, as outlined under "Scholastic Offences" in the Western Calendar. Unacceptable practices include cheating, impersonation, plagiarism, misrepresentation of research, falsification of documents, obstructing the academic activities of another, aiding or abetting academic misconduct, and abuse of confidentiality. In addition to incurring penalties, as outlined in the Calendar, some academic offences may fall under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Approved on behalf of Faculty, Staff, and Students by the Council of the Department of Geography on 4 March 1994.

PLEASE NOTE *Course content & order of presentations may deviate from this general outline due to unforeseen circumstances.*

The Department of Geography

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

Student Name: _____ Student # _____

Name/Location Field Course: _____

Date of Trip: _____

I am aware that during field trips, exchanges or other excursions in which I am participating under the arrangements of the University of Western Ontario, certain risks and dangers may occur, including, but not limited to, the hazards of traveling, accidents or illness in remote places without medical facilities, the forces of nature and travel by air, train, automobile or other means, as well as exposure to customs and practices of societies different from our own. Accordingly, I understand that despite its efforts, the University may not be able to ensure my complete safety at all times from such risks and dangers. More particularly, I appreciate that the University of Western Ontario does not carry medical, accident or injury insurance for my benefit. Further, there may be certain matters for which I could be at fault personally if the accompanying circumstances do not relate to or arise from my education, or if my activities or conduct fall short of what would be considered a reasonable standard for an individual in my position. In these cases I agree to be accountable in all respects for my own actions and not to ask the University or its employees to accept the consequences thereof; further, I agree to be responsible for any claims made against the University in relation to such actions.

I acknowledge that I have been advised by UWO of such risks and dangers as well as the need to act in a responsible manner at all times. My signature below is given freely in order to indicate my participation in the above mentioned Program.

Signature: _____ Dated: _____

Witness: _____ Dated: _____

Your OHIP number: _____

Other Health Insurance Plan, type, & number: _____

Person to Contact in case of emergency: _____

Emergency Contact Telephone number: _____

The information on this form is collected under the authority of *The University of Western Ontario Act, 1982*, as amended, and is needed for use in the event of a medical or other emergency. If you have any questions about the University's collection, use, or disclosure of this information, please contact the Coordinator, Freedom of Information and Privacy Office, Stevenson Hall, Room 4101, 519-661-2111 ext 84543

Date & Location of Field Work:

Lab #1 UCC Plaza: Sept. 20-Oct 3, 2023 / Lab #2 Victoria Park: Oct 4-10 / Field Research Paper: Oct 11-Nov 15 Student Selects Site (SSS) / Lab #3 Critiquing Un/Successful Sidewalks: Oct 11-17 SSS / Lab #4 Strips of London: Oct 18-24 SSS / Lab #5 Beats: Oct 25-Nov 7 / Lab #6 Turfing & Spatial Identities: Nov 8-14 / Lab #7 Hardened Public Place: Nov 15-21 / Lab #8 Sites of Placelessness & Elsewhere: Nov 22-28

EMERGENCY INFORMATION – CONFIDENTIAL

Student Name: _____ Student # _____

Home University: _____

Field Course/Location _____

MEDICAL INSURANCE

OHIP # (or equivalent): _____

Name of other insurer(s) and policy numbers: _____

Name of Policy Holder (if not student): _____

Policy holder guarantees that additional insurance is in force for the duration of the field course.

Signature of Policy Holder

HEALTH INFORMATION

Please list any allergies, drug sensitivities, regular medications and other information that might be of significance to a physician or hospital treating you in an emergency situation.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

Please give the following information for a person who can be reached in an emergency, during the course.

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Address: _____

Phone (H): _____

(W): _____

(C): _____