

Syllabus

GEOG 215: Geospatial Cornerstone Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number: GEOG 215
Course Title: Geospatial Cornerstone
Section: 930/931/932
Time: MWF 10:20AM - 11:10AM
Location: CSA 302
Credit Hours: 1

Instructor Details

Instructor: Carmen P. Brysch, PhD
Office: O&M 706C
E-Mail: carmen.brysch@tamu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1115am-1215pm, and by appointment.

Course Description

Professional career options, methods, strategies and skills involved in successful career planning in the geospatial sciences; highlights high impact learning opportunities such as study abroad and internships and the development of scientific communication skills.

Course Prerequisites

GEOG and GIST majors; sophomore classification or approval of instructor. No other Prerequisites.

Special Course Designation

C-Course Designation

This class is a C (communication intensive) class. See the "Assignment Types and Weights" section below as well as the ["Best Practices for W & C Courses"](#) for grading details including what students will have to write and speak to earn credit for the course.

C-Course Grading Requirements

Grading for this course will be based on completion of the University "C" course requirements. 85% of the graded assignments for the course will include writing assignments (totaling at least 2000 words) and speaking assignments (totaling at least 15 minutes). Writing assignments will be complemented with a combination of oral presentation slides, handouts, scripts, web sites, and posters which accompany any oral presentation. The "public speaking" component of the course will be completed by students in person or electronically, for example in video or podcast formats as determined by the instructor. 100% of the Communication (C) course components of the class work will be completed individually. Student assignments will be provided with formative feedback including review and assessment by the instructor as well as peer-review by fellow students. To pass this course students must pass the Communication (C) component.

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to introduce students to career opportunities that are available across the geospatial industry including both the public and private sectors. The course will include an introduction to various means by which students can be best-prepared for obtaining professional employment in the geospatial industry and for ensuring a successful career, including the types of skills that required in different segments of the industry and how and where students can find instruction and practical experience to obtain them. This course will highlight how and why high impact learning experiences such as undergraduate research, internships, and study abroad are important components of a student's portfolio that will aide them in gaining professional employment before and following graduation. This course will provide training on effective writing and communication, and emphasize the importance of both as key aspects of successful careers in the geospatial industry.

At the end of this class, each student will be able to:

1. Enumerate and compare the types of jobs that are available in the geospatial industry, in both the public and private sectors;
2. Enumerate and evaluate the sets of geospatial skills required by different types of jobs, and develop an academic and extra-curricular plan to achieve those that are required for the types of professional employment that they desire;
3. Describe the application process for graduate and professional school, and develop a plan for improving the competitiveness of their application;
4. Develop an effective career plan including a reflection on the impact that internships and other high impact learning experiences may have on their job-seeking potential;
5. Prepare, present, and discuss the strengths of different resume styles and contents; and
6. Develop effective communication skills for geospatial information and topics in writing, visually, and in spoken presentations.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

There are no required textbooks. Course readings will include online and other videos and resources and materials provided by the instructor and made available in Canvas.

Grading Policy

Grading Scale

The typical grading scheme for this course has the following cutoffs: $\geq 90\%$ A, 80-89% B, 70-79% C, 60-69% D, $< 60\%$ F

Grading Policy, Due Dates, and Time Zones

All homework and other assignments will be due at the start of the following class in which they were assigned, unless otherwise indicated on the assignment. Late work will not be accepted for inclusion in a student's grade without prior authorization from the instructor or in compliance with the University Excused Absence and Makeup Work policies as defined in [Student Rule 7](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Written Assignments: 13×10 points total = 130

Final Written Assignments: $4 \times 20 = 80$

Speaking Assignment: 1×10 points total = 10

Final Speaking Assignment: 1×20 points total = 20

Volunteer Activities: 1 (**4 hours total**) $\times 20 = 20$

Attendance: 70 points total

Total Points: 330 points

Written Assignments: 40%

Speaking Assignments: 9%

Volunteer Activities: 6%

Attendance: 21%

Total: 100% (not weighted)

Communication-Specific Assignment Types

C-Course writing and speaking assignments will be calculated as follows:

| Style | Assignment Type | Words/Minutes | Points |
|------------|-------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Individual | Writing 1 Draft: Resume | One page Max | 10 |

| | | | |
|------------|--|-----------------------|-----|
| Individual | Writing 2 Draft: Cover Letter | 250 Words | 10 |
| Individual | Writing 3 Draft: Career Plan | 500 Words | 10 |
| Individual | Writing 4 Final: Resume | One page Max | 20 |
| Individual | Writing 5 Final: Cover Letter | 250 Words | 20 |
| Individual | Writing 6 Final: Career Plan | 500 Words | 20 |
| Individual | Presentation 1 Draft: Technical Talk | 5 Minutes | 10 |
| Individual | Presentation 2 Final: Technical Talk | 5 Minutes | 20 |
| Individual | Recommendation Letter Request 1 Draft | 250-500 Words | 10 |
| Individual | Recommendation Letter Request 1 Draft | 250-500 Words | 20 |
| Individual | Weekly Writing Activities | 250-500 Words each | 100 |

Attendance Policy

A portion of your grade will be associated with the participation, attendance, and professionalism you demonstrate during the semester. Professionalism will be comprised of prompt class attendance, class participation, being a team player, professional use of technology, and personal ethics and honesty.

Professionalism:

Traits of a professional include a high academic standard, continual renewal of knowledge, personal responsibility for work, service to society, display of self-confidence, and dedication beyond personal considerations.

Attendance is required and will be taken each class through the completion of an activity, and/or using a sign-in sheet.

- It is your responsibility to make sure you sign the attendance sign-in sheet.
- If students are caught signing each other in on the attendance sheet, attendance credit will not be received for that day; these matters will also be taken to the Student Conduct Office.

- If a student leaves class early without notifying me in advance and providing a valid excuse, they will not receive attendance credit.
- Students arriving late will not receive attendance credit.
- Students who are using electronic devices for purposes not related to class also risk removal of attendance credit for that class day.

Attendance grading: 2 absences or less, no deduction. If you miss $\frac{1}{4}$ or more classes during the semester (4 or more classes), you will get a 0 for your attendance grade. This will result in your grade dropping a letter grade in the course. Please see the course attendance policy below. Please also see the Professionalism Assessment Rubric in Canvas which will be used as a guide when calculating the final Participation, Attendance, and Professionalism percentage grade for this course.

Assignment DUE DATES and Late Work Policy

Do not wait until the last minute to get started on activities and assignments. Please start early to allow enough time for you to work on the assignments.

The **Written Assignments (either submit or they are set up as Canvas quiz surveys)** correlate to the week's topic and **are due in Canvas the Sunday (1159pm) after class.**

See Canvas Assignments and the Course schedule for **Written Assignment** and **Speaking (Presentation) Assignment** due dates and times (1159pm).

Late assignment submissions will not be accepted.

In past years, failure to complete assignments in a timely manner has been the primary cause of poor performance in this class. It is your responsibility to keep up with assignments. You should talk to your instructor BEFORE late assignments become a problem.

University Policies

This section outlines the university level policies. The TAMU Faculty Senate established the wording of these policies.

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Class will meet 10 times this semester. Each class will be worth 7 points for a total of 70 points for attendance. The lowest attendance grade will be dropped. If you receive a zero for an attendance grade you must submit a University approved excuse within one week of the class day. Submit the excuse in the comment section in the assignment section in canvas and email me when you do. This is the only option for a change to the attendance grade.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7 Links to an external site.](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7Links to an external site.](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1Links to an external site.](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2Links to an external site.](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. ([See Student Rule 24Links to an external site.](#)).

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20Links to an external site.](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at [aggiehonor.tamu.eduLinks to an external site.](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu).

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu[Links to an external site.](#).

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)[Links to an external site.](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#)[Links to an external site.](#) (CAPS). Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#)[Links to an external site.](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus.

Students who need someone to talk to can contact [Counseling & Psychological Services](#) [Links to an external site.](#) (CAPS) or call the [TAMU Helpline](#) [Links to an external site.](#) (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](#) [Links to an external site.](#)

Course Calendar

See the course calendar in the course information module in canvas. The schedule of topics for the semester is as follows.

| Week | Date | Topic and Chapter Readings |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Week 1 | Aug 19-23 | Introduction to the Course |
| Week 2 | Aug 26-30 | Career Pathways |
| Week 3 | Sept 2-6 | Volunteer Activities |
| Week 4 | Sept 9-13 | Jobs in Geography |
| Week 5 | Sept 16-18 | Career Fair |
| Week 6 | Sept 23-27 | Professional/Disciplinary Writing |
| Week 7 | Sept 30 - Oct 4 | Resume |
| Week 8 | Oct 7-11 | Volunteer Activities |
| Week 9 | Oct 14-18 | Cover Letter |
| Week 10 | Oct 21-25 | Career Planning |
| Week 11 | Oct 28 – Nov 1 | Public vs. Private; Public Speaking & Networking |
| Week 12 | Nov 4-8 | Graduate School/ Internships/ Research/ HILES |
| Week 13 | Nov 11-15 | Geography Awareness Week / GIS Days Events |
| Week 14 | Nov 18-22 | Final Assignment Review |
| Week 15 | Nov 25-29 | Work on final assignments |
| Wk 16 | Dec 2 – last day of classes | Work on Final Assignments |
| No final Exam for this course | Friday, Dec 6, by 1159pm | All final assignments due: 1159pm in Canvas |

Schedule is subject to change.