

Preparing Future Faculty

GEO 291
26860

Fall 2020
Thursdays 2-3:30pm



Course Description and Evaluation:

Navigating the career path at the PhD level is a challenge because most of what you are asked to do in an academic job requires skills that you have not acquired in graduate school!

This is a seminar course intended for graduate students interested in pursuing a career in geoscience at the PhD level. The focus of this course is on the academic/research track but much of the material will translate to many other professional settings. While most seminar courses are just one credit, this one requires a little more work on your part to create a professional application package that gets you ready for the job market. So, I've added an additional credit hour to account for the time you will be putting into class.

Through lectures, discussions, readings, and peer workshoping of materials you will create a complete application package ready for the academic or research institute job market. You will also have access to recorded interviews to explore a

range of academic career options in the geosciences (from research-intensive to teaching-intensive options) in order to fine tune what job options suit you best. About half-way through the semester we will shift to other aspects that make one successful in academia/research including finding mentoring, running a research program, time-management, and goal setting. My hope is that the ideas you learn in this class become fundamentals to your success in any profession.

Course Evaluation: This course is intended to assist you in your preparation for your academic career and so you will get out of it as much as you put into it. I fully understand the pressure late-career graduate students are under, particularly these days with many other pressing political, health, economic, etc. issues that all keep us up at night. So, all students will be graded pass/fail. A passing grade is obtained by attending >75% online lectures, submitting materials for an

application (cover letter, CV, research statement, teaching statement, diversity statement) and giving your 5-min job talk. All other material is optional (but good for you). You will also be expected to participate in group discussions and in the peer-review process involved with workshoping your statements.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing at UT in the sciences with preference given to students in the Jackson School of Geosciences if space becomes limited. Postdocs are welcome with permission from the instructor. If space becomes limited, late-career (>3 years in) will be given priority. This course is offered every other year.

Disclaimer: *Like academe itself, the advice presented in this class will be sometimes absurd, paradoxical or impossible. There is no magic formula to landing the elusive tenure-track job. I wish there were, because I would give it to you!*

Recommended Reading:

There are a lot of online resources about careers in academia that I link to on Canvas. There are also a lot of books on the topic of academic employment and success. I have found these most useful:

- [A PhD is Not Enough](#): A guide to survival in science by Peter Feibelman
- [How to Write a Lot](#): A practical guide to productive academic writing by Paul Silvia
- [The Professor Is In](#): The essential guide to turning your PhD into a job, Karen Kelsky
- [The New Academic](#): (more appropriate for those in academia), Shelda Debowski

Course Logistics:

Lectures will be delivered via Zoom, with meeting links integrated into the modules. Just as an in-person class, we will meet at the same time each week; Thursdays 2-3:30pm (Central Time).

Our time on Zoom will be split into some lecturing, some discussion, and some exercises that you do in breakout groups. Technical issues are bound to occur and so all lectures will be recorded and posted on Canvas (in Modules) after class.

The course content will be provided through Modules (in Canvas) that will organize content by topic. In addition, the course has a Slack channel that consists of prior graduates of the PFF class - these are folks who have gone on from the JSG to find exciting employment in a range of areas including tenure-track jobs, postdocs, industry, data science etc. You will

receive an invite for the Slack channel on the first day of class and you will be a member of this channel forever - so you can always use it as a resource for asking questions to those who have recently gone through a job search (or several).

Office hours: I will not hold official office hours, but students should feel free to make individual or group appointments with me via Zoom at any time to discuss anything. This can be well after the end of this class! Students can also email me with general questions. For quick conversations, feel free to try out the Chat option within Canvas.



normal me

me in the field



Dr. Ginny Catania

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I am from Canada but have lived in the US since grad school and moved to Austin in 2005. I got into glaciers because of my love for exploring and because I was good at math. I have been lucky to have had opportunities to participate in field work in the polar regions. I never thought I would end up a professor, but it is an amazing job and though many aspects are challenging, the ability to indulge my curiosity and to have an impact on the next generation really fulfills me.

Course Schedule:

The following is a tentative outline of course topics. These may change depending on class interests and timing.

Date	Topic Covered in Class	Assignment Due	In-class Exercise(s)
Preparing to go on the job market			
27-Aug	Why Academia? Networking, and Social Media		networking, pros/cons of academia
3-Sep	Where is your academic home? Job Ads	Watch/read Informational Interviews	personal assessment of needs
Creating your application package			
10-Sep	CV Boot Camp: Cover letters and CVs	Bring in your job ad	highlight ad to match to cover letter
17-Sep	CV Boot Camp: Research Statements	CV + Cover Letter	peer review of cover letter and CV
24-Sep	CV Boot Camp: Teaching Statements	Research Statement	peer review of research statements
1-Oct	CV Boot Camp: Diversity Statements	Teaching Statement	peer review of teaching statements
Getting a job			
8-Oct	Job Talks – best practices	Diversity Statement	peer review of diversity statements
15-Oct		5-min job talks	
22-Oct		5-min job talks	
29-Oct	Interviewing Skillz	Entire application package	mock interview (optional, scheduled)
5-Nov	Negotiations and Startup	Startup wishlist with \$\$	prioritize the startup list
Thriving in life and the job			
12-Nov	Getting Tenure: Time Management		
19-Nov	Getting Tenure: Running a Research Program	Time tracking experiment	define yourself
26-Nov	Thanksgiving		
3-Dec	Getting Tenure: Support and Mentorship	Curate your online image (website)	mentoring chart

The Fine Print:

Academic integrity: Students are expected to read and to strictly adhere to the University's Honor Code and written policies on academic dishonesty, which states: *"As a student of the University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity."* Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated and any student caught violating University policy will be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty harms you, all students, and the integrity of the University.

Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited: No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

Class Recordings: Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared

outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

Late assignments: It is a fact of life that we all have bad days, bad weeks, or even bad semesters. I take student mental health very seriously, and so in an effort to accommodate any unexpected, unfortunate personal crises, I have adopted a "time bank" policy for this course. This policy allows you to, for one assignment, take a no-questions-asked **two-day extension**. You do not have to utilize this policy, but if you find yourself struggling with unexpected personal events, I encourage you to e-mail me as soon as possible to notify me that you are planning to use this policy. As with the rest of the class, I expect professional behavior and so please do not take advantage of this policy unnecessarily. Please note, that if you hand in an assignment late, you may not benefit from the in-class peer review process.

An accessible classroom: If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. If appropriate, also contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (videophone) to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Religious exemptions: Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination or lab assignment due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

Q Drop Policy: If you want to drop this class after the cutoff day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution.

Personal Pronoun Use: Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness. You have a right to respect. You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly. You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression. You have a right to privacy and confidentiality. You have a

right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning experience. You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student will be isolated, excluded, or diminished in any way.

With these rights come

responsibilities: You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the teaching team and with others if things start to feel out of control or over-whelming. You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others. Your experience with this course is directly related to the quality of the energy that you bring to it, and your energy shapes the quality of your peers' experiences. You are responsible for creating an inclusive environment and for speaking up with someone is excluded. You are responsible for holding yourself accountable to these standards, holding each other to these standards, and holding the teaching team accountable as well.

Your success in this class is important to me. We all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we can develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

Help & UT Resources

If you are feeling lost or overwhelmed....

Make an appointment with me

You are welcome to email me or make an appointment to meet. Many questions and issues can be easily resolved this way.

All of us benefit from support in times of struggle. You are not alone. An important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or someone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support at the **Counseling and Mental Health Center**.

Important Safety Information: If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call the **Behavior Concerns Advice**

Line: 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/ domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms.