

GY460 project: Assessment Criteria

Assessment:	The project is worth 100% of your final mark.
Word limit:	5000 words of text including tables, footnotes, references and any data appendices. Tables should be in a text format, not pasted images. Use the total word count from Microsoft Word or your preferred word processing software.

Intended learning outcomes tested by the assessment

1. Ability to formulate a relevant and answerable research question concerning the spatial/geographic dimension of some social science-related process.
2. Successful selection and use of methods of the type studied on the course to answer this research question.
3. Capacity to source and manage quantitative spatially referenced data in appropriate software.
4. Effective visualisation and description of spatial information.
5. Understanding of the underlying processes giving rise to spatial patterns in observed socioeconomic phenomena, and the challenges these place on causal interpretation of the observed relationships.
6. Ability to write up a coherent scientific report in the style of an academic journal article.

Assessment criteria

1. Research aims and hypotheses: The topic/question/hypothesis is clearly and precisely defined and addresses an interesting, answerable and relevant question. (ILO 1, 5, 6)
2. Background theory and literature: The project engages with, and demonstrates understanding of, the existing theory and literature on the topic. (ILO 1, 6)
3. Methods and data: The methods and data are appropriate to the research question. The methods employed are rigorously applied, quantitative techniques that have credibility in the field of social scientific research and are related to methods covered on the course. The methods are clearly presented, clearly explained and critically evaluated in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. (ILO 2, 3, 5, 6)
4. Strength of analysis: It is completely clear how the results have been derived from the methods and data that have been utilised. The project demonstrates understanding of the methods of analysis and an ability to critically evaluate their strengths and limitations. (ILO 2, 4, 5, 6)
5. Interpretation and conclusions: It is clear how the conclusions follow from the empirical results. There is clear discussion of the implications of the findings. (ILO 1, 5, 6)

6. Insight: The research demonstrates strong insights into the topic being investigated, in terms of the research findings, understanding of the theoretical aspects and methods. (ILO 2, 5)

7. Structure: The material is structured in an appropriate manner, and clearly organised in a way that leads the reader from the research questions, through to the methods of analysis, interpretation, discussion of the findings and conclusions. There is a clear structure to the manner in which the answer or argument unfolds. (ILO 6)

8. Style and presentation: The writing is succinct, lucid, articulate, fluid and easy to read. The results are presented clearly. The project is well-presented and formatted and is within the word limit. (ILO 6)

9. Originality: the topic and/or the approach to answering the question shows some originality and is not a close replication of previous work. (ILO 1)

Grading

Marks are awarded on how successful the project is in meeting these assessment criteria above.

High Distinction 85+: Work is of an outstanding quality that is a potential foundation for a publishable article in an academic journal, subject to revisions. Work of this standard would be expected to show excellence in almost every one of the criteria, and be exceptional on many, relative to what can typically be expected at this level of study. Distinction grade work should exhibit a depth of understanding, originality and insight, coupled with authority in execution, that sets it apart from the majority of work.

Low Distinction 70-84: Excellent in most but not all of the criteria described above, or may be excellent on all aspects, but succeeding to a lesser extent. Potentially publishable in principle, but only with considerable revision and reformulation. Distinction grade work should exhibit a depth of understanding, originality and insight, coupled with authority in execution, that sets it apart from the majority of work.

Merit 60-69: Signs of excellence on some criteria, and good in nearly all others. Displays a high level of competence in execution, and evidence of breadth of understanding of the course content, but without many signs of deep understanding, or with some errors. Projects may be technically excellent and complete, but lacking the depth of understanding, originality or insights characteristic of distinction grade. Projects that work competently through a standard set of procedures very competently but without showing unusual insight and/or with minor errors will typically achieve a mark in this grade.

High Pass 55-59: Good in many aspects and shows that the candidate has understood and absorbed much of the course content. However, there may be some signs of misunderstanding, errors or lack of effort. Projects that work through a standard set of procedures without showing much insight and/or with significant errors, will typically achieve a mark in this grade.

Low Pass 50-54: Good in some aspects, but poor in others. Shows that the candidate has understood the course content to a satisfactory level and able to carry out some of the basic

tasks required. However, there may be frequent and/or moderately serious signs of misunderstanding, serious errors or lack of effort.

Fail <50: Weak in all or nearly all aspects. Shows few signs that the candidate has understood the course content or can execute the basic tasks required. Frequent and/or serious signs of misunderstanding, errors or lack of effort.

Bad Fail <39: Projects are generally only awarded this grade if they show almost no effort or serious attempt to deliver the required material, reveal a complete lack of relevant understanding, or deliver material that is unrelated to the course content.

Note: these marks do not represent percentages, but should be viewed as distributed around a mean in the low Merit grade, with low probabilities of scoring marks in the upper and lower tails.