

**TI350-367: Research Seminars in Geography
Dissertation and Extended Essays (10 ECTS module)
General Guidelines: Dr Mary Cawley**

Module credit and requirements

TI350-367: Research Seminars in Geography provide opportunities for independent research, under individual supervision by academic staff. The seminars relate to both the dissertation and the essays. Guidelines are provided here relating to the organisation of your work and the timetables that should be followed. Regular meetings with your advisor are an essential part of your research training. Information is provided below on the criteria for assessment associated with the essays; the corresponding criteria for the dissertation and the oral presentation are in the Dissertation Handbook. Individual advisors may give additional guidelines; if these differ from those below, please follow your own advisor's advice.

Module credit: 10 ECTS =a minimum of 200 hours study. Plan to allocate at least 14 hours each week to the preparation of your essay/dissertation, if you wish to perform well.

Dissertations and essays that do not show evidence of serious study and consistent effort will not receive high marks;

Meetings with advisor: all students should **sign up to meet with their advisor**, during the week of 9 January. Bring a Notebook which is to be used throughout the semester to record your Bibliographic Reviews (see p. 5) and log your progress. Essay students must hand up a Notebook with each essay. Dissertation students will also find it useful to keep a log of progress for their own purposes. **Throughout the semester, time slots will be posted by advisors for students to sign up for consultation meetings.**

Advice provided: advisors will provide advice on the planning and structuring of work and oral feedback;

Plagiarism: students are expected to be aware of how to avoid plagiarism; if in doubt, refer to your lecture and workshop notes from Semester 1. **Evidence of plagiarism will be treated very seriously and may result in disciplinary action;**

Referencing: students should follow the guidelines for referencing provided on the Geography web page and in the Dissertation Handbook on the web page;

Time management and deadlines: seven weeks are allocated to prepare each essay and 14 weeks for the dissertation. **Extensions of the deadlines will be considered only in very exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness certified by a medical doctor).** It is each student's responsibility to ensure that the work advised below is conducted on a weekly basis and reported at meetings with the advisor (see Tables 1 and 2).

Teaching objectives and learning outcomes

The *teaching objectives* of TI350-367 are:

- To provide opportunities to apply the theoretical knowledge and skills acquired in TI251: Theory and Practice in Geography 1, TI252: Theory and Practice in Geography 2 and TI335: Research Project Design and Development, in the execution of an independent research project and essays, under supervision;

- To provide experience in the management of time in the planning and conduct of a substantial research project or two extended essays;
- To increase awareness of the academic standards expected in a final year dissertation or extended essays and the methods of attaining those standards (including the principles of conceptualisation, critique, argumentation, in text citation and bibliographic referencing);
- To provide opportunities for individual discussion of the theory and practice of research and essay development with an academic advisor;
- To afford opportunities to receive feedback on progress, on a regular basis;
- To provide experience in oral presentation of results using Powerpoint, in the case of the dissertation;
- To provide experience in the development of an Annotated Bibliography and a log of research, in the case of the essays.

Having completed the dissertation or the extended essays, you should have attained the following *learning outcomes*:

- Experience in applying theoretical knowledge and skills in the execution of an independent research project or extended essays, under supervision, and confidence in your capacities to do so;
- Enhanced capacities to manage your time in planning and conducting a substantial research project or extended essays;
- Increased awareness of the academic standards associated with a final year dissertation or extended essays and the methods of attaining those standards (including the principles of conceptualisation, critique, argumentation, in text citation and bibliographic referencing);
- Experience in discussing research-related issues with an academic advisor;
- Enhanced capacities to use feedback effectively to improve academic work;
- Confidence in presenting the results of your research orally, using Powerpoint;
- Knowledge of the principles associated with preparing and using an Annotated Bibliography and a log of progress as aids to research and essay preparation.

Table 1 Essay titles and content

<p>Each essay should be based on c. 15 readings in the form of journal articles and chapters from academic texts. No more than 3 web sources may be used and they must be reliable web sites (e.g. official sites of government or other organisations); The essays are expected to show capacities to conceptualise a research topic and review material critically. A high standard will be expected in terms of content and presentation; You are expected to read and prepare notes on at least three readings weekly, as part of developing your essay. These notes will form the basis for discussion with your advisor. Refer to the document on an Annotated Bibliography for guidance (p. 6); Essay word limit: 3500 words; 40% of the module credit. 10% of the credit is allocated for the Annotated Bibliography/Notebook.</p>	
Essay 1	Essay 2
Further development of a conceptual/theoretical framework relating to the research project proposed by the student in their proposal	An essay on a topic allocated by the advisor which will require the student to engage with important themes and debates in the discipline

Table 2 Meetings with advisor and deadlines for Dissertations/Essays

Dissertations	Essays
All students should meet individually with their advisor during the week of 9 January to discuss the Dissertation and Essay 1	
Scheduled meetings will take place thereafter. Advisors will post hours and time slots which must be signed up for in advance	
Each dissertation student will make a presentation on progress to the group mid-way through the semester: 20% of module credit will be allocated to the oral presentation and accompanying slides/notes. The advisor will notify the hours for the presentations. An advisory session on presentation skills will be provided in advance.	See guidelines on preparing an Annotated Bibliography and Notebook recording progress, associated with the essays: worth 10% of the assessment credit for each essay
	Essay 1 submission deadline: on or before 12:30 on Thursday, 23 February 2012 , to Dr Siubhan Comer
	Essay 2: Introductory Workshop, mid-February, as arranged by the advisor
Submission of Dissertation: on or before 12:30 on Thursday, 12th April 2012 to Dr Siubhan Comer	Essay 2 submission deadline: on or before 12:30 on Thursday, 12 April 2012 , to Dr Siubhan Comer
Dissertation: 7000 words (80% module credit)	2 Essays: 3500 words each (40% of module credit each). A Notebook recording progress and an Annotated Bibliography of c 15 sources relating to each essay (10% of module credit for each essay)

Assessment criteria

Essays and Annotated Bibliography: see the documents which follow. The Annotated Bibliography will form part of the Notebook to be handed up with each essay. The Notebook should also document your progress and report on meetings with your advisor (questions you prepared and advice you were given);

Dissertation: the assessment criteria for the dissertation and the oral presentation are in the Dissertation Handbook.

Essay Marksheet 2011-2012

Name: _____
 Essay Title: _____
 Mark: _____

	A			B+			B-			C	D	E
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	C-Grade	D-Grade	Fail
Preparation												
Clear definition of essay topic												
Key themes are introduced in an Introduction												
Evidence of conceptualisation and awareness of theory												
Sound understanding of relevant concepts												
Awareness of broader theoretical issues												
Evidence and Interpretation												
Relevant evidence addresses key themes												
Quantity and quality of evidence used												
Contextualisation of evidence												
Analytical capacities												
Analysis is logical and well-structured												
An argument is developed and presented in a critical manner												
Conclusions follow from analysis												
Communication Skills												
Work is structured clearly												
Work is presented in a fluent and suitable style												
Spelling/grammar/punctuation												
In-text citation												
Bibliographic referencing												
Consultation with Advisor												
Total												

Additional comments:

Check the Descriptors associated with each grade on the Geography Web Page

Your Notebook: Keeping an Annotated Bibliography: Dr Kathy Reilly

What is an annotated bibliography?

At this stage you are all familiar with the term bibliography; a list of sources or references (books, book chapters, articles, reliable webpages, newspapers or documentaries, to name but a few) that you draw upon in the context of your own writing to inform, support or refute your ideas. An annotated bibliography builds on this idea to develop an extended bibliographic list that highlights and incorporates key ideas from the source. In practice, each consulted source is represented by a paragraph in the annotated bibliography (usually between 200 – 250 words) that evaluates and critically appraises the source in question. For examples developed by other geographers see the resources listed below.

How is an annotated bibliography entry structured?

Address the following:

- *Summarize:*
 - What are the main arguments?
 - What is the central idea or point of the book or article?
- *Evaluate and connect with other perspectives:*
 - Is this a useful source in the context of your research / essay?
 - Is this a reliable source?
 - Can you connect some of the ideas presented to other reading you may have completed?
 - Is there common ground with other readings?
 - Does the author offer an alternative perspective on this topic or issue?
- *Reflect:*
 - How does this source relate to your research / essay?
 - Was it helpful? Did it offer an alternative idea / perspective that you may not have thought about?
 - How does this source help shape your argument overall?
 - Has this source changed how you will approach your topic (research or essay)?

Why an annotated bibliography?

There are many advantages to fully engaging with the development of an annotated bibliography. These include:

- to gain a broader understanding of the topic in question, drawing together useful and relevant sources;
- to help formulate central research questions;
- to explore multiple elements of key debate in your research area;
- clarify your thinking on the what the main arguments and issues are;
- help to develop your own point of view.

This brief guideline has been developed using resources from Queen's University Belfast and The Writing Lab at Purdue University, Indiana. For further information see:

- <http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/gap/Education/GeographyUG/FileStore/Filetoupload,170873.en.pdf>
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>