

# Geography 425: Field Methods in Geography (Summer 2013)

**Meetings:** Mon 9:10-10:55 am; Tues 8:00 am-5:00 pm (field) (5 credits)

**Instructor:** Dr. Megan Walsh, 308 Dean Hall, 963-3699; email: WalshMe@cwu.edu, office hours: by appointment.

**Prerequisites:** Geog 107

**Overview:** This course is designed to give you practical experience in designing and carrying out a field study in physical geography. Attention will be given to: 1) generating appropriate questions that can be answered with field data; 2) project planning to focus field effort; 3) methods and techniques of data collection; and 4) processing and analysis of samples. The topics covered in this course will focus on the health of forests of the eastern Cascades, forest disturbance, climate change, and human impacts on forest ecosystems.

## Course objectives:

- Learn basic field methods in geography such as research design, sampling strategies, landform analysis, map reading, and plant identification
- Design a field-based study, collect field data, organize and analyze field data and be able to interpret and summarize results
- Learn to work independently and as a group in an outdoor setting
- Learn to read scientific literature and effectively convey the topics discussed through written reactions
- Write a grant proposal using empirically collected field data and scientific literature

**Text and other resources:** All readings for the course will be available on via blackboard (blackboard.cwu.edu). You are expected to have access to the readings and to print out articles when necessary (I will let you know).

Grades, lecture notes, announcements, readings, homework assignments and other information will be posted on blackboard (courses.cwu.edu). Make sure you check this regularly to insure you know what is going on in class!

Here is a list of other items necessary for you to bring (or wear) when we go into the field:

- Field notebook ("Rite in the Rain" is best, but any notebook will do) and a pencil
- Sturdy close-toed shoes (no sandals allowed)
- Long pants (strongly recommended, although you may want to bring shorts with you too)
- Jacket or long-sleeve shirt (go for light-colored clothing, they repel mosquitoes)
- Hat
- Backpack
- Water bottle (mandatory!)
- Bug spray
- Sun screen
- Lunch
- Digital camera (optional)
- GPS (optional, we can borrow some from the department)

**Grading:** Your grade in the course will be based on your performance on:

Attendance and participation (25%)  
Homework assignments (30%)  
Field journal (15%)  
Grant proposal (30%)

Attendance is expected at all lectures and on all field trips. Your participation grade will also be based on your completion of reading assignments prior to coming on the field trips (you will need to bring some articles with you) and your involvement in the discussion of these articles.

Weekly homework assignments will be turned in via blackboard (under the "assignments" tab) and are due Sunday @ 11:59 pm. You will lose 10% of the possible points for every day the assignments are turned in late. The reading reactions will require you to read several articles and either answer questions or summarize them into sections that will be used in your final grant proposal (see below). Other homework assignments will be based on field activities.

Your final product you will turn in at the end of the course will be an 8-10 page (single spaced) grant proposal. This proposal will be based on the work we will be doing in the field throughout the 6-week period and additional research you do through the library's online databases. The grant proposal is due Friday July 26<sup>th</sup> @ 5 pm. I will give out more detailed instructions at a later time.

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A = 100-94, A- = 93-90

B+= 89-87, B= 86-83, B- = 82-80

C+= 79-77, C= 76-73, C- = 72-70

D+= 69-67, D= 66-63, D- = 62-60

F = 59 and below

Policies:

Cheating or any other academic misconduct/dishonesty will NOT BE TOLERATED. Examples of these behaviors include (but are not limited to):

- Plagiarism (passing off the work of another as that of your own)
- Copying answers from your neighbors during exams/activities or using a "cheat sheet"
- Dishonesty concerning reasons for absence from class or your presence in class
- Any other actions that might give you an unfair advantage over your classmates

All cases of academic dishonesty/misconduct will be treated very seriously. The penalties for engaging in academic dishonesty and/or misconduct can range from a grade of "F" for an assignment/exam to an automatic failure of the course. Please consult the university policy at <http://www.cwu.edu/~saem/index.php?page=student-conduct-code> if you have additional questions/concerns regarding academic dishonesty or CWU's Student Conduct Code.

Students with disabilities who require academic adjustments in this class are encouraged to meet with me during my office hours to discuss their disability-related needs. Please bring a copy of your Confirmation of Eligibility for Academic Adjustments (or email it to me) and your current class schedule to this meeting. If you are unable to meet during office hours due to class schedule conflicts, please call me at 963-3699 or email me at [WalshMe@cwu.edu](mailto:WalshMe@cwu.edu) to schedule an appointment. Students with disabilities who have not registered with the Center for Disability Services are not eligible to receive accommodations/academic adjustments. Please contact the CDS for additional information. Contact info: Center for Disability Services, Boullion room 205, phone: 963- 2171, email: [dahlberc@cwu.edu](mailto:dahlberc@cwu.edu) website: <http://www.cwu.edu/~dss/cms/>

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the quarter, please email me or come see me! Don't wait until the end of the quarter to voice your concerns. I am here to help you get the most out of this course, so please let me know how I can help.

**Note:** I consider this syllabus a contract between myself and the students in this course. In writing this syllabus, I have obligated myself to follow the policies and procedures contained herein. By being a student in this course, you are responsible for understanding and following these policies as well. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus. You will receive verbal and written notification of major changes to course policies, procedures and content.