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Human & Environmental Geography Field Course

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY | UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Spring 2016

TueThu11-12.30|Room 214

http://blogs.ubc.ca/geography379b/

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Siobhán McPhee, Ph.D.

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Room 124 | 604 827 2078

Office hours Wednesday 1-2pm and Thursday 9-11am

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

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INTRODUCTION

The field school and the activities will be based around the three pillars of sustainability – of importance to Human Geographers and Environment and Sustainability students alike: the Economy, the Social and the Environment. Student groups will be made up of 3 and consist of a mixture from both streams in order to have different perspectives in how students design and carry out their fieldwork.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

+ Apply knowledge gained in academic geography courses to ‘real’ world topics and projects.

+   Appreciate how knowledge is acquired through conducting original research.

* + Identify, discern, and apply a diversity of research methods and techniques  in the discipline of geography.
* + Decide on the appropriateness of the methods and techniques in geography  and then evaluate the chosen method/s.
* + Develop an in-depth understanding and critical awareness of local economic,  social, cultural and environmental landscapes through collaborating and  conducting research with community partners.
* + Demonstrate effective collaboration, initiative, and leadership within interdisciplinary teams.
* COURSE DESCRIPTION
* The field school course addresses important issues around intercultural understanding, engagement with local communities and sustainability, as defined by the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and ecological/environmental. Specifically the course is centered on Student Learning through a direct and real-life experience with the knowledge which you are acquiring through the research techniques and site visit components of the course. The course will expose you to issues of public concern through engaging with local community organizations in BC. You will have the opportunity to learn by doing, which is the cornerstone of geographical research.

ASSESSMENT

+ Create and maintain a personal learning space in the form of a blog as a group – this will be assessed by the instructor in weeks 3,6,9,12 (20%)

+ Weekly activities to be completed weeks 1-10 and 13 (10%)

+ Online discussion forums and peer engagement weeks 3,6,9,12 (10%)

+ Department presentation – present research overview to graduate students and faculty prior to field visit (10%)

 + Submit research findings using any presentation format agreed on with community partner and approved by instructor such as research paper, video, policy paper, poster, interactive multi-media (35%)

+ Final individual research reflection paper (15%)

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| **Assignment** | **%** | **Due date** |
| Blog (group grade) | 20% | Weeks 3,6,9,12 |
| Online discussion forum and peer engagement (individual grade) | 10% | Weeks 3,6,9,12 |
| Weekly activities (2 group grades, 9 individual grades) | 10% | Weeks 1-10 and 13 |
| Department presentation (group grade) | 10% | April 29th |
| Research project (group grade) | 35% | May 13th |
| Reflection paper (individual) | 15% | May 13th |

Detailed descriptions of the different assignments are at the end of the syllabus, along with the assessment criteria.

READINGS

1 Castree, N., Fuller, D., Kent, A., Kobayashi, A., Merrett, C.D., Pulido, L. & Barraclough, L. (2008) “Geography, pedagogy and politics”. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5): 680–718.

Klein, P., Fatima, M., McEwen, L., Moser, S. C., Schmidt, D., & Zupan, S. (2011) “Dismantling the ivory tower: Engaging geographers in university–community partnerships”, *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 35(3), 425-444.

Sellars, B. (2013) *They Called Me Number 1: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School.* Talon Books

2 Gibson, C., (2006) “Decolonising the production of geographical knowledges? Reflections on research with indigenous musicians”.  *Geografiska Annaler Series B - Human Geography,* 88 B (3): 277–284.

3 Fairhead, J., & Leach, M. (1995). “False forest history, complicit social analysis: rethinking some West African environmental narratives”. *World development*, 23(6), 1023-1035.

4 Norris, T. B. (2014). “Bridging the great divide: State, civil society, and ‘participatory’conservation mapping in a resource extraction zone”, *Applied Geography*, 54, 262-274.

5 Skop, E. (2006). “The methodological potential of focus groups in population geography”. *Population, space and place,* 12(2), 113-124.

6 Bergmann, L. (2013) “Bound by Chains of Carbon: Ecological–Economic Geographies of Globalization”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 103:6, 1348-1370

7 Ball, J. & Janyst, P. (2008). “Enacting research ethics in partnerships with indigenous communities in Canada: “Do it in a good way””. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics: An International Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 2. pp. 33-51

8 Kusek, W. A., & Smiley, S. L. (2014). “Navigating the city: gender and positionality in cultural geography research”. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, (ahead-of-print), 1-14.

9 Brown, G., Donovan, S., Pullar, D., Pocewicz, A., Toohey, R., & Ballesteros-Lopez, R. (2014). “An empirical evaluation of workshop versus survey PPGIS methods”. *Applied Geography*, 48, 42-51.

10 Garrett, B. L. (2011). “Videographic geographies: Using digital video for geographic research”, *Progress in Human Geography*, 35(4), 521-541.

Katz, C. (2013) “Playing with fieldwork”, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14:7, 762-772.

There are no obligatory readings for weeks 11-13 as you will be busy preparing your research for the site visit. On the class website there is a tab with “recommended resources” where you will find books, tips and articles that will be useful during the last three weeks of class.

WEEK BY WEEK

Week 1: What Is A Field School?

+ Importance of fieldwork in Geography

+ Three pillars framework of the course justification

05.01 First lecture: Introduction, overview of course and getting to know each other

07.01 Second lecture: Getting to know each other and the community partners

Lecture Activities

+ Get to know the site and the groups and organizations we will be working with throughout the course.

+ Divide into groups – UBC blog for blog creation

+ Short videos about Williams Lake

Weekly activity: Walking tour of False Creek with your group

Readings: Castree et. al (2008), Klein et. al. (2011), Sellars, B, (2013)

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Week 2: The Researcher’s Role

+ Assess the importance of the positionality of the researcher/student when conducting fieldwork

+ Developing awareness of the ‘other’ in research and what this entails

+ Strategies for being an ethical researcher

12.01 First lecture: CBEL lecture on working with a community partner

14.01 Second lecture: Group work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Activities in class based on assessing positionality

+ Becoming culturally aware even within one’s own context

+ Talk on ethical process in research and why this is important

Weekly Activity: Assessing my positionality

Reading: Gibson, C. (2006)

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Week 3: Interdisciplinarity and methods

+ Assessing the strength of having a combined human/environmental field school

+ The challenges which may occur working in a ‘mixed’ group

+ Analyzing the overlap of the methodologies in Geography including using triangulation and sampling in research

+ Examine data available for Williams Lake and how to access it

19.01 First lecture: Group work and class sharing

21.01 Second lecture: Library guest lecture Kelly Schultz room 217 library

Lecture Activities

+ Presentation by librarian on available data and its uses

+ Focus the discussion on strengths, weaknesses and necessity of working together

Weekly activity: Complete library worksheet

Reading Fairhead and Leach (1995)

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Week 4: What Is Participant Observation?

+ Techniques on how to engage with a community or location through observation

+ Differences and similarities between observational techniques of human and physical contexts

+ Approaches on being sensitive to the contexts being studied

26.01 First lecture: Guest lecture by graduate student who uses participant observation: May Farrales

28.01 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Discussion of participant/observational skills

+ Outline details of weekly activity provided on the worksheet

Weekly Activity:

+ Carry out participant observation worksheet provided in the lecture

+ Prepare for focus group next week based on your assigned role

Reading: Norris, T.B. (2014)

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Week 5: Focusing on the Focus Group

+ Purpose of a focus group

+ Techniques and challenges of designing a productive focus group

+ Ethical, cultural and social issues surrounding the design and facilitating of a focus group

02.02 First lecture: Guest lecture by graduate student who conduct focus groups: Emily Rosenman

04.02 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Pre-class task: Designing a focus group – video activity – *must watch prior to class*

+ Focus groups in class time – one group observing with one participating: (2 focus groups)

Weekly activity: Short reflection on focus group experience (500 words)

Reading Skop, E. (2014)

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Week 6: Data visualization

+ How to uncover existing data that may inform the research question being asked – think back to week 3 lecture with library

+ Techniques and challenges to using online sources as a research resource

09.02 First lecture: Guest lecturer experienced in archival work/data based research and visual representation: Graduate student Joey Lee

11.02 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Pre-class task: Using archives – watch the assigned video prior to class

+ Video based in-class discussion

Weekly Activity: Create a timeline of Williams Lake using (http://timeglider.com) illustrating the main events relevant to your community partner and research question/topic

Reading: Bergman, L. (2013)

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Week 7: A visitor from the site

+ Sarah Hunt, Michelle Daigle and Charlie Presti

23.02 First lecture: Lecture by First Nations community member

25.02 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Three perspectives on research with indigenous communities in North America

+ A researcher’s positionality when doing research in indigenous communities

Weekly Activity: Write a short reflection on the presentations given by the three guest speakers. Please especially focus on their positionality.

Reading Ball, J. & Janyst, P. (2008)

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Week 8: The Interview

+ Types and purpose of using interviews

+ Techniques and challenges of designing a productive focus group

+ Ethical, cultural and social issues surrounding the design and facilitating of interviews

01.03 First lecture: Guest speakers who conduct interviews in foreign contexts: Graduate student Craig Jones in Israel/Palestine

03.03 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Discussion on the types of interviews: structured, special structured, oral history

+ Questions and answers to guest speakers on their approach to interviewing

Weekly Activity: Interview someone (not from the class) on the issue which your group is addressing in Williams Lake

Reading Kusek, W. A., & Smiley, S. L. (2014)

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Week 9: The Survey

+ Techniques and decisions around using surveys as a technique in research

+ The importance of the design of the questions in a survey

08.03 First lecture: Guest researchers experienced in conducting surveys: graduate student Craig E. Jones

10.03 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Discussion on surveys and their relevance to this research

+ Questions and answers to speakers on approach to surveys and the importance of sampling

+ Problem-based learning: come up with a 10-item checklist of key considerations for designing and implementing a good survey

Weekly Activity: Write a short reflection on the 10-item checklist activity (500 words)

Reading Brown, G., Donovan, S., Pullar, D., Pocewicz, A., Toohey, R., &

Ballesteros-Lopez, R. (2014)

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Week 10: Emerging Methods

+ Become aware of ‘creative’ or alternative methodologies in geographical research

+ Assess how these are breaking norms and expanding research possibilities

+ Address the extent of these and the endless possibilities available

15.03 First lecture: Guest lecturer using alternative methods, such as film, art or other participatory methods: Graduate student Max Ritts

17.03 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Guest speakers presentations with questions and answers

+ Challenges of adopting ‘creative’ methodologies

+ What are the other possibilities of using alternative tools for a cross human/environmental research?

+ Learn about the resources and equipment available in the department

Weekly Activity: Alternative methods worksheet distributed in class

Readings Garrett, B. L. (2011), Katz, C. (2013)

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Week 11: Preparing for site visit

+ Acknowledging what skills we have, and what skills we might need

+ Experimenting/piloting some of the techniques gained during the first 10 weeks

+ Identify any issues within group work which need to be addressed

22.03 First lecture: Group work on class presentation

24.03 Second lecture: Group work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Group work in class time

+ Work with your group on designing a short 15 minutes presentation to the group on your research questions and methodological approach

Weekly Activity: No weekly activity – prepare for your class presentation

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Week 12: Preparing for site visit

+ Preparing for group presentation next week

+ Presenting methodological approach to a research question

29.03 First lecture: Group work

31.03 Second lecture: Group Work and class sharing

Lecture Activities

+ Group work in class time

+ Work with your group on designing a short 15 minutes presentation to the group on your research questions and methodological approach

Weekly Activity: No weekly activity

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Week 13: Communicating Your Findings

+ Presentations to class

+ Preparation for site visit

05.04 First lecture: Group presentations

07.04 Second lecture: Group presentations

Lecture Activities

+ Group Presentations

Weekly Activity: Provide written feedback to another group on their presentation

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 29.04

+ Held in Geography department with virtual connection to Williams Lake and Community partners

SITE VISIT 01.05 - 06-05

+ Detailed information about the Williams Lake visit will be provided in class and in other documents.

WRITING UP 09.05 – 13.05

+ Submit blog and paper by end of the semester

THE BLOG (20%) group grade DUE weekly but graded in weeks 3, 6, 9 & 12

You are asked to use UBC Blogs for your group blog (<http://blogs.ubc.ca>) as it will remain private accessible only to CWL users. Blogs encourage experimenting and risk-taking, seriousness and play, and they foster an increased awareness of the relationship between your individual understanding of an issue and the broader impact of what you are studying. In using your own voice, you will learn how to develop analysis and articulate ideas to a larger public. Your blog is your journal for this course, where you reflect on the content of the lectures, guest speakers, weekly activities and the work your group is doing with the community partner. It is a showcase of the work you do over the entire term and enables you to learn how to craft an online presence around a topic of interest to you. Suggestions of sections or pages on your blog could include:

+ Introducing the team – background on your group and on your community partner.

**+** Every group member should also have their own page to address weekly reflections.

+ A section containing regular updates on progress with community partner

+ A resource bank of information directly relevant to your project and community partner

+ Your research proposal – this should be updated as the course progresses. Although the blog will be graded for everything on this list, these are the specific items which should be updated for grading purposes:

* Week 3: Your groups’ research question and initial proposal
* Week 6: Initial theoretical framework
* Week 9: Selection of a methodological approach and chosen tools
* Week 12: Complete research proposal for site visit as well as any initial data gathered

+ Your project findings as your research progresses – this does not have to be the final project in its entirety but rather is a showcase of your research findings as you progress through the term

You will be graded on the clarity of your presentation in terms of the organization of the blog and your group’s work. You will also be graded on your progression over the course of the term, on how your research proposal develops, your resources grow, and your research expands.

You can view past course blogs at the following links:

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/sd27/>

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/geog379spcteam/>

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/geog379md/>

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/geogfieldschool/>

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/geob379bpuddleproduce/>

<http://blogs.ubc.ca/379thecityofwl/sample-page/>

**However, please keep in mind that the portfolio requirements have changed since the course was offered last year.** As such, you should be attentive to the assessment scheme and instructions in this syllabus and given in class.

Weekly ACTIVITIES (10%) Individual Grade DUE Weekly

You are expected to complete and submit the weekly activities at the beginning of the Tuesday lecture. Necessary worksheets and information on the False Creek walk will be distributed in class. All worksheet activities are an individual grade except the False Creek Walk.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATION (10%) group grade DUE April 29th

The virtual conference is a great opportunity to showcase all the work you have been doing to your community partners but also to your peers and instructor. Prior to the site visit you will be expected to attend the conference held in the Department of Geography at UBC on the 29th of April. Your group should present the main points of your project from the overview of your research design, to context of your community partner and the proposed field research when in Williams Lake. I would recommend that you use a presentation tool such as Powerpoint or Prezi. You will be graded based on the clarity of you argument and whether you have met the objectives you set out at the beginning of the project. You will also be graded on your ability to answer any questions proposed to your group on your project.

RESEARCH FINDINGS SUBMISSION (35%) group grade DUE May 13th

You are very much encouraged to use your imagination for your final group project presentation, however it is recommended that you consult with your community partner on the format. The instructor must approve all presentation formats and you are advised to decide on this earlier in the research project. Suggestions include a research paper (please see website for format), a video, a policy document, a poster, or some form of interactive media (Any form of interface between the audience and the medium may be considered interactive, and is therefore not limited to electronic or digital media. Examples are board games, pop-up books, gamebooks, flip books, video games, social media forum, digital media). You will be graded on the clear presentation of your findings through the use of your format specifically on how the clear link between your research question and your findings. Please be inventive but realistic, and you must agree with your community partner and instructor on the presentation format. See separate grading rubric attached.

FINAL INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION PAPER 2000-2500 words (15%) DUE May 13th

In this paper you are asked to reflect on your experiences conducting group research and working with your community partner. This involves reflecting on your positionality in the research process and in relation to your community partner, making connections between your specific research experiences and geographical concepts more broadly, and analyzing how working in a group contributed to the output of your research. It is expected that you will engage in a great deal of self-reflection in this paper while demonstrating your growth as a scholar and researcher. The reflection paper is an open-ended assignment and will be completed at the conclusion of your research project.

I suggest using your own individual page on the blog where you reflected on weekly lectures as a basis for your paper.

The paper should include the following sections:

* Reflection on process of doing research including guest speakers and weekly activities
* Reflection on experience of being in Williams Lake and working with a community partner
* Reflection on working in a group on a research project
* Connect your work in GEOG 379B to your future career or grad school plans: create a three-sentence personal statement based on your reflection paper. Resources for creating a personal statement and a personal webpage to publicize items from your UBC coursework are available here: [enter link to Julie’s “additional resources” website].

Below are some questions which you can use to shape the three sections of your paper:

* What parts of your research experience in GEOG 379B helped you learn best?
* What did you learn about yourself through working as part of a team in this course?
* What is something that surprised you about the research process?
* What were the proudest highlights of your learning in the course? Conversely, what were your main disappointments?
* If someone asked why you were studying Williams Lake, what would you say?
* What does it mean to be “of service” to a community like Williams Lake? Who is your community?
* What does it mean to study on Musqueam traditional territory?
* What do you want your field of expertise to be? What does research in this field look like and how might you contribute to the development of knowledge in your chosen field?
* What is sustainability? How does your research connect with sustainability?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A. Setting up a Wordpress Portfolio

Mike Fabris is the field school TA who will help you with any enquiries in terms of setting up your group blog. Please see him during office hours to address any questions or concerns. Below is an overview of the important steps:

1. Sign-up & Login

a) Go to https://blogs.ubc.ca/ and click on the “CWL Log-in” button to log-in with your UBC CWL username and password.

b) Click on “Create a Website”, and create a site name (lowercase a-z only) and title. Try to keep your site name simple and easy to identify for your TAs and instructors. You can allow search engines to index your site or not. These settings can be changed later. Remember that your portfolio will eventually be accessed by your community partner and possibly other organizations in Williams Lake.

c) Find your “Dashboard” in the upper-left corner drop-down menu and begin customizing your site.

2. Getting Started

a) Clean House: your “At a Glance” window will show that you have one page and one post. Click through and trash these defaults so you can start with a blank slate.

b) Create a page: from your “Dashboard” click “Pages” from the left-side menu and create a page by clicking “Add New”. How your portfolio looks is up to you, but it’s a good idea to have a “Home” page. Try naming this page “Home” and writing a short description of your group’s project. Let us know who you are! Click “publish” to save your changes. You can make this your default page later on.

c) Create pages for the various pieces of your project. For example, research design, information on your community partner, biographies for your research team, etc.

3. Customize your Portfolio

a) From your “Dashboard” click “Customize Your Site”. From here you can customize almost all aspects of your portfolio, from its appearance to custom widgets.

b) When selecting an Appearance, simplicity can be a virtue. Start simply and choose more complicated themes as you become more comfortable with your portfolio.

c) Edit your Site Title & Tagline. Make sure to change the default tagline: this is not ‘just another UBC blog’.

d) Create a Static Front Page by selecting the “Home” option for your front page. This will help orient viewers to your portfolio.

e) On the same page, set your “posts page” to “Research Blog” or a similar title. This will ensure that your blog entries go directly onto this page.

f) Widgets can add a lot of customization options to your site. They can also add a lot of clutter. Feel free to remove any or all of the default widgets to give your portfolio a clean, professional look.

g) Remember to click “save & publish” for all your changes!

4. Adjust Privacy Settings

a) From your “Dashboard” go to “Settings” and select “I would like my site to be visible only to registered network users.”

5. Post!

a) When you are ready to make your first post, from your Dashboard go to Post and “add new”.

Remember, you can only post images or other media on your blog if you obtain proper copyright permissions or if you create the media yourself (e.g., take your own digital photo).

B. Items for blog reflection on weekly activities: (This is for your individual section and will also contribute towards your final reflection paper)

Week 1-3 Consider:

* What are potential research questions for your group
* Your position in the research in terms of our site. What ethical issues might you encounter?
* What is the process of getting ethics approval as a student who wants to conduct research at UBC?
* Why do you think it is important for your group to work well together: identify the group’s strengths. How can the work be shared and divided?
* Where can we find secondary data for our research question? What is the best approach to getting this data? Should we look at more than one source?

Week 4-6 Consider:

* What form will your participant observation take during the site visit? Will you take different observational approaches or just one? How do these relate to week 2’s ethical issues?
* Is participation in one of the focus group on the site visit necessary for your group? What data will you get from participating? What issues may arise?

Week 7-9 Consider:

* What were the different approaches of the three researchers to studying indigenous communities? What does this make you think about your own positionalities?
* Who will you want to interview on the field site trip? What type of interviews will you use? What else will you need to consider in the preparation or your interviews?
* Is a survey possible in your research – before departure? Why use a survey as opposed at another method? Designing the right questions

Week 10-13 Consider:

* Can your group adopt any of the emerging methods discussed methods? Requirements? What can they add to your research question?
* Assess how these are breaking norms and expanding research possibilities
* What are some of the difficulties, aside from ethical, you might encounter when doing your fieldwork?
* What is good research communication?

UNIVERSITY STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Academic Honesty and Standard

Academic honesty is essential to the continued functioning of the UBC as an institution of higher learning and research. All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of an academic community. Breach of those expectations or failure to follow the appropriate policies, principles, rules, and guidelines of the University with respect to academic honesty may result in disciplinary action.

It is the student’s obligation to inform themself of the applicable standards for academic honesty. Students must be aware that standards at UBC may be different from those in secondary schools or at other institutions. If a student is in any doubt as to the standard of academic honesty in a particular course or assignment, then the student must consult with the instructor as soon as possible, and in no case should a student submit an assignment if the student is not clear on the relevant standard of academic honesty.

Inclusivity

You are expected to be attentive to postings & comments by instructors and TAs; ask questions if you do not understand something; offer your opinion in online discussions. UBC is committed to providing a positive climate for all students, faculty, and staff. All persons shall have equal access to its programs and facilities without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, or sexual orientation.

Racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate to express in this class. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help.

Availability of Disability and Mental Health Services

If you have any special classroom requirements please contact one of the offices listed below. They will work with you and, if necessary, they will contact the instructor to work out the details for any necessary accommodation.

RESOURCES

Department of Geography, Student Services

Suzanne Lawrence

Room 218

604 822 2020

Suzanne.lawrence@geog.ubc.ca

UBC Writing Centre

http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/improve-your-writing/

Access & Diversity

Brock Hall | Room 1203

604.822.5844

http://students.ubc.ca/about/access

University Councelling and Consulting Services

Brock Hall | Room 1040

604 822 3811

http://students.ubc.ca/livewell/services/

counselling-services