

Geography 486/586: Field Methods (Fall 2015)

Faculty:

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Meeting time: We meet on **Fridays** from 9-3:30 (sometimes **earlier** or **later** depending on our work.)

Meeting place: PH1-227 and various locations in Southern California ☺



Field Class in Avalon, Catalina Island

GOALS: By the end of this semester you will be able to: (i) gather data in the field using a variety of techniques, (ii) understand the limitations of gathering your own data, (iii) define a research question and determine the best method for gathering and analyzing data to address your question, (iv) write a well-structured research report, and (v) have a better knowledge of various physical and human environments in Southern California. In addition, we will spend a lot of time working in groups and you will gain valuable experience in collaboration.

Required Materials

Turlo, J. 2005. *Guidelines for writing Field Research Reports* (on beachboard).

Hay, I. (2010) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. 3rd Edition. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Recommended Reading

Hay, I. 2012. *Communicating in Geography and the Environmental Sciences*. Oxford U. Press.

A useful and general guide for writing reports and papers, and for making presentations.

Additional reading and **field excursion questions and assignments** will be posted on BeachBoard at least one week prior to the field day. BeachBoard is also where we will **post announcements** to the class. Please check your e-mail regularly as plans for field outings may change.

Field Methods introduces advanced students to variety of methodological approaches for exploring biophysical and human geographies. The course includes both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Field Methods is designed to enhance your skills in recognizing real world geographic patterns and features, developing methods of collecting, describing, interpreting and analyzing geographic data in the field and solving geographic problems. The course is experiential in nature. There will be a great deal of hands-on work as well as a significant amount of writing. Over the duration of the course, fieldwork will be concentrated in the following areas: biogeography, environmental issues, restoration, social and geography, feminist geography and urban geography.

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Course Organization This class meets on *most Fridays* as a group and on one 3-day weekend during the fall semester. There are also dates set aside for individual or small group independent field-work (note that on some days we go past the 3:30 end time and we will give this time back to you at a later date). Transportation will be **by carpool** to all sites. **Be prepared to offer to drive and/or share gas cost.**

Assignments This course is an intensive field and writing course. You will be graded on 9 reports. About ½ of these reports will involve group work; a single group report will be submitted for a grade in these cases (see table below). Individuals in the group must determine the work distribution and “sign-off” on the final copy. Assignments should be submitted in digital form. Reports should look professional and will be graded on thoroughness and accuracy as well as layout and style (see Hay 2003 and Turlo 2005 for details on what is expected). For the Catalina trip and the Final Project, students will form groups based on their interest in the different topics.

Assignment	Group or Individual	Points
Ethnographies	Individual	50
Palos Verdes. (Causes of type conversion in CSS).	Individual	50
Catalina. (Vegetation sampling issues; Cultural geographies)	Group (vegetation & cultural geography)	100
GIS lab assignment	Individual	50
So-Cal Beaches and La Jolla Valley, Pt Mugu	Group (vegetation & cultural geography)	100
Qual Labs	Individual & group (x 4~5)	50
Final Rewrite Projects	Group	100
TOTAL		500

Grades are based on a point system. Points earned by the student are awarded based on the quality of the fieldwork, clarity and thoroughness of work submitted, participation, and improvement. You will be required to complete all assignments, varying in work-load and point value. Typically, students who earn 90% or more of the total possible points earn “A”s, 80%-89% “B”s, 70%-79% and so on. There are **no** traditional exams (*Yippee!*).

Late Assignment Policy The due date and time for assignments will be identified at the time the work is assigned. Students who turn in work late will be penalized. The penalty will be in the

form of a loss of 5% of the score per day. Make a special effort to turn assignments in on time since the course moves quickly to the next topic.

Plagiarism Plagiarism is the act of taking the ideas or work of another and passing it off as one’s own. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and is grounds for expulsion. In this class you will be encouraged to work in pairs or groups. If you use material created or gathered by a fellow student, you must note this on your paper/report. Likewise, if you co-author a report for the class, it must be clear to us that the work is a joint project. In general, be sure to give credit to all of your sources of information, e.g. photographs, maps, or written descriptions. See CSULB policy:

<http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/research/our/information/policies/cheating/>.

Absences and Tardiness Absences are extremely difficult to overcome and every effort should be made to attend class. If you know you will be absent from class please inform us prior to class. Field classes will begin promptly at 9:00 in the morning unless otherwise noted. You must arrive to class on-time. Tardiness disrupts class and in our case it may mean that you are left behind (it has happened)!

Eating in the Classroom We do not mind if you snack or drink in class during our morning session. We would rather have you eat in class than starve in the field! Please clean up after yourself.

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Transportation We require that all students car pool. The only exception to the rule is if you are coming from far away from campus and it will be much more convenient for you to return home directly from the field rather than return to campus. Car pool agreements should be agreed to before leaving campus. Passengers in car pools are expected to contribute to the driver for the cost of gas.

CSULB requires that all drivers (their cars) be insured for a minimum of \$15,000 personal injury for one person, \$30,000 for personal injury for two or more persons, and \$5,000 for property damage. Cars driven by students on field trips must be properly registered, insured, and equipped with working seat belts for the driver and each passenger.

University Withdrawal policy It is the **student's** responsibility to withdraw from a class. Withdrawal from a course after the first two weeks of instruction requires the signature of the instructor and department chair, and is permissible only for serious and compelling reasons. The deadline to withdraw for the Fall semester without a "W" is September 8, 2014. During the final three weeks of instruction, **withdrawals are not permitted** except in cases such as accident or serious illness where the circumstances causing withdrawal are clearly beyond the student's control and the assignment of an "incomplete" grade is not practical.

Things to bring on Field Days

- An open and inquiring mind!
- Notebook or other device for making notes while standing
- Sunglasses, sun screen and hat
- Muddy boots and/or dusty sandals, or walking shoes if in the city
- Camera (**required!**)
- GPS, compass, map of area (optional)
- WATER!
- Cell phone
- Snacks and Lunch (some days we will need sack lunches)
- First Aid (bee allergies anyone?)

Final Note: We do a lot of walking each week. If for any reason you think you will have trouble, please let us know.

*****IF AT ANY TIME YOU NEED HELP, PLEASE ASK FOR IT! *****

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Calendar of Activity
(Times are subject to change as semester progresses!)

WEEK	DATE	PROF	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	TIME*
1	August 28	PL/DT	Introduction and Paperwork [Read Turlo in advance]	CSULB	9:00-11:00
2	Sept 4	DT	Field Trip: Ethnographies & Drifting [Read Hay, Chap 1 & 12; other readings on BB] Report writing	CSULB Long Beach (via Passport)	9:00-4:00
3	Sept 11	PL/DT	Lab work and Prep for P.V.	CSULB	10-1
4	Sept 18	PL	Field Trip: Type Conversion in Coastal Sage [Read Engelberg et al. and "Sampling"]	Palos Verdes	8:00-3:00
5	Sept 25	PL/DT	Lab work and Prep for Catalina (GIS Lab) [Read Laris Proposal]	CSULB	10-1
6	Oct 2-4 Over-night!	PL/DT	Overnight Field Trip: Catalina Details TBA	Catalina: Wrigley Marine Science Center	Leave Friday am; return Sunday eve
7	Oct 9	PL	Lab Work (Assignment)	CSULB	10-2
8	Oct 16	NO CLASS, work on write-up.			
9	Oct 23	NO CLASS (APCG meeting, Palm Springs)			
10	Oct 30	DT	Lab: Managing Qualitative Data using NVivo Software; Interviews & Ethics, Part I [Read Hay, Chap 2, 6, 14]	CSULB	9:00-12:00
11	Nov 6-7 Over-night!	PL/DT	Overnight Field Trip (camping): La Jolla Valley, Pt. Mugu [Read: Laris et al.] Geographical Methods & Postmodernity [Read: Thien & Pugh; Urban Rangers; Hay, Chap 4]	Pt. Mugu/ Carbon Beach	Meet at CSULB Friday Am; return Saturday PM
12	Nov 13	NO CLASS			
13	Nov 20	DT	Lab: Qual Data Analysis in NVivo [Read; Hay, Chap 14 & 15]; Interviews & Ethics, Part II; Transcription (audio/video) [Read Hay, Chap 2, 6, 14]	CSULB	
14	Nov 27	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving			
15	Dec 4	DT	Lab: Final presentation discussion and prep	CSULB	
16	Dec 11	PL/DT	Conclusions and final presentations PARTY/POTLUCK???	TBA	
		PL/DT	Final Reports Due		

* All finish times are *approximate*. Depending on traffic and work pace, we may arrive back at campus later. We recommend that we leave early on long field days rather than return late. Our choice would be to work from 7 AM until 3:30 PM to avoid heat and traffic.