

## 1.1 THE DISCIPLINE OF GEOGRAPHY

Geography is an important and dynamic discipline which encompasses the concerns of the humanities and social sciences and the scientific study of the natural world. It provides those who study it with a broad-based education about the world, and is one of the few academic subjects to synthesize ideas and information from the environment, economics, politics, society and culture. In a world increasingly characterized by global change (climate warming and other environmental changes, and economic and cultural globalization), the importance of a solid, broad-based geographical education to an understanding of our complex, inter-related planet has never been greater.

In the Department we place considerable emphasis on the linkages between developed and developing countries, and on applied geographical themes that connect people to the environment, such as natural hazards and disaster management, tourism and coastal processes, natural resource management and the environment, and urban geography and planning. Our courses cover a wide range of material, from tropical and temperate countries, and from industrialized/developed countries and the developing world. However, the Caribbean region is our geographical tapestry, so naturally many of our courses include Caribbean examples – more so than any other university geography degree in the world. We even have a special, Level III course on the region. Thus, we want UWI geography graduates to have the broad world view of geography graduates elsewhere, but also to have a deeper understanding of the Caribbean than their counterparts from universities in North America and elsewhere in the world.

The Department provides a friendly teaching and learning environment for geographers. The administrative structure of the Department has changed several times since the Geography degree was introduced on the Mona campus in 1965. In 1996, Geography and Geology were merged to form a single academic department housed in two buildings. Building A (the de la Beche building) is the older building. The upper floor includes the offices of geography lecturers and the computer laboratory. The ground floor houses the offices of geology lecturers, teaching classrooms (Labs #1 and #2), and three analytical laboratories (sedimentology, optics and paleo-environmental). The basement houses a teaching classroom (Lab #3), the Geology Museum and the rock-cutting laboratory. Building B includes the Map Library and Undergraduate Reading Room and a teaching classroom (Lab #4).

We hope you find the department an exciting, stimulating and friendly place to study geography. Our most significant non-physical feature as a learning environment arises because we attract students from all over the Caribbean region; from Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, St Vincent, St Kitts & Nevis and St Lucia and other islands, as well as Belize. The regional character of the UWI, sadly, is not as strong as in the past. But we are very proud that our department can still offer West Indian students a West Indian experience, an opportunity to meet people from different parts of the region, to share educational, social and personal learning experiences and ideas, and forge lifetime friendships.

We also place great emphasis on developing good relationships and rapport between staff and students. The Department is fairly small in comparison to other academic departments at Mona, and certainly in comparison to geography departments elsewhere in the world. Nevertheless, the Department has a good reputation for its “family atmosphere” and the approachability of staff. In part, this is because of the importance we place on fieldwork which provides opportunities to get outside the classroom and get to know both staff and other students very well. Remember, though, that interaction is a two-way process – a happy and successful Department depends on the active involvement of students and staff alike.

## 1.2 WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION

The most important contact person in first year geography is your first year tutor. You will be allocated a tutor during the second or third first teaching week at the university. Your tutor will be a postgraduate, research students who have obtained good first degrees in geography from our department and so “know the ropes.”

You will have weekly meetings with your tutor in a tutorial class, which is a small discussion group of first year students like yourself. While the primary role of a tutorial is to help you prepare for the first year examinations, these meetings will also help you gradually understand what it means to be a university student, how to improve your academic and time management skills, and how to take advantage of the facilities available on campus. You can get to know your tutor very well during your first semester, and you can turn to your tutor for advice as the need may arise.

### 1.2a Undergraduate Notice Boards

Information about courses, timetables, seminars and tutorials is to be found on the notice boards which are located outside the Main Departmental Office on the ground floor of Building A. This is an important way in which lecturers routinely communicate with students. You should check the notice boards every time you come into the Department, in order not to miss important announcements. There are other notice boards in the Department which provide additional information. One notice board is dedicated to Student Matters, including the Geographical and Geological Societies and other student activities, as well as the Minutes of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee.

### 1.2b Departmental Offices

The Main Departmental Office is located on the ground floor in Building A, and is manned by secretarial staff from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Mondays to Fridays. This is the normal point of entry for visitors to the Department. There is a smaller Departmental Office located on the upper floor in Building A. Secretaries are usually able to answer your questions concerning undergraduate information. Any official Departmental forms that you may need to obtain are normally available from one of these offices. If you want to leave a message for a member of staff, it can be left in staff letter boxes (pigeon holes) in the Main Departmental Office. The

secretary will place the message in the appropriate pigeon hole for you. She will also convey any messages to lecturers you may phone in to the Department in the same way.

The Department has its own website at [www.uwimona.edu.jm](http://www.uwimona.edu.jm)/which has additional information about courses. The UWI website ([www.uwimona.edu.jm](http://www.uwimona.edu.jm)) contains a wealth of relevant information on campus services, news items, and other matters of interest.

### 1.2c OURVLE

Lecturers usually post their POWERPOINT lectures on OURVLE soon after the lecture has been delivered. In addition, some reading material including articles and book chapters may be posted on OURVLE for you to read or download. Lecturers and tutors may use OURVLE to communicate with students, and the platform is often used for the on-line submission of essays and coursework.

### 1.2d Email

You are strongly encouraged to use the email facility provided by the University. Many important announcements are sent by email (through OURVLE), and the use of a common format for email addresses makes it easier for you to be contacted by lecturers or tutors if necessary.

## 1.3 WHO'S WHO IN THE DEPARTMENT

Head of Department

Dr. Donovan Campbell

Lecturers

Geography

Dr. Donovan Campbell

Dr. David Miller

Dr. Michael Burn

Ms. Shaneica Lester/Dr. Rose-Ann Smith

Dr. Robert Kinlocke

Emeritus Professor David Barker

## Geology

Professor Simon Mitchell

Dr. Arpita Mandal

Dr. Tom Stemann

Dr. Sherene James-Williamson

Dr. Taneisha Edwards

Geography Coordinator     Dr. Michael Burn

Geology Coordinator     Dr. Tom Stemann

Examinations Coordinator     Dr. David Miller

## Support Staff

Administrative Assistant     Ms. Denese Francis

Secretary (Upstairs)     Mrs. Coreen Cornwall-Perry

Secretary (Downstairs)     Ms. Camille Wint

Museum Curator     Dr. Sherene James-Williamson

Map Curator     Dr. Thera Edwards

Computer Technician/Cartographer     Mr. Leonard Notice

Laboratory Technician     Mr. Rupert Green

Office Attendants     Ms. Karen Bogle & Ms. Donna Williams

Senior Laboratory Technician     Mr. Dave Archer

## 1.4 USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

## Department

Phone 876-927-2129, 876-927-2128

Extension 2258, 2259, 2246, 2210

Fax 876-977-6029

Email [geoggeol@uwimona.edu.jm](mailto:geoggeol@uwimona.edu.jm)

## Faculty Offices

Science & Technology 876- 927-1785, extensions 2401, 2961, 2962

Humanities & Education 876-970-1666, 876- 977-3659, extension 2365

## Office of Student Services & Development

876-970-2739, 876-977-3880, extensions 2541, 2546

## Health Centre

876-970-0017, extension 2270, 2370

### 2.1 THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

The Head of Department has the ultimate responsibility for all administrative, financial and academic activities of the Department, including the undergraduate programme. As far as possible, he tries to maintain close contact with students.

### 2.2 GEOGRAPHY COORDINATOR

The Geography Coordinator, Dr. Michael Burn, is one of your lecturers in first year human geography. You will be able to discuss any matter concerning the geography programme with him as needs arise. It is absolutely essential that you have registered on-line properly at the beginning of each semester, as it may affect your smooth progression through Levels I to III. You should see the Geography Coordinator if you have queries about your course registrations, declaration of Majors and Minors or other degree changes, or suspending or withdrawing from the degree programme.

## 2.2 LECTURER AVAILABILITY

We think it is important that staff members are available to see students. You will get an opportunity to discuss your courses with lecturers in the classroom, in their offices, during field work, or informally and on an ad hoc basis around the Department. If you have a problem with, or a query, about a course you are encouraged to discuss this first with the appropriate lecturer. However, remember that all lecturers are also active in research and other professional activities, in addition to their undergraduate, postgraduate teaching and administrative duties, so they are sometimes not available for consultation.

You can make arrangements to see staff informally or via a formal appointment arranged through the Main Departmental Office. In an emergency you should contact the Departmental Office.

## 2.4 STUDENT RECORD CARDS

When you join the Department, you will be asked to fill in a record card, giving details of your home and term addresses and your educational history and qualifications. This will be done during the first practical class in the first week of Semester I. It is important that you are present at this session because it is also used to assign first year students to tutorial groups. If, during the time you are in the Department, you change your address or telephone contact numbers, please inform the Administrative Assistant so we can update your records. The record cards are important because lecturers use them when they are writing references for you, for example, when you are seeking a job or applying for postgraduate courses. Please help us keep your information up to date by informing of changes in your contact details.

We also display class photographs in the upper floor Departmental Office, and you can consult these to learn the names of your classmates.

## 2.5 ILLNESS AND OTHER EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Unfortunately, illness occurs from time to time. If, for any reason, you have an illness or other problem which influences your ability to attend classes or undertake your academic studies for any length of time, you should inform the Departmental Office and, if possible, the lecturers whose classes are affected.

The University has strict rules about procedures to be followed in the case of illness, so you need to familiarize yourself with them. If you are absent from a lecture, practical, tutorial class or field class, you will need to obtain a doctor's note from the University Health Centre. This is a University regulation. The note needs to specify the dates of any classes missed, and you need

to ensure that the Health Centre sends it on to the Head of Department. The University does not accept sick notes from your family doctor, so even if you obtain treatment from your family doctor you must still follow the correct University procedure and also visit the University Health Centre to obtain the relevant documentation.

## 2.6 ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYMENT

You are expected to attend all lectures, tutorials, seminars, field trips and any other teaching classes indicated by your lecturers.

Permission for any prolonged absence for reasons other than illness must be obtained from the Head of Department.

Both the Geography and the Geology programmes have field classes on Saturdays, at Levels, I, II and III. Field classes are critical aspects of your geography/geology education and learning and are also opportunities for social interaction. They are often enjoyable and rewarding experiences and allow you to visit places in Jamaica you may not have visited before. Saturday field classes are unavoidable because of the intensive organization of the university timetable. Participation in field work affects the social lives of both students and lecturers alike. Saturday field classes, thus, are compulsory, in both Geography and Geology. Non-attendance at field classes in both Geography and Geology will result in you not getting a final grade for the course in question.

If you are unable to attend Saturday field classes for any reason you should NOT register for the Geography or Geology degree.

Attendance records are taken at the start of all tutorials and field trips and, from time to time, at the beginning of lectures and practical classes. Absences are reported to the Head of Department and there are consequences for missing classes:

Regular non-attendance at lectures, tutorials and practical classes can result in your being debarred from sitting an examination.

Non-attendance in tutorials will result in marks being deducted from your final tutorial grade. Failure to submit essays in tutorials will result in your failing the coursework component of the course, thus failing the course.

Non-attendance at practical classes will result in your being graded with a zero for that particular class.

Non-attendance in a field class will result in your coursework mark being incomplete. Even if you pass the examination and have a letter from the Health Centre, you will need to successfully complete the fieldwork the following year before you are deemed to have passed the course. An incomplete field class may affect your ability to advance to the next level in the degree programme.

Non-attendance at lectures will not only affect your academic performance, but is unlikely to impress your lecturers whom you may ultimately depend upon to write you a job reference after you graduate.

## 2.6a Timetable Clashes

Faculty timetables are not infallible. As far as possible, timetables are designed to ensure that students at a particular level can combine cognate subjects, like geography and geology, or geography and life sciences, without timetable clashes. However, on occasion there may be timetable clashes, especially where your course registration straddles different levels, or where you have selected an unusual combination of subjects. Missing classes is prejudicial to your education and can have serious consequences in terms of your preparation for and performance in examinations. Should a timetable clash arise, you need to resolve it as quickly as possible at the start of the semester and in a way that is acceptable to all the lecturers involved. If other students have the same clash, it is sensible to try to act as a group to resolve the problem rather than acting individually. All timetable clashes must be reported to the Administrative Assistant or Geography Coordinator.

The Department recognizes that many students seek paid employment during the academic year for financial support. However, we are concerned that employment does not disrupt your academic work. University regulations state that full-time undergraduates shall not undertake paid employment during scheduled class hours, and this should not normally exceed 20 hours in any one week during term-time.

Permission to waive such regulations must be obtained from the Dean and is only granted in exceptional circumstances. You should ensure therefore that if you undertake employment during the semester it does not clash with any of your academic commitments, including lectures, tutorials, practical classes, seminars and field classes. If, for any reason, you feel that you are having difficulty completing work or coping with your courses, you should talk to your tutor, or the Head of Department or any other lecturer as early as possible. Genuine difficulties will be viewed sympathetically, and most problems can be dealt with as long as we are informed early enough.

## 3. THE UNDERGRADUATE GEOGRAPHY DEGREE PROGRAMME

### 3.1 Undergraduate Geography at UWI

The discipline of Geography concerns the study of the earth's places and environments, with a particular interest in the relationships between people and their environments. It is a discipline which stretches from the humanities and social sciences (which seek to understand the dynamics of societies, cultures and human behaviour) to the earth sciences (which seek to explain the development of physical landscapes and the dynamics of environmental processes). Geography puts this understanding of social and environmental processes within the essential context of places and regions. It recognizes differences in cultures, political systems,



economies, landscapes and physical environments across the world, and the complexities of the links between them.

The Geography degree programme is designed to give a sound and extensive introduction to the study of Geography, and provides the opportunity of studying advanced, specialized courses at Level III. Our first- and second-year core courses are compulsory and provide the essentials of the modern discipline of Geography. Our courses are progressively more demanding, commensurate with your personal intellectual development, increasing knowledge and your acquisition of key technical skills as you move through your university degree programme. Our final year courses reflect the specialized research of lecturers as well as current knowledge, debates and issues in the discipline. The current range of courses available in final year includes urban development, tourism, tropical agriculture and rural development, coastal and karst geomorphology, hazards and disaster management, tropical biogeography and GIS.

Geography is offered at UWI either as a B.A. or a B.Sc. degree, in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, and the Faculty of Science & Technology, respectively. Despite the different names of the degree, the geography content and geography courses available are the same irrespective of which Faculty you belong to. The difference between the B.A. Geography and the B.Sc. Geography degrees lies in the choice of other subjects and courses you are able to combine with your geography programme.

If you are in the Faculty of Science & Technology you are likely to be registered either for a Geography Major or a Geography Minor. Some students may wish to register for a Geosciences Major. While it is possible to register for a Double Major, in Geography and Geology, Geography and Life Sciences, or Geography and Computer Sciences, for example, but we strongly advise you to seek counseling, from the Faculty Office, the Geography Coordinator and from other lecturers before embarking on such, because of the heavy workload involved and the registration regulations governing double majors.

If you are in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, you are likely to be registered for a Geography Major. It is possible to do a Geography Minor in this faculty. Please consult the Geography Coordinator for advice and counseling regarding your selection of courses.

If you are in the Faculty of Social Sciences; it is possible to do a Geography Minor. Please consult the Geography Coordinator for advice and counseling regarding your selection of courses.

### 3.2 Grade Point Average (GPA)

Your academic progress and class of degree is determined by your Grade Point Average (GPA). The regulations relating to GPAs are contained in UWI booklet Examination Regulations for First Degrees, Associate Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates Including GPA Regulations. You should familiarize yourself with these regulations, calculations and conversions of percentage marks and letter grades into GPA and class of degree. Make sure you consult the most up-to-date

version of these regulations. If you have any questions, you may contact the Faculty Office, the Student Records Unit, or the Examinations Section of the Registry.

### 3.3 Prerequisites

As you move through your degree programme you will notice that most courses at Level II and Level III have pre-requisites – this means that you cannot register for a particular course until you have successfully completed its pre-requisite(s). You must think ahead and plan your degree programme carefully in advance. If you want to do a particular course at Level II or Level III, make sure you register for all the necessary pre-requisites otherwise you will be locked out of the course.

## 4. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Geography books are located in both the Main Library and in the Science Library, so you need to familiarize yourself with both libraries. There are conducted tours of the libraries for new students at the beginning of the semester. It is critical that you sign up for one of these tours at the beginning of your time as a U.W.I. student. The U.W.I. libraries are the most important of student resources, and you should learn to make full use of them, including access to the on-line catalogue, and on-line journals.

Human Geography books are located in the Main Library and Physical Geography in the Science Library. Get into the habit of visiting the library regularly when you are not in classes, once a day or several times a week. If you go to the library only a few times a semester, then you are not functioning properly or sensibly as a university student. The internet is a useful information source, but it is no substitute for a good university library. Browsing the shelves is a useful way of finding additional lecture material and for researching tutorial essays and assignments. Further, the nature of geography is such that not all relevant books are catalogued under “geography” and, indeed, many geography books are not even classified under “geography”, especially in the Main library. So you will need to learn how to use a large university library; it will take time and patience to become familiar with its intricacies and idiosyncrasies.

Both the Main Library and the Science Library have a Reserved Book Collection (RBC). These contain multiple copies of key text books for your first-year courses. These books are on restricted loan; either they must be used in the library or are available on overnight loan only. You should find this facility useful if, like most students, you are unable to afford the cost of purchasing several expensive textbooks.

### 4.1 Departmental Map Library and Reading Room

This facility is located in Building B. The Map Library has one of the largest collections of maps in the English-speaking Caribbean. We have comprehensive topographical coverage of Jamaica at the scales of 1:50,000 and 1:12,500, as well as Geology maps, other specialized maps, town plans and hydrographic charts. The collection also includes a selection of maps of the Eastern

Caribbean. The large collection of aerial photography is a valuable archive of historical images of the region, some of which date back to the mid-20th century. The collection is used both for research and teaching

The Map Library also functions as a quiet work room for geography and geology undergraduates. The room houses essential reading material for undergraduate courses, in the form of photocopied articles and book chapters. You can read these articles in the Reading Room, take them home as an overnight loan, or borrow the articles to make your own photocopies; articles may be photocopied in the Department for a small charge. The Map Curator will explain how the loan system works. Some of this reading material will be available in electronic form on the OURVLE website. We have created this facility to help alleviate the problem of the shortage of key textbooks and journals in the UWI libraries. The collection is not a substitute for using the UWI libraries; you should use the Main Library and the Science Library to research tutorial essays, and to dig deeper into the literature for lectures.

## 5. STUDENT GEOGRAPHY SOCIETIES AND PRIZES

### 5.1 Undergraduate Geographical Society

There is a very active undergraduate society which meets regularly on Thursday at lunch time. It is run by a student committee composed of geographers from first, second and third year. It organizes meetings and field trips. You are encouraged to join and get involved in the activities.

### 5.2 Jamaican Geographical Society

The Jamaican Geographical Society invites students to join the Society at special student rates. The Society was formed in the 1960s and organizes meetings, field trips, conferences and social activities. It has an on-line newsletter which is accessible through the department website – go to “useful links” (<http://www.mona.uwi.edu/geoggeol/JGS/home.htm>). You are encouraged to join as a student member and participate in the society’s activities. The Undergraduate Geographical Society is represented on the Council of the JGS.

### 5.3 Barry Floyd Prizes in Geography

The Barry Floyd Prizes in Geography are named after the first Head of Geography at UWI, Dr Barry Floyd. There are two prizes, in the form of a small cash prize, awarded to the best first year and the best second year Geography students in a particular year. The prizes are awarded at the appropriate Faculty Awards Ceremony in the following academic year.

## FIRST-YEAR GEOGRAPHY PROGRAMME

The Level I Geography consists of four 3-credit courses.

#### Semester 1

GEOG1131: Human Geography 1: Population, Migration and Human Settlement

Ms. Shaneica Lester

GEOG1231: Earth Environments I: Geomorphology and Soils

Dr. David Miller

#### Semester 2

GEOG1132: Human Geography 2: World Economy, Agriculture and Food

Emeritus Professor David Barker

GEOG1232: Earth Environments 2: Climate and the Biosphere

Dr. Michael Burn

Each lecturer will provide a separate list of lecture topics and a reading list for the module. First year courses are taught through a combination of lectures, laboratory classes and tutorials; the two latter contribute towards the coursework component of the course.

#### COURSEWORK

##### Laboratory classes (practicals)

Practical classes are held weekly. The class is divided into two streams and you will register for either the Monday or the Friday stream. You must attend laboratory classes in the stream in which you register otherwise your assignments will not be graded.

Lab classes are structured around useful methods and techniques for geographical data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and map presentation. Assessment is normally through a weekly assignment that you will complete during each lab class. This is a form of continual assessment since marks from assignments contribute to your final grades for all Level I geography courses.

##### Tutorials

The lecture topics for Level I geography courses are supported by a tutorial, held every week. You will have an opportunity to discuss lecture material and other geographical issues in a small group. Tutorial essay assignments are based on past examination papers or sample essay questions. You will also be given other assignments to complete and present in a tutorial.

CONTACT TIME IN GEOGRAPHY: 9 hours per week

- (i) One 4-hour practical
- (ii) Four 1-hour lectures
- (iii) One 1-hour tutorial

Non-attendance at practical classes, lectures and tutorials can result in a student being debarred from sitting an examination.

#### COURSE ASSESSMENT

The final mark for both first year geography courses is obtained using TWO components:

60% from a 2-hour written theory examination, held at the end of the semester, based on topics covered in lectures

40% from coursework – the detailed breakdown of coursework marks will be given separately

The “pass mark” at UWI is 50%. Faculty regulations require students to get at least 50% in both the theory paper and in coursework. If your final mark is 50% or higher but you fail either the theory paper or the coursework, you are deemed to have failed the course.

You must pass all Level I Geography courses before you can proceed to Level II Geography.

#### UWI's MARKING SCHEME and GPA

A+  
86 – 100  
C+  
55 – 59  
A  
80 – 85  
C  
50 - 54  
A-  
75 – 79  
F1

40 - 49

B+

70 – 74

F2

30 - 39

B

65 – 69

F3

0 - 29

B-

60 - 64

## CAPE GEOGRAPHY

You can register for Level I Geography without CAPE Geography provided you have the CSEC grade 3 or higher in Geography. However, CAPE and A-Level are the foundations for first-year university geography courses. Students without the two Geography units at CAPE will need to put in extra reading to 'catch up' and 'keep up' with lecture material.

Some topics in Level I Geography overlap with the CAPE syllabus; others will be entirely new. Be careful not to fall into the trap of believing that, because you have covered similar topics in 6th form, you have covered a topic adequately. First-year university level course requires much greater depth of knowledge, analytical skills and insight often using different conceptual frameworks, theories and more detailed case studies. Not surprisingly, much more is expected of you at university in terms of your analytical ability, knowledge base, and ability to write fluent, structured and well-reasoned essays.

## READING FOR A DEGREE

You need to read widely in addition to taking notes in lectures. A lecture provides basic information and only introduces a topic. You will need to read up each topic in much more depth in order to get a good grade in an exam. You cannot rely on a single source or textbook when studying geography at university, even in first year. You need to consult several textbooks, chapters in specialized edited books, and articles from academic journals. The key to success in examinations is to read widely and assimilate material beyond that provided in lectures. Remember that the Internet can be an important source of information and ideas, and lecturers will indicate important Internet sites during lectures.

The fundamental premise of a university education is that you are reading for a degree in a particular subject, rather than being 'taught' as in a school classroom. The educational philosophy is different. The onus is on you, as a student, to learn rather than expecting to be 'taught' by a lecturer or tutor.

Time management is critical to being successful at university. Organize your time and your work schedules sensibly and try to achieve a balance between your academic and non-academic activities.

## PRACTICAL/LABORATORY CLASSES IN GEOGRAPHY

### THE PURPOSE OF PRACTICAL CLASSES IN GEOGRAPHY

A unique aspect of geography is that it exposes students to a wide range of techniques for helping to understand human and environmental patterns and processes. A modern graduate in geography is expected to have some experience and technical skills in:

cartography;

land use and other field mapping;

data analysis and presentation;

quantitative methods and statistical analysis;

land surveying;

field techniques and research methods in geomorphology and biogeography;

interpreting meteorological information;

soil sampling and soil analysis;

the use of computers in data processing and mapping;

use of GIS and GPS technology;

social survey research design;

questionnaire design;

focus groups, attitude measurement and other qualitative interviewing techniques;

analysis of census and other secondary data.

No other academic discipline offers such a wide range of opportunities for developing personal skills for career development. Exposure to such a wide range of techniques is a strong selling point in job interviews.

The main exposure to research methods and techniques in the Geography degree is through practical laboratory classes, initially in the four first year geography courses, and later in second- and third-year courses. Fieldwork projects also help build your research skills in geography. Both laboratory classes and fieldwork are essential preparation for the undergraduate research thesis that all geography majors undertake in final year. The dissertation is a measure of your ability to do original research, and a good undergraduate thesis is something you can take with you to a job interview or cite when applying for postgraduate courses.

Practical classes are designed to learn these technical skills in a step-by-step fashion. The techniques and methods for collecting and manipulating geographical data will help you understand material presented in lectures, books and journals.

Nowadays, many people obtain jobs that require research skills and analytical, problem-solving abilities. Since practical classes are partly intended to develop your skills in organizing and conducting research, there is much to be gained by assimilating a wide variety of analytical techniques at an early stage in your career development.

## THE FORMAT OF PRACTICAL CLASSES IN GEOGRAPHY

### The Introductory Talk

There is no fixed format to a geography practical class. Some classes involve only a short introductory talk, while others require a longer lecture to explain a more difficult or unfamiliar technique, or to provide conceptual or theoretical background to the material covered in a practical class.

It is crucial to be on time for the start of a practical class and not miss the introductory talk. The talk and the instructions for the assignment will not be repeated for the benefit of latecomers.

You should treat the introductory talk as a lecture and take notes. These notes will help you successfully complete the practical and can serve as revision notes for the review test which is conducted in the last teaching week of the semester.

### The Assignment

Part of the coursework for first year courses involves complete laboratory class assignments. Some assignments will be completed in a four-hour class. Other assignments will extend over two practical classes and may involve you doing extra work outside formal contact hours. In such cases you will be given a deadline in which to complete an assignment. Late assignments will be penalized. Some lecturers may ask you to work on your own for an assignment, other assignments involve shared or team work.

You should always carry basic items with you like a calculator, eraser, pencils, rulers, compass, paper clips or stapler, etc. In some classes you may need access to specialist drawing equipment, and these requirements will be indicated in advance.

It goes without saying that at all times you ought to try to present your assignments in an neat and legible way. This might seem trivial and easy, but in fact it is neither. It is not easy to work quickly, accurately and neatly, and it will take time to learn how to do this competently and professionally. It is not trivial either because, in effect, you are learning specific professional presentation skills which, if acquired proficiently, will undoubtedly help you in seeking employment after you graduate.



## FIELD WORK CLASSES

Geography field classes are normally held on Saturdays and are compulsory whenever they are scheduled. The fieldwork must be undertaken on the day the class is scheduled; non-attendance on a field trip will debar you from final examinations in that course.

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance at ALL practical classes are compulsory. If you are absent from a practical, your mark will be recorded as zero for that particular assignment unless you obtain a doctor's note from the University Health Centre. This is a university regulation. The note will need to specify the dates of any classes missed, and you need to ensure the Health Centre sends it on to the Head of Department. The university does not accept sick notes from your family doctor, so even if you obtain treatment from your family doctor you must still follow the correct university procedure and also visit the University Health Centre to obtain the relevant documentation.

## FIRST-YEAR TUTORIALS IN GEOGRAPHY

A tutorial class is a small group of about eight students, led by a postgraduate tutor. The purpose of the tutorial programme is to provide additional support for the topics covered in lectures in first year geography courses.

A tutorial is fundamentally different from a lecture. The tutor's role is to lead a discussion and not to lecture to you on a particular topic. In a tutorial your group will discuss particular topics related to those covered in lectures. Tutorials provide opportunities to read around topics, or to research topics in more depth, from books and from the internet and other information sources.

The success of a tutorial critically depends on the participation of each student in discussion. You will be expected to make short presentations in tutorials on a regular basis, in addition to writing essays. The small group size provides an opportunity to interact with other students on a more personal level

Tutorials are intended to help you pass your exams and are organized for your benefit. They should help you to assimilate lecture material and discuss areas of the syllabus which you may find difficult. Lecture topics are covered in more depth and case studies explored in more detail. You may wish to discuss other issues or news events in tutorials, even though they are not strictly part of the syllabus.

First-year tutorials in geography are held weekly. Each week, your group will discuss a particular geographical topic in depth. You will need to prepare for a tutorial in advance, by reading, by preparing discussion notes, or by writing an essay. This will involve researching topics in the library and on the internet. You may be asked to make a short presentation in a tutorial class

Tutorials are useful to your career development in several ways:

Tutorials enable you to improve your writing skills through essay work, and thus allow you to improve your examination technique, a critical factor in passing examinations.

Tutorials help you improve your reasoning ability by encouraging you to articulate your ideas clearly and constructively in class discussion. You will improve these skills gradually over time. People who are articulate and who can write fluently and intelligently are at a great advantage when competing for a job after graduation.

Tutorials provide an opportunity to go through difficult lecture topics in more detail, or to explore and compile additional information on case studies and relevant examples.

#### REGULATIONS FOR GEOGRAPHY TUTORIALS

1. Attendance, each week, is **COMPULSORY**.
2. Marks are **DEDUCTED** for each tutorial class that you miss, unless you provide a medical certificate from the University Health Centre. Tutors take an attendance record at each tutorial and this is submitted to the university examiner together with your tutorial mark. Tutors have been instructed to report students who miss more than three tutorials to the HOD.
3. Students who persistently miss tutorials classes will be debarred from sitting the final examination, causing them to fail the course. Students who fail to submit any essays will be deemed to have failed the course.
4. If you are **LATE** for a tutorial, there are repercussions for the rest of your group because it makes a tutorial less effective, especially when you are making a presentation. Tutors are allowed to deduct marks from students who are frequently late.
5. You are required to write at least **TWO** essays for each first year course per semester. Essay questions are taken from recent examination papers, so they provide practice for the theory paper examination.
6. You will also be required to make short presentations to the rest of the tutorial group, either on your own, in pairs or in a group, as indicated by your tutor. Making a short presentation at the tutorial, like writing an essay, will require some research and a lot of reading.
7. Your mark for tutorial performance is derived principally by taking the average of the two essays, for each course. However, if you fail to hand in an essay by an agreed deadline, that essay can be graded as 0, and this 0 mark will be automatically factored into your final tutorial mark.

8. Tutors will take into account your performance in class presentation and other assignments, and can award merit marks for good presentations, overall participation and contribution to class discussion.

9. Your tutorial mark counts for 25% of the coursework mark for each first year course