
GMS 201

RESEARCH SEMINAR IN COMPARATIVE URBAN STUDIES

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This course constitutes the core research seminar for the Designated Emphasis in Global Metropolitan Studies. Students will engage intensively with one another's dissertation projects, using this as an opportunity to understand how research is undertaken in the various disciplines contributing to our understanding of urban and metropolitan processes. Students should make substantial progress with their dissertation projects in the context of the course.

SEMINAR FORMAT

The course will meet once a week for three hours. The time will be devoted to the intensive discussion of dissertation material from participating students. The first part of each class will be a review of the previous week's discussion. Each student who had work reviewed will briefly summarize the take home messages and their next steps and also highlight the most useful written commentary received. We will also briefly discuss any outside readings on the agenda, such as the readings on writing. The bulk of each week will consist of in-depth discussion of dissertation materials of a subset of students, each distributed to the class the week prior to the discussion. At some point in the semester, each student will share a dissertation overview (consisting of a 1-2 page extended abstract and a 1-2 page annotated table of contents) and two dissertation chapters. The last part of each seminar will be presentations by students whose work we will be discussing the coming week. These overview presentations should be designed to aid other students in their efforts to provide feedback on chapters during the following seminar session. As this is an interdisciplinary seminar, these short presentations should also explain how research questions are defined in their field, and how research projects have been structured so as to address these questions.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

- Submit dissertation materials for group discussion at least three times during the semester. Post these materials to the course website by Friday noon the week before the seminar during which they will be discussed.
- Prepare written comments on all dissertation materials submitted by other students. Post these comments to the course website by midnight the night before the seminar.
- Come to seminar prepared to discuss the dissertation materials submitted and any other readings for the week.
- Be respectful and constructive in all interactions.

GRADING

Students (Letter grade or P/NC) will be graded on based on the quality of their contributions to three different aspects of the seminar:

- Submission of dissertation materials to the seminar at least three times during the semester. Chapter submissions will include a <1 page memo explaining how the piece of writing contributes to the larger dissertation project. As the aim of the course is to encourage students to share and obtain useful feedback on works-in-progress, grading will not emphasize the level of polish of the dissertation chapter. Grades will primarily reflect the timely submission of materials, the quality of the memos, discussions designed to explain the nature of their project to scholars working outside their discipline, and the post-discussion reflection. (50%)
- Written feedback on other students' contributions. Students are to upload written comments on colleagues' contributions to bCourses before each class. (25%)
- Contributions to seminar discussion. Contributions will be assessed not only with respect to quantity, but also with respect to their thoughtfulness and constructiveness. (25%)

COURSE WEBSITE & DOCUMENT SUBMISSION

The course website will be hosted on BCourses. All students will post their submissions and written feedback directly to this course website. Under "Resources" will be a folder for each week of the course (for example "Week2 Jan28"). Submit all documents as PDF to the week in which it will be discussed. Use the following file naming conventions:

- For your original submission to be discussed in the class:
YourLastName_Week#_Submission.pdf
E.g. Walker's submission for week 2: *Walker_Week2_Submission.pdf*
- For your written feedback on someone else's work:
LastNameOfOriginalAuthor_Week#_Feedback_YourLastName.pdf
E.g. Walker feedback on Post's work for week 8: *Post_Week8_Feedback_Walker.pdf*

READINGS ON WRITING

Student dissertation chapters will comprise the majority of the readings for this course. In addition, there will be readings assignments related to writing dissertations and professional development. We will devote a portion of the seminar each week to discuss these readings.

Jan. 27th: Kicking-starting the writing process I

- Reading: Joan Bolker. 1998. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day*. New York: Henry Holt, pp. 32-45. [Chapter 3]
- Reading: Eviatar Zerubavel. 1999. *The Clockwork Muse: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses, Dissertations, and Books*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 36-55. [Chapter 3]

Feb. 3rd: Kicking-starting the writing process II

- Reading: Becker 2007, pp. 43-67 [Chapter 3: "One Right Way"] [*available as e-book through libraries*]

Feb. 10th: Engaging with the literature: literature reviews/ theory chapters

- Reading: Howard S. Becker. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists* (Second Edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 135-149. [Chapter 8: "Terrorized by the Literature"] [*available as e-book through libraries*]
- Reading: Wendy Laura Belcher. 2009. *Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., pp. 139-169. [Week 5: Reviewing the Related Literature]

Feb. 17th: Sharing our writing

- Reading: Becker 2007 [Chapter 6 and 7]

Feb. 24th: Graphical Presentation

- Reading: "Make Maps People Want to Look At: Five Primary Design Principles for Cartography." *Arcuser*. Winter 2012. Pp. 46-51.
- Reading: Jane E. Miller. 2004. *12345: The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 102-128. [Chapter 6: Creating Effective Tables].
- Belcher 2009: Week 7, "Presenting Your Evidence."

Mar. 3rd: Writing about Numbers

- Reading: Miller 2004: 11-32. [Chapter 2: "Seven Basic Principles"]

Depending on interest, other writing or professional development topics will be covered in the remaining weeks.