

## Senior Seminar

GEOG 16490 | Section 2 | CRN: 42937 | Fall 2018

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 9:15pm | Robinson 315L

Geography, Planning, & Sustainability

Rowan University

**Dr. Mahbubur Meenar**

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Office hours: Tuesdays 5:00-6:00pm,

Thursdays 2:00-3:00pm & by appointment



Source: <https://blogs.plos.org>

### Course Description

This course is a culminating experience in designing, conducting, and writing a project report or a research article suitable for publication. This is perhaps one of the last courses of your undergraduate program. As such it should represent the culmination of everything you've learned so far, both in terms of content and your professional and scholarly skills. This seminar-style course is designed to provide weekly structure and ongoing peer support for an independent research project. To excel you must work diligently every week. You should expect this course to be a challenge, and at times it will definitely require a lot of work – but if you bring excitement, intellectual curiosity, and focus to your project, I am confident Senior Seminar will be formative in achieving your academic and professional goals beyond Rowan.

*Catalogue description: Students participate in planning a research project, collecting data and preparing a report suitable for publication including cartographic materials. Research subjects are selected according to student interest. This course is regularly offered and may be available as a hybrid or online format.*

*Prerequisite: COMP 01112 (College Composition II) and GEOG 16290 (History & Methods of Modern Geography)*

## Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Apply knowledge of Geography/GIS/Planning/Environmental Studies concepts and methods in designing an original research project
- Manage a multi-stage project from initial design phase to completion
- Develop critical and creative analysis and communication skills (both written and verbal), including using digital tools in digital environments.
- Identify and evaluate sources of data and methods to solve research problems
- Reflect critically on your role in the writing and research process

## Reading Materials

- Required Text: Booth, WC, GG Colomb, JM Williams, J Bizup, & WT Fitzgerald. 2016. *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.  
Available as Rowan eBook, [click here](#), then refresh the page. You will be prompted for your Rowan Log-In credentials. Additional course readings may be posted to our course Blackboard site.
- Other readings will be available electronically through Blackboard

## Course Format

This course is offered in a hybrid format, combining in-class and remote meetings. You are **required** to keep your schedule open on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 9:15 pm throughout the semester. The course schedule describes the meeting format for each week. "In-class" means we will definitely meet in class (attendance is required). "No meeting" means we will not meet in class, but we will communicate virtually. "TBD" means we will meet either in class or virtually, depending on the need of the class. When I will feel that an in-class meeting is necessary, I will send you a notice (via Blackboard or email) one week prior to that meeting. Once you get such a notice, your attendance will be required.

You are required to use Canvas for submitting assignments and accessing resources and announcements, including possible syllabus or calendar changes. To access the course, go to <https://rowanonline.com/portal>, login and click on access my courses in Canvas.

## Course Assignments

### Portfolio

You will create a portfolio and either publish it online or submit as a hard copy. You will work on the contents of this portfolio throughout the semester. Your portfolio will include:

- A 1-2 page **professional resume** (1-page preferred unless you have significant work experience);
- A 1 page **cover letter** (This should be based on a real job/internship announcement. For sample job announcements, please visit AAG web site for geography jobs <https://jobs.aag.org/jobs> or APA web site for planning jobs <https://www.planning.org/jobs/search>);
- A 20 page **research paper** OR a **project report** (Page limit excludes references, abstract, etc. You will choose a track—either a paper or project—within the first two weeks of the semester. You will be allowed to choose one of your sole-authored old projects or papers and make significant improvement based on peer-review and feedback from the instructor. No credit will be given if the revision is not significant enough. The topic of the research paper or project report must be approved by the instructor within the first four weeks of the semester;
- (Optional) An additional 10-15 page sole-authored research paper OR project report from previous classes with a grade of A, A-, or B+ that needs only minor modifications/edits; and
- Examples of **graphical/visual work samples** (e.g., maps, posters, infographics, photography, presentations) solely authored or produced by students in other classes (modifications encouraged).

### Professional Communication

You will be evaluated based on how you communicate in-person and virtually (through your online presence) to different types of audience. This will include:

- A final presentation on the research paper or project report at the end of the semester (this will be video-recorded and uploaded on YouTube);
- A blog post explaining major findings/topics of the research paper or project, customized for general audience.

### ***Research Journal***

A researcher's world-view shapes their research findings! Good researchers use a research journal/diary/field notebook to both record their observations, feelings, and thoughts and to reflect on them. This is true for project managers. This weekly practice—from week 4 to week 12—of taking notes (e.g., observation, documentation, and reflection) will improve the quality of your research or project. You'll bring your notebook in every class and finally submit the notebook on 11/27.

### ***Class Participation***

This course is being offered as a seminar; it is therefore essential that everyone is fully invested in creating a meaningful and effective learning community. Class participation will be evaluated based on the followings: (i) record of attendance, (ii) demonstrated knowledge of assigned readings through online quizzes (short 5-7 question quizzes) and class discussions, and (iii) informal verbal presentations in front of class at various points of the semester. Each week you will receive points for attendance and participation. If you are disinterested, distracted, or disruptive, your lack of participation will result in a weekly grade reduction. Please talk with me if you have questions or concerns in regards to class participation.

Attendance is mandatory for in-class meetings, and attendance will be recorded within the first five minutes of each in-class meeting. Students must notify the instructor in advance if they will miss a class or leave early. Everyone is allowed 1 absence without penalty. Any subsequent absences will result in lost attendance and participation points unless arrangements are made with me in advance for University recognized reasons that are accompanied by documentation (e.g. doctor's note or other form of supporting evidence). University recognized reasons for excused absences include: Official university activities, documented illness, death of a family member or loved one, inclement weather, and religious observance (notification must take place before the holiday).

### **Expected Responsibilities and Attitude**

- ***Communication:*** For course-related correspondences, you must use your Rowan email accounts. You are expected to check email every day and visit the Blackboard course page on a regular basis. In addition, Rowan emails will be used for conveying urgent or emergency notices (such as class cancellation due to inclement weather). In-person meeting requests with the instructor should be arranged via emails. Email is the preferred form of communication for any course or topic questions, or any issues that arise during the semester. You may expect to receive a response within one business day (<24 hours during the work week, longer on the weekend or other announced period).

To ensure clear and professional communication, please ensure your emails include the following four components: (1) A greeting; (2) The course info in the title or text of the email (e.g. Senior Seminar); (3) A detailed question; and (4) Closing with your full name.

- ***Technology use:*** Cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices should be off/silent, unused, and out of sight during class, unless otherwise specified. The use of such devices will negate credits for attendance and participation. Using laptops to do homework for other courses or browse to non-course websites is not permitted. Students should not create an unnecessary distraction in class. Audio and video recording are not permitted without prior instructor permission.
- ***Assignment submission:*** Each weekly task will further your research/project/portfolio in a timely and productive manner. Do them—ON TIME! They must be uploaded in Blackboard before class starts (or printed and submitted in class, if instructed). I will accept only one late submission (up to 1

week late). You will not earn credit for any subsequent late submissions, as I will review them for feedback only.

- **Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another individual's ideas, words, labor, or assistance. All coursework submitted by a student, including papers, examinations, laboratory reports, and oral presentations, is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. When it is not, that assistance must be reported to the faculty. If the work involves the consultation of other resources such as journals, books, or other media, those resources must be cited in the appropriate style. All other borrowed material, such as suggestions for organization, ideas, or actual language, must also be cited. Failure to cite any borrowed material, including information from the Internet, constitutes plagiarism. Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated. According to Rowan University policy, students committing any act of academic dishonesty may fail the course, be suspended from the university, or both. You will find Rowan University's policy on academic integrity here:  
<https://confluence.rowan.edu/display/POLICY/Academic+Integrity+Policy>

Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself—fully or partially, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously submitted in another class, (3) use others' ideas or work without citation, (4) cheat on an exam or quiz, or (5) sign someone else in on an attendance sheet.

## Grading Distribution

Letter Grade	Score	Letter Grade	Score
A	93.3-100	C	73.3-76.5
A-	90-93.2	C-	70-73.2
B+	86.6-89.9	D+	66.6-69.9
B	83.3-86.5	D	63.3-66.5
B-	80-83.2	D-	60-63.2
C+	76.6-79.9	F	59.9 or lower

## Evaluation

All course activities and assignments will be considered for the final grade, with the following weights. Specific grading policies and a rubric related to each assignment will be distributed via Blackboard.

<b>Portfolio</b>		<b>70 pts</b>
Resume	5 pts	
Cover letter	5 pts	
Research paper or project report	50 pts	
Introduction + Conclusion	10%	
Research questions + Thesis	15%	
Literature review	20%	
Methodology	20%	
Analysis + Findings + Results	25%	
Grammar, spelling, mechanics	10%	
Total	100%	
Graphical/visual work samples	5 pts	
Optional paper or project report	Bonus pts	
Portfolio compilation	5 pts	
<b>Professional communication</b>		<b>15 pts</b>
Final presentation	10 pts	
Blog post	5 pts	
<b>Research journal</b>		<b>5 pts</b>
<b>Class participation</b>		<b>10 pts</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100 pts</b>

## Tentative Schedule

Note: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this schedule is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Week	Date	Format	Discussions /Activities	Due*	Readings**
<b>PORTFOLIO</b>					
1	09/04	In-class	Introductions + writing resume/professional statement Building research community IRB and research ethics	---	---
2	09/11	No meeting	Peer review of resume and cover letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resume</li> <li>Cover letter</li> </ul>	Sample documents
3	09/18	In-class	Peer review of portfolio components + portfolio design principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graphical/visual materials</li> <li>Edited paper or project from a prior class (optional)</li> </ul>	Sample documents
<b>RESEARCH PAPER or PROJECT REPORT</b>					
4	09/25	In-class	Student presentations Research/project components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft portfolio</li> <li>Research/ project topic proposal</li> <li>Research journal</li> <li>Online quiz</li> </ul>	TCR Ch. 1-4
5	10/02	TBD	Peer review of research topics, purpose, and questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic + Purpose + Questions + Thesis</li> <li>Research journal</li> </ul>	---
6	10/09	In-class	Peer review of AB + how to write LR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annotated bibliography</li> <li>Data collection</li> <li>Research journal</li> <li>Online quiz</li> </ul>	TCR Ch. 5-6
7	10/16	In-class	Peer review of LR + designing methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature review</li> <li>Research journal</li> <li>Online quiz</li> </ul>	TCR Ch. 7-8
8	10/23	No meeting	Peer review of methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methodology</li> <li>Research journal</li> <li>Online quiz</li> </ul>	TCR Ch. 9-11
9	10/30	Online	Work on your research/project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research journal</li> </ul>	---
10	11/06	In-class	Student presentations Peer review of results + how to visualize them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results and discussion</li> <li>Research journal</li> <li>Online quiz</li> </ul>	TCR Ch. 12-15
11	11/13	In-class	Student presentations Peer review of visualization + how to write introduction/conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visualization of results</li> <li>Research journal</li> </ul>	---
12	11/20	TBD	Peer review of intro and conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro + Conclusion</li> <li>Research journal</li> <li>Online quiz</li> </ul>	TCR Ch. 16-17
<b>DOCUMENTATION &amp; DISSIMINATION</b>					
13	11/27	TBD	Peer review of drafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete draft paper/report</li> </ul>	---
14	12/04	TBD	Peer review of drafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abstract + keywords (paper)</li> <li>Executive summary + TOC (project report)</li> <li>Blog</li> </ul>	---
15	12/11	In-class	Final presentation techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final papers/ Project reports</li> </ul>	---
Finals	12/18	In-class	Final portfolio due + Presentations (follow official exam schedule)		



\* Online quizzes will be due BEFORE class sessions. Quizzes will be posted on Blackboard one week prior to due dates.

\*\* Required readings listed here are only from the textbook (TCR – The Craft of Research). Additional readings and resources will be provided via Blackboard. Please check Blackboard one week prior to every class.

## Resources

### Writing Center

The writing center, located in the Campbell Library, 1st floor, can assist you with your writing assignments for any class. The center tutors offer 30 to 60 minute sessions, including face-to-face appointments, online tutoring. It is a free resource for students, faculty, and staff. For appointments: 856-256-4367. To learn more visit: <http://www.rowanwritingcenter.com>.

### Tutoring service

Tutoring Services offers academic support in a variety of subjects in order to improve educational achievement. Tutoring is available free of charge to all Rowan University undergraduate students. Small-group or drop-in tutoring is available in most subject areas. To learn more visit: <http://www.rowan.edu/home/advising/current-students/tutoring-services>.

*Academic Coaching* provides students in the EOF/MAP program with an academic coach for one-on-one weekly meetings to support students in the acquisition of academic skills such as note-taking, time management, organization, and studying and test-taking strategies. If interested, contact [successcenter@rowan.edu](mailto:successcenter@rowan.edu).

### Special needs and accommodations

Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center in order to receive official University services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856-256-4234. The Center is located on the 3rd floor of Savitz Hall. The staff is available to answer questions regarding accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations. Any student who has a need for accommodation due to documented disability should contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students seeking support around these issues can find more information and resources at <http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/asc/disabilityresources>.

Students who anticipate an absence due to a scheduled religious observance should contact the faculty personally to make arrangements.

If a major life event of any kind is impacting your schoolwork beyond 1 week in the form of absences, tardiness, difficulty focusing in-class or completing coursework please contact the Office of Student Life/Dean of Students. Their office is equipped to assist students undergoing difficult life events, including communicating with your professors if temporary accommodations are needed to help you through a difficult period. To request a meeting with the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students, please e-mail Martha Aderinto at [williamsm@rowan.edu](mailto:williamsm@rowan.edu) or 856.256.4283.

### Counseling and psychological services

The Wellness Center at Winans Hall provides physical and mental health services for students, such as time management, test anxiety, relationship issues, career assessment tools, and crisis situations. You can make an appointment during business hours at 856-256-4333. After hours call 856-256-4922 to speak with a counselor on call. If you are in crisis call 856-256-4911. <http://www.rowan.edu/studentaffairs/counseling/>.

### Stress and anxiety student support

College, while fun and fulfilling, can be a very stressful time. Everyone can agree dealing with academics, work and relationships on a daily basis is a lot to handle. If you're looking for someone to talk to and a way to de-stress, check out Healthy Campus Initiatives Stress and Anxiety Student Support Group. This peer-led non-clinical is a great way for students to meet one another, learn about stress and how to cope with it. The group meets every Monday at 2:00 p.m. in the Wellness Center Training Room starting on September 10<sup>th</sup>. No appointment needed. Contact Allie Pearce ([pearce@rowan.edu](mailto:pearce@rowan.edu)) for more information.

**Sexual assault**

Sexual assault is one of the most underreported violent crimes on university campuses. To reach a confidential, trained sexual violence advocate 24/7 call 866-295-7378. Rowan provides resources and programs designed to prevent sexual violence and other acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, provide information about what to do when an incident has occurred, and increase awareness of campus and community resources for support and response. <http://www.rowan.edu/open/studentaffairs2/sexualviolence/>.

**STARFISH**

The Rowan Success Network powered by Starfish® is designed to make it easier for you to connect with the resources you need to be successful at Rowan. Throughout the term, you may receive email from the Rowan Success Network team (Starfish®) regarding your academic performance. Please pay attention to these emails and consider taking the recommended actions. Utilize the scheduling tools to make appointments at your convenience (i.e. Tutoring, Advising, Financial Aid, etc.). Additional information about RSN may be found at [www.rowan.edu/rsn](http://www.rowan.edu/rsn).

**Emergency information**

During an emergency situation, please check the Rowan website for updates on campus closing. Also check your Temple emails around 5 pm for announcement specific to this class. If I cannot make it to campus due to inclement weather, other emergencies, or illness, I will send an email and post an announcement to Blackboard.

**Respect for diversity**

Diverse backgrounds, embodiments, and experiences are essential to the critical thinking endeavor. Students are expected to (i) respect individual differences which may include, but not limited to age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender presentation, immigration status, national origin, race, religious and political beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status; (ii) engage respectfully in discussion of diverse worldviews and ideologies embedded in course readings, presentations. And artifacts, including those course materials that are at odds with personal beliefs and values. Students seeking support around these issues can find more information and resources at <https://www.rowan.edu/home/student-diversity/resources>.

**Conflicts in examination periods during finals week**

<http://www.rowan.edu/provost/policies/documents/ConflictsinExaminationPeriodsDuringFinalsWeek.pdf>