

Department of Geography  
GEOG 291: Independent Short Project in Geography  
1 credit  
Course Outline

**Calendar Description:** Project related to any geographical field, enabling independent study under the guidance of qualified Geography faculty. Students are responsible for identifying a supervisor for their project and acquiring approval for their project topic at the beginning of term.

### **Guidelines**

This course permits students to pursue an independent research project under the guidance of a faculty member in the Department of Geography. Projects for GEOG 291 should involve *original research* rather than simply a review of published scholarship. (The department recognizes that the nature of original research varies by subfield.) As a 1-credit course, students are expected to devote 45 hours total to the course, including work in the field, lab, and/or library, meeting with the supervisor, and writing.

Projects must have a gradable product at the end, such as a written report that can be evaluated by the supervisor. Such a report is in addition to any other requirements agreed upon by the student and supervisor.

Students should be cognizant that faculty members have limited time, and that supervision of an independent project requires time and effort beyond their normal teaching duties. Consequently, only tenure-stream faculty and faculty lecturers should serve as supervisors. (If you are not sure about this, ask the Undergraduate Advisor or the UAC Chair.)

When students approach a potential supervisor, they should have a clear idea of a project, at least in principle. Typically, students need to prepare a one-page outline of the project with a statement of (potential) research questions, a brief methodology, and at least a few appropriate scholarly sources. Supervisors should not be expected to provide funding (*e.g.* for travel), but may do so at their discretion.

Students may undertake a research project for GEOG 291 as part of a lab or research group. In such cases, each student must have an independent research question or set of objectives, and each must submit an independent project for evaluation.

### **Responsibilities of the student**

Students are expected to work independently but with clear guidance from a supervisor. Students must:

1. Identify a Geography faculty member willing to supervise their project. Even if a student is working with a non-McGill organization, they must have a supervisor from McGill Geography.

2. Complete and obtain the appropriate signatures on the GEOG 291 Student-Supervisor Agreement Form and return it to the Department of Geography.
3. Submit work to the supervisor by the agreed deadlines.

### **Responsibilities of the Supervisor**

Supervisors have general responsibility for guiding the research project, including guidance with relevant scholarly or scientific literature, guidance on methodology/techniques, provision or approval of data sets, field protocols, access to laboratory facilities, and the like. Supervisors are responsible for:

1. Directing the research project and ensuring that it meets departmental standards.
2. Ensuring appropriate Research Ethics Board (REB) compliance. *Please note that students may not submit REB applications directly; they must come from the supervisor. If the research is not covered by a supervisor's existing REB certification, they are responsible for completing a new application.*
3. Ensuring appropriate Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) compliance.
4. Arranging necessary access to university facilities, including laboratories and Burnside Hall, and ensuring that students follow laboratory safety guidelines, field research safety protocols, and other appropriate measures.
5. Meeting with the student regularly and providing written feedback in a timely manner.
6. Final evaluation of the completed project and submission of the grade.