Geography 123 Fall 2013 W. Thowdis Tuesdays 4:00-7:00PM

***GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH PROJECT*** (worth 25% of course grade)

**PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The purpose of this assignment it to have you practice “doing” Geography by conducting research on a current topic in U.S. History/Government and recommending a policy change based upon this research. As we have studied,

geographic inquiry involves the ability and willingness to ask and answer questions about geospatial phenomena. In this project, you will use the modes of Spatial and Spatio-Temporal Thinking to offer an analysis of our current immigration policy. It is through this lens that you will make policy recommendations on either the national or state level.

* The Scientific Method

You will create a hypothesis (an assumption) about what you believe will be the impact of the immigration policy reform you are recommending. You will then collect and analyze data and

draw conclusions about the validity & practicality of your recommended policy change.

* The Research Process

You will use a **Historical Research Design** to collect, verify, and synthesize evidence from the past and present to establish facts that defend or refute your hypothesis. You are required to use secondary sources and a variety of primary documentary evidence, such as speeches, diaries, official records, reports, archives, and non-textual information [maps, pictures, audio and visual recordings]. The limitation is that the sources must be both authentic and valid.

* The Paper & Oral Presentation

Your paper and presentation will take the **Policy Memorandum Approach** in which you are asked to summarize a situation to date, identify the main issue of concern, provide a breakdown of the elements of this main issue, and then recommend how to address the issue based on research about the topic.

**REQUIREMENTS**

* Working in groups of 3, conduct a ***Literature Review*** **in the form of an Annotated Bibliography** (1-2 typed pages; 12 pt font; 1” margins), gathering 6-10 sources. These will help you to narrow down the following Essential Question to focus your research on a particular area of immigration:

*“How should the United States reform our immigration policy?”*

(Note that you may focus on national or California/state reforms. If you do the latter, make sure that your reform falls within the scope of the current national policy)

* ***Create a hypothesis*** which reflects your group’s consensus about a specific way to reform our current immigration policy. What do you think will work and how will you know it works? What will be the impact of this reform?
* Locate additional resources with data to help broaden, modify, or strengthen your initial hypothesis; include all sources in a ***Works Cited Page***, using the APA format
* Incorporate aspects of the ***8 Modes of Spatial Thinking and the 3 modes of Spatio-Temporal Thinking***
* Create a detailed ***Outline*** for your paper (1 typed page; single-spaced; 12 pt font; 1” margins)
* Original data collection***: Create a brief survey*** of 6-8 questions, not including demographic data and administer it to 30 respondents & interview an “Expert” in the field
* ***Write the paper*** (6-8 pages of text; 12 pt. font; 1” margins, not including the Works Cited page)
* Create a ***PowerPoint presentation*** with a description of your research project and your results
* Turn in a ***Progress Report*** which will include the Literature Review, Outline, Survey, & Interview contact
* Complete ***Peer Evaluation*** forms on day of final presentations

**DUE DATES for Final Research Project (No late papers or presentations will be accepted)**

Progress Report due: Tuesday, November 26th

Written Paper & Oral Presentation due: Wednesday, December 11th (2:45-5:00 pm)

(Day of our Final Exam)

**Choosing a Specific Topic from the Essential Question & Conducting your Research**

**Step 1**: **Identify concepts and terms that make up the topic statement**. Break down the Essential Question into researchable pieces by conducting a brainstorm of what you know and what you need to know. Create a chart which you can add to as you conduct your Literature Review. This will help guide your research.

**Step 2**: **Review related literature to help refine how you will approach focusing on the topic and finding a way to analyze it**. Begin by searching the [SJSU library catalog](http://library.usc.edu/uhtbin/webcat) to find a recent introductory book and, if appropriate, more specialized works about the topic; conducting a preliminary review of the research literature using multidisciplinary library databases such as [ProQuest](http://www.usc.edu/libraries/databases/records/database.php?db=PRQ), Academic Search Premier, and CQ Researcher, or subject-specific databases (see Librarian’s handouts) Use the main concept terms you developed in Step 1 to retrieve relevant articles. This will help you refine and frame the research problem. Don’t be surprised if you need to do this several times before you finalize how to approach writing about the topic.

*NOTE:*  Always review the references cited by the authors in footnotes, endnotes, or a bibliography to help locate additional research on the topic

**Step 3**: **Look for additional sources that can help broaden, modify, or strengthen your initial thoughts and arguments.** Since social science research papers are generally designed to get you to develop your own ideas and arguments, you will now need to expand your research to sources that address your specific area of focus.

**There are least four appropriate roles your related literature plays in helping you formulate how to begin your analysis**:

*1. Sources of criticism* -- frequently, you'll find yourself reading materials that are relevant to your chosen topic, but you disagree with the author's position. Therefore, one way that you can use a source is to describe the counter-argument, provide evidence from your review of the literature as to why it is unsatisfactory, and to discuss how your own view is more appropriate based upon your interpretation of the evidence.

*2. Sources of new ideas* -- while a general goal in writing college research papers is to approach a research problem with some basic idea of what position you'd like to take and what grounds you'd like to stand upon, it is certainly acceptable [and often encouraged] to read the literature and extend, modify, and refine your own position in light of the ideas proposed by others. Just make sure that you cite the sources.

*3. Sources for historical context* -- another role your related literature plays in helping you formulate how to begin your analysis is to place issues and events in proper historical context. This can help to demonstrate familiarity with developments in relevant scholarship about your topic, provide a means of comparing historical versus contemporary issues and events, and identifying key people, places, and things that had an important role related to the research problem.

*NOTE:* Remember to keep careful notes at every stage. You may think you'll remember what you have searched and where you found things, but it’s easy to forget.

**Step 4**: Assuming you've done an effective job of synthesizing and thinking about the results of our initial search for related literature, you're ready to prepare a detailed [**outline for your paper**](http://libguides.usc.edu/aecontent.php?pid=83009&sid=634166) that lays the foundation for a more in-depth and focused review of relevant research literature [after consulting with a librarian, if needed].

**WRITING THE PAPER**

**I. The Introduction (1 page)**

The introduction serves the purpose of leading the reader from a general subject area to a particular field of research. It establishes the context of the research being conducted by summarizing current understanding and background information about the topic, stating the purpose of the work in the form of the hypothesis, question, or research problem, briefly explaining your rationale, methodological approach, highlighting the potential outcomes your study can reveal, and describing the remaining structure of the paper.

**Issues to keep in mind that will help the narrative flow in your introduction**:

* **Your introduction should clearly identify the subject area of interest**. A simple strategy to follow is to use key words from your title in the first few sentences of the introduction. This will help focus the introduction on the topic at the appropriate level and ensures that you get to the primary subject matter quickly without losing focus, or discussing information that is too general.
* **Establish context by providing a brief and balanced review of the pertinent published literature that is available on the subject.** The key is to summarize for the reader what is known about the specific research problem before you did your analysis. This part of your introduction should not represent a comprehensive literature review but consists of a general review of the important, foundational research literature (with citations) that lays a foundation for understanding key elements of the research problem.
* **Clearly state the hypothesis that you investigated**. When you are first learning to write in this format it is okay, and actually preferable, to use a past statement like, "The purpose of this study was to...." or "We investigated three possible mechanisms to explain the...."
* **Why did you choose this kind of research study or design?** Provide a clear statement of the rationale for your approach to the problem studied. This will usually follow your statement of purpose in the last paragraph of the introduction.

**The overarching goal of your introduction is to make your readers want to read your paper.** The introduction should grab your reader's attention. Strategies for doing this can be to: (only choose **ONE)**

1. Open with a compelling story,
2. Include a strong quotation or a vivid, perhaps unexpected anecdote,
3. Pose a provocative or thought-provoking question,
4. Describe a puzzling scenario or incongruity, or
5. Cite a stirring example or case study that illustrates why the research problem is important.

**NOTE:** Even though the introduction is the first main section of a research paper, it is often useful to finish the introduction very late in the writing process because the structure of the paper, the reporting and analysis of results, and the conclusion will have been completed and it ensures that your introduction matches the overall structure of your paper

**II. The Literature Review** : What has already been done **(1-2 pages)**

**Historical Review** Few things rest in isolation from historical precedent. Historical reviews are focused on examining research throughout a period of time; often starting with the first time an issue, concept, theory, phenomena emerged in the literature, then tracing its evolution within the scholarship of a discipline. The purpose is to place research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments and to identify the likely directions for future research.

1.  Number of sources to include: 6-10

2.  Types of sources to review: books, journal articles, websites, etc.

3.  Summarize how the sources address your topic

4.  Evaluate whether these sources will help you prove your hypothesis/recommendation

5. Sources may be used from 1900-today

6. Organize Lit review in alphabetical order & present it as an Annotated Bibliography

In selecting Sources, make sure they:

* Clearly relate to the research problem;
* Are the most relevant sources to use in the literature review related to the research problem;
* Include both research that validates your assumptions and alternative interpretations found in the literature.

**III. The Methodology (1/2 page)**

The methods section of a research paper provides the information by which a study’s validity is judged. The method section answers two main questions: 1) How was the data collected or generated? 2) How was it analyzed? The writing should be direct and precise and written in the past tense.

**An effectively written methodology section should:**

1. **Describe the specific methods of data collection you used**, Most of the data you collect and analyze will be existing data, so make sure you describe how it was originally created or gathered and by whom. For this project you will also collect original data by creating a 6-8 question survey based upon your hypothesis about immigration reform. You will then administer this written survey to a minimum of 30 respondents & conduct an Interview with an “expert” in the field.

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1. **Explain how you analyzed the results from your survey & interview and from data collection methods you read about in your resources.** For your survey, make sure you create charts and/or graphs to report these results. For existing data collection methods, explain how you analyzed the results and why you selected this data to use. Describe how you will share the information you collected from your interview.
2. **Provide a rationale for subject selection and sampling procedure**. For your surveys and interview, describe how you selected the sample population? If you are analyzing texts, which texts have you chosen, and why? If you are using statistics, why is this set of statistics being used? If other data sources exist, explain why the data you chose is most appropriate.

**4. Address potential limitations**. Are there any practical limitations that could affect your data collection?

If your methodology may lead to problems you can anticipate, state this openly and show why pursuing this methodology outweighs the risk of these problems cropping up.

**IV. Reporting the Results (2 pages of text)**

The results section of the research paper is where you report the findings of your study based upon the information gathered as a result of the methodology [or methodologies] you applied. The results section should simply state the findings, without bias or interpretation, and arranged in a logical sequence. The results section should always be written in the past tense.

**Structure and Writing Style**

**A. Structure and Approach**

**Present the results followed by a short explanation of the findings**. For example, you may have noticed an unusual correlation between two variables during the analysis of your findings. It is correct to point this out in the results section. However, speculating as to why this correlation exists, and offering a hypothesis about what may be happening, belongs in the discussion section of your paper.

**B. Content**

**In general, the content of your results section should include the following elements:**

1. An introductory context for understanding the results by restating the research problem that underpins the purpose of your study.
2. A summary of your key findings arranged in a logical sequence that generally follows your methodology section.
3. Inclusion of non-textual elements, such as, figures, charts, photos, maps, tables, etc. to further illustrate the findings
4. Aspects of Spatial Thinking that help to understand and explain your results: Location, Comparison, Aura/Influence, Region, Hierarchy, Transition, Analogy, Pattern, Association, Change, Movement, Diffusion
5. A systematic description of your results, highlighting for the reader observations that are most relevant to the topic under investigation

**Using Non-textual Elements (Note: these do not “count” as text when looking at the number of pages)**

* Either place figures, tables, charts, etc. within the text of the result, or include them in the back of the report--do one or the other but never do both.
* In the text, refer to each non-textual element in numbered order( Table 1, Table 2; Chart 1, Chart 2; Map 1, Map 2).
* Regardless of placement, each non-textual element must be numbered consecutively and complete with caption [caption goes under the figure, table, chart, etc.]
* Each non-textual element must be titled, numbered consecutively, and complete with a heading [title with description goes above the figure, table, chart, etc.].

**V. The Discussion (2 pages)**

The purpose of the discussion is to interpret and describe the significance of your findings in light of what was already known about the research problem being investigated, and to explain any new understanding or fresh insights about the problem after you've taken the findings into consideration. The discussion will always connect to the introduction by way of the research questions or hypotheses you posed and the literature you reviewed, but it does not simply repeat or rearrange the introduction; the discussion should always explain how your study has moved the reader's understanding of the research problem forward from where you left them at the end of the introduction.

**Importance of a Good Discussion**

**This section is often considered the most important part of a research paper** because it most effectively demonstrates your ability as a researcher to think critically about an issue, to develop creative solutions to problems based on the findings, and to formulate a deeper, more profound understanding of the research problem you are studying.

**This part of the paper is not strictly governed by objective reporting of information** but, rather, it is where you can engage in creative thinking about issues through evidence-based interpretation of findings. This is where you infuse your results with meaning and make your recommendation for a policy change. It is also where you comment on how the Spatial Thinking mode(s) helped you decide on this policy change.

**Structure and Writing Style**

**Explanation of results**: comment on whether or not the results were expected and present explanations for the results; go into greater depth when explaining findings that were unexpected or especially profound. If appropriate, note any unusual or unanticipated patterns or trends that emerged from your results and explain their meaning.

**Deduction**: a claim for how the results can be applied more generally. Here is where you discuss whether your hypothesis about immigration reform was shown to be correct.

**Hypothesis**: Were you able to conclude that your hypothesis was correct?

**Recommendation:** Make a recommendation for a public policy reform around immigration using what you have learned.

**VI. Conclusion (1 paragraph)**

The conclusion is intended to help the reader understand why your research should matter to them after they have finished reading the paper. A conclusion is not merely a summary of your points or a re-statement of your research problem but a synthesis of key points about immigration reform. For this paper, one well-developed paragraph is sufficient for a conclusion.

**Importance of a Good Conclusion**

A well-written conclusion provides you with several important opportunities to demonstrate your overall understanding of the research problem to the reader. These include:

1. **Presenting the last word on the issues you raised in your paper**. Just as the introduction gives a first impression to your reader, the conclusion offers a chance to leave a lasting impression. Do this, for example, by highlighting key points in your analysis or findings.
2. **Summarizing your thoughts and conveying the larger implications of your study**. The conclusion is an opportunity to succinctly answer the "so what?" question by placing the study within the context of past research about the topic you've investigated. Make sure you briefly describe your recommendation, a specific course of action, and the impact you found might occur if this policy change was enacted.
3. **Demonstrating the importance of your ideas**. Don't be shy. The conclusion offers you a chance to elaborate on the significance of your findings.
4. **Introducing possible new or expanded ways of thinking about the research problem**. This does not refer to introducing new information [which should be avoided], but to offer new insight and creative approaches for framing/contextualizing the research problem based on the results of your study.

Remember to make the Geography connection when describing your recommendations, using 1 or more of the Modes or Aspects below.

**8 Modes of Spatial Thinking**

A *spatial data model* is a data model defining the properties of and operations on *static objects in space*. These objects are described by *spatial data types* like *point* (for example, representing the locations of cities in the U.S.), *line* (for example, describing the ramifications of the Nile Delta), and *region* (for example, depicting school districts). Operations on spatial data types include, for instance, the geometric *intersection*, *union*, and *difference* of spatial objects, the computation of the *length* of a line or the *area* of a region, the test whether two spatial objects *overlap* or *meet*, and whether one object is *north* or *southeast* of another object.

**1. Comparison: How does this place compare with that one?**

Examples: use maps, graphs to look at ratios; size of a state to another nation

Comparison Word Pairs: similar/different more/less larger/smaller crowded/empty warmer/colder etc.

**2. Aura/Influence: How does the presence of something in this place affect other places nearby?**

Examples: cities in the aura of a nuclear missile site; Major employer/land value; Eyesore/view

Aura Word Pairs: next to/far from strong/weak [effect] within [range]/beyond [affected/not]

**3. Region: What places are either similar to this place in some way, or connected to this place in**

**some way?**

Examples: Great Plains; Fire Hazard region; NYC & Seoul have similar latitudes & positions on their continents

so have similar climates-fits with Analogy, too

Region Word Pairs: same/different within/without inside/outside group/other (ally/enemy)

**4. Transition: What is the nature of the change between this place and that one over there?**

Examples: Border Effect; change in elevation as you cross a ridge as in Harpers Ferry

Transition Word Pairs: earlier/later near/far gentle/steep [slope] gradual/abrupt slowly/suddenly

**5. Hierarchy: What larger area is this one inside? What smaller areas are inside it?**

Examples: Country, State, County

Hierarchy Word Pairs: larger/smaller whole/part [of] higher/lower [in “pecking order”] tributary/main

**6. Analog: Are there places that have similar situations and therefore might have similar**

**conditions?**

Examples: Mediterranean climates; Gentrifying neighborhoods, Border crossings

Analog Word Pairs: like/unlike same/different place [middle/edge etc.] similar /different [position]

**7. Pattern: Is the spatial arrangement of things random, or does it have a pattern?**

Examples: Rings, donuts; Clusters; Biases/imbalances

Pattern Word Pairs: balanced/biased aligned/unaligned [in-a-line/not] even/random

**8. Association: What features usually occur together? What features seldom occur together?**

Examples: Mosquitos/Malaria; Malls/Freeways; Factories/Theaters; Faults/Earthquakes

Association Word Pairs: together/not associated/separate similar/different [pattern] correlation/none

**Aspects of Spatio-Temporal thinking:**

A *spatio-temporal data model* is a data model representing the temporal evolution of spatial objects over time. These evolutions can be discrete, that is, they happen from time to time (for example, the change of the boundary of a land parcel) or continuous, that is, they happen permanently and smoothly (for example, the devastating trajectory of a hurricane). In the continuous case, one speaks about *moving objects* and represents them by *spatio-temporal data types* like *moving point* (for example, recording the route of a cell phone user), *moving line* (for example, representing the boundary of a tsunami), and *moving region* (for example, describing the motion of an air polluted cloud).

Change: then/now yesterday/today changing/stable early/late trend/none

Movement: up/down fast/slow east/west etc. push/pull buy/sell import/export

Diffusion: spread/shrink expand/contract advance/withdraw [contagion/relocation]