

Graduate Program in Geography Handbook 2024-2025



environmental &
urban change

YORK U

Graduate Program in Geography Handbook 2024-2025

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Welcome Message from the Director

Welcome to York University and to the Graduate Program in Geography!

My colleagues and I are delighted that you have chosen to join us at one of Canada's largest universities in a Geography program that is renowned for its collegiality, productivity, and critical scholarship. We look forward to getting to know you over the coming years, to your involvement in our program, and to supporting your academic development.

York University is diverse and dynamic, with many collaborative research, service, and teaching opportunities for students. Whatever your interests, you will find a community of peers on campus to connect with. And whatever your needs, you will find the support services (e.g., writing skills, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, teaching development, career guidance, personal counselling, and learning and psychiatric support), and facilities (e.g., library, computing, athletic, and medical) to enable your success.

You will find that faculty, staff and other students are approachable and down-to-earth. Furthermore, with its strong ethos of interdisciplinary scholarship, few people at York see traditional disciplinary boundaries as constraining. You are encouraged to participate in research centres and programs of study that take you beyond the discipline of Geography.

In addition to the many wider university opportunities, we also take pride in the intellectual vibrancy and sociability of the Graduate Program in Geography. There are many fun extra-curricular social and academic activities organized by the Department and student groups, including the Geography Graduate Students Association (GeoGSA). Bi-weekly colloquia are a lively tradition of community-building, knowledge sharing, and dialogue along with many other social events on and off campus. We encourage you to join in these activities, to connect with your peer-mentor "buddy", and to become part of the Geography community at York. Your best source of practical and unofficial advice is always your fellow graduate students!

Ultimately, the more energy you put into all facets of your life as a graduate student, the more rewarding your graduate school experience will be. Connecting with your peers as an active departmental citizen has enormous social, emotional, and intellectual benefits!

We hope that this handbook will help you to navigate the academic and administrative dimensions of being a graduate student. These guidelines may occasionally be revised by the Geography Graduate Council. For program requirements and regulations, please do consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies webpage (<http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/>).

Have fun and see you on campus!

Alison Bain

Director, Graduate Program in Geography

Welcome from the Geography Graduate Student Association

Hello and welcome to a new year in the Graduate Program in Geography! On behalf of the GeoGSA, I'd like to warmly welcome all incoming graduate students, and welcome back all those who are returning. The Geography Graduate Student Association is a student-run group in the department, so its potential as a group will be shaped by the level of participation and input of this year's graduate student body –in other words, by all of you! I encourage everyone to make the most of the GeoGSA by coming to myself and the rest of the executive committee with ideas, proposals, questions, comments and concerns. This organization really depends on your involvement and commitment to the department. The GeoGSA will hold monthly meetings, organize events and fundraising initiatives, and will generally be a forum for graduate students in the department to connect with one another, share ideas and collaborate on various projects.

The GeoGSA will be organizing several events to help you get to know the program and its community. We will also be organizing a 'Buddy System', where new students will be paired with a returning student 'buddy' who can answer questions and generally help new students to become more familiar with York. Finally, there will be an 'Orientation Day' in early September where you will meet students and faculty in the department and take a campus tour to further familiarize yourself with student life at York.

Please feel free to contact me anytime this year if you have questions or concerns. I hope we can make the most of this year together!

GeoGSA President

What is GeoGSA?

The Geography Graduate Student Association at York University (GeoGSA) is a student-run body that organizes and advocates on behalf of all graduate students in our department— including you!

- We organize social and professional events on our own and in cooperation with the department, alumni, and other groups.
- We engage in social justice and charity activities in our community and around the world.
- We run the GEOG_GRADS email list to facilitate communication among students

- We give students a voice on important matters of departmental policy, hiring and admissions.
- We elect representatives to larger bodies such as the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Council, the Graduate Students Association (GSA), and the local union (CUPE 3903).

All these endeavours rely on your participation and input, so get involved and get the education you want! 2024-2025 committee members and representatives will be elected at our first monthly meeting in the fall (early September), so watch your inbox for the date and time.

The Geography Graduate Program – Our History and Objectives

Our graduate program was established over a half century ago. In 1968, the ACAP Appraisals Committee approved our Master's Program in Historical, Economic, Cultural and Urban Geography, and in Theory of Geography. In 1971, the Doctoral Program was approved by the Appraisals Committee in the areas of Historical, Economic and Urban Geography. In 1973, York was permitted by the ACAP discipline assessment committee to add Biogeography, Climatology and Hydrology as areas for the Master's degree. This committee recommended that the Program offer the new PhD Program in Historical-Cultural Geography, Urban-Economic Geography and Resource Analysis. ACAP approved the Ph.D. field of Biogeography in 1978. An M.Sc. in Biogeography was approved in 1979. An M.Sc. in all areas of Physical Geography was approved in 1987.

In the 1993 appraisal by OCGS, the Program made minor changes to the definition of the doctoral fields which became: (1) Biogeography/Biogeochemistry; (2) Historical-Cultural Geography; (3) Resource Analysis; (4) Social and Economic Space. In the 2000 appraisal, the Program defined three doctoral fields: (1) Biophysical processes; (2) Cultural-Historical Geography; (3) Social and Economic Space. In the subsequent appraisal in 2007, we defined two doctoral fields: (1) Biophysical Processes; (2) Critical Human Geography. These two fields continue to define our program, although the subfields the program emphasizes continues to evolve.

Biophysical Processes

We continue to define our Ph.D. core area within physical geography as biophysical processes, at the interface between environmental biology and the geosciences. The research conducted by doctoral students in physical geography spans climatology, hydrology, biogeography, biogeochemistry, geomorphology, and landscape ecology, and encompasses a wide range of environments that include Arctic, temperate, tropical, and arid regions. Geomatics and field work are the backbone of much of the research undertaken by our faculty and students. A recent faculty hire in our program (Olusola) adds new expertise in machine learning algorithms for hydrological and climatological modelling. Global environmental change and human modification of the environment are major areas of concern, involving research that links traditional subfields of physical geography as well as partnerships with government agencies, community groups, and Indigenous organizations, among others, to facilitate knowledge mobilization.

The current relevance of our focus on biophysical processes has been highlighted by recent developments in cognate science disciplines. In the past ten years or more, the emerging field of biogeosciences has gained prominence as an interface between ecological biology and geosciences in response to complex issues of human impact on natural environments. Biogeosciences has been recognized as a new field with the establishment of a new biogeosciences section by the Ecological Society of America and the American Geophysical Union. Nevertheless, the themes of this field are similar to those that have been the focus of the biophysical processes area in the York Geography graduate program for many years.

Physical geographers were involved in the creation of the OneWater Institute at York, a new organized research unit that launched in 2023 that aims to enhance the Canadian water sector by providing a

strong industry-academia-government platform. Physical geographers are also leading a new interdisciplinary research cluster around geomatics for climate change research. Both initiatives prioritize a robust training environment for graduate students.

Critical Human Geography

Human geographers have pursued a variety of theoretical perspectives since the post-WWII period from regional geography to positivist quantitative methods to the introduction of ‘radical’ approaches to the discipline and engagement with social theory. Our program established over 50 years ago, has likewise evolved with the major paradigm shifts in the discipline. Since the mid-1970s, a series of engagements with various strands of critical geographic thought have coalesced into a set of approaches broadly identified as critical human geography.

Critical human geography has evolved into an expansive, perhaps sometimes eclectic, approach to geographic inquiry. There are, however, some primary common themes. First, there is an emphasis on the uneven spatiality of power relations and social justice produced through economic, social, political, cultural and ecological practices at multiple scales. Critical human geographers recognize: the differentiated and unequal access of different groups to power; the marginalization of some groups and the centrality of other groups to the production of political, social, cultural and economic landscapes; and the unsustainable and ‘irrational’ character of the transformation of the physical environment. Second, critical human geographers appreciate the limits of knowledge, its production through power relations, and the value of other ways of knowing that have been historically silenced. As a result, political engaged geographic scholarship giving communities voice is valued. We therefore view critical human geography as a ‘pluralistic’ intellectual project that encompasses diverse and even competing traditions including phenomenology, post-structuralism, Marxism, post(de)colonialism, feminism, anti-racism, and environmentalism. Such a diversity of understandings leads to lively discussions, both in the classroom and outside. Third, and perhaps most important, critical human geography is emancipatory as it concerns are not only what geographies are in the present but also what they could be more just and sustainable for the future.

Critical human geography has been integrated into the discipline to the point where it is now almost the ‘mainstream’. It has reshaped and transformed traditional subdisciplines that our program covers (i.e., economic geography, political geography, socio-cultural geography, urban geography, and political ecology) but also allows other subdisciplines and fields in our program to grow (i.e., feminist geographies, queer geographies, Indigenous geographies, geographies of development, geographies of migration, geographies of empire and decolonization, and labour geographies). Our students and faculty contribute to the development of these fields through research that spans the globe from core metropolitan global cities such as Toronto to rural areas in the global south.

In recent years, critical human geography has been institutionalized in various forms – through international critical geography conferences, web-based communities (e.g. the Critical Geography Forum; Left geography forum) and journals, including not only those which specifically aim to promote critical geographic scholarship (e.g. ACME; Antipode; Society and Space; Gender, Place and Culture; Human Geography: A New Radical Geography) but also more ‘mainstream’ journals (e.g. Geoforum, Environment and Planning A, and Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers). Critical human

geography now constitutes an identifiable approach within a broader disciplinary context. It is with this tradition that the graduate program in human geography at York identifies, and this tradition is now firmly a part of the broader critical social science and humanities research culture at York University.

Administratively, the Graduate Program in Geography lies within the new resource Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (EUC). The new faculty and its programs share many of the same approaches to both biophysical and critical human geographic research.

Program Objectives

The Geography Graduate Program provides advanced instruction to students in critical human geography and biophysical processes. While this is the overall mission of the program, there are six key objectives that serve as the foundation of our program design and delivery:

1. To allow students to develop advanced critical, theoretical, and applied geographical research skills. Theoretical and applied work are viewed as interrelated pursuits necessary for the advancement of geographical knowledge necessary to address contemporary economic, political, social, and environmental issues of inequality, violent conflict, and unsustainability. Students are given the opportunity through course work, research project development, and field-based research to make significant contributions to geographical knowledge and build just and sustainable futures.
2. To foster student appreciation for the diversity of geographical knowledge within and outside the confines of the formal discipline. Students are expected to understand Geography as the diverse study of physical and human spatial processes and human-nature interactions with several sub-disciplines and different theoretical perspectives. Further, geographical thinking extends far beyond the discipline necessitating an appreciation for interdisciplinarity.
3. To encourage students to challenge accepted ways of understanding geographical knowledge and recognize it is fallible and incomplete. Students will appreciate the historic role Geography has played as a discipline of both domination and emancipation as we seek to decolonize geographical knowledge as a singular project and recognize the many ways of understanding geographical relations.
4. To give students the opportunity to succeed in the program through experiential and research-based learning. Students will be given opportunities to expand their geographical knowledge and skills both inside and outside of the traditional classroom. Lab-based learning environments, colloquium speakers from other programs, universities, and professions, and field-based thesis and dissertation research provide students the opportunity to engage their intellectual interests and development in multiple ways.
5. To build professional capacities for students for a diverse range of career trajectories. Advanced geographical training necessitates transferrable skills such as written and oral communication, technical proficiencies, project management, and an ability to work collaboratively. Further, the program endeavours to assist students in the recognition and promotion of these capacities for employment in academia, non-profit organizations, governments, and the private sector.

6. To foster a research and learning environment that reinforces the values of collegiality, ethical practice, and academic freedom for all graduate students and faculty. Students and faculty together will strive to create a program around an ethics respect and care for research participants and each other in all scholarly activities. Collegiality is integral to building a strong research and learning environment. Furthermore, collegiality does not mean the absence of debate as the program values the academic freedom needed to pursue difficult and controversial topics. But rather collegiality is the sense of shared responsibility to cooperate to achieve all our program objectives.

Administrative Matters

The Graduate Program

Graduate programs are administratively separate from undergraduate teaching departments. Your registration and academic status are overseen by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). In the Graduate Program in Geography, faculty members are drawn from a variety of units and Faculties at York in addition to the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (EUC).

As a student, you are enrolled in the Graduate Program in Geography, but you may be employed as a Teaching Assistant or Graduate Assistant in the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (or another unit). All Geography graduate students are assigned office space by virtue of their employment as a TA.

When you have questions about graduate courses, funding, your program requirements etc., your first point of contact will be either your supervisor, or:

- Alison Bain, Graduate Program Director (HNE 263A), geogpd@yorku.ca
- Tricia Fuller-Davidson, Graduate Program Assistant (HNE 132), gradgeog@yorku.ca

First Steps

Registration for Fall/Winter begins in June. Please register at your earliest opportunity. Although you only need to register in one term at a time if you prefer, please note that graduate students must maintain continuous registration all year long throughout their career at York.

Therefore, you must register and pay fees for all three terms: Fall, Winter and Summer.

Enrolment for courses begins at the same time as registration, but there is no rush or pressure to finalize this as you have time at the start of September to sample different courses that interest you. It is best to discuss course selection with your prospective supervisor and together plan a suitable course of study. You need permission to take a course outside the program. The permission forms are available under [FGS Enrollment](#).

York University issues a permanent [YU Card](#) which incorporates a variety of services including library access, recreational facilities, student discounts, etc. New students must apply for their YU-card online via the [YU-card photo upload tool](#) (see <http://www.yorku.ca/yucard> for more details).

All computing services including user accounts and passwords can be accessed and activated through *Passport York*, York's primary method of online authentication. Services include:

Students' Account Information; Registration & Enrollment; Grade Reports; and Tax forms.

Through [Manage My Services](#), accessed from the Computing web site, the following computing resources can be activated:

- York Email Account
- eClass (if a class requisite, and enabled by your course director)

Once you are officially registered as a York student, you will be able to log in to *Passport York* and access your records and enable these services. The username you select at this point will also be your email ID for the duration of your academic career at York, so choose carefully.

Note that activation of services can take up to 24 hours.

The graduate student listserv geog_grads@yorku.ca will be used regularly to share information with you. This is an important point of contact. You should ensure that you have a 'yorku.ca' email address and that you check it regularly. The membership of this listserv comprises all graduate students and the Graduate Program Assistant. The Graduate Program Director can post messages to the list but cannot read any messages from the list. Faculty members do not have access to the list.

Payday

Payday is the 25th of each month. All active employees in receipt of pay can access HR Self Serve. To access HR Self Serve, you will need an employee Passport York Account.

<http://hrselfserve.info.yorku.ca/>

To set up an employee passport York account, please go to:

<https://passportyork.yorku.ca/ppylogin/ppylogin?empsignup=1>

If there is a change to your home address, it is important that you inform Payroll and Records, Human Resources. Questions can be directed to hrhelp@yorku.ca.

Funding

It is important to stay alert to sources of internal and external funding either for research funds or for scholarship support. Some funds are for very specific kinds of projects or activities.

Internal Funding

Glen Frankfurter Scholarship in Geography

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/awards-and-scholarships/glen-frankfurter-scholarship-in-geography/>

The Ross Hunter Paterson Award

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/awards/the-ross-hunter-paterson-award/>

Paul Simpson-Housley Award

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/awards/paul-simpson-housley-award/>

GeoGSA Research and Travel Fund

Open to full-time or part-time registered students in the Graduate Geography Program. For information and how to apply, please contact Philip Lynch, President (plynch15@yorku.ca), Aishwarya Bhattacharyya, Vice-President (aishb@yorku.ca) or Felicia Achamah, Treasurer (achamah1@yorku.ca).

EUC Graduate Awards

<https://euc.yorku.ca/current-students/financial-information-and-awards/>

Other Funding

FGS Scholarships and Awards

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/awards-and-scholarships/>

CUPE Professional Development Fund

<https://3903.cupe.ca/professional-development-fund-pdf/>

Funding for Conference Travel

The Glen Frankfurter Conference Award will be granted to full-time MA or PhD students enrolled in the graduate program of Geography who are conducting research in historical geography. Students must be in good academic standing and planning to present the results of their research at an academic conference in some capacity. *Further information:*

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/awards-and-scholarships/glen-frankfurter-conference-award/>

The Canadian Association of Geographers

Each year the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada provides the Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) with a grant to assist current student members to attend the CAG Annual Meetings. To be eligible, students must have held CAG student membership in the year prior to the meeting as well as the year in which the meeting takes place and their paper/poster must have been accepted. The deadline for grant applications is **February 15**. *Further information:* <https://www.cag-acg.ca/student-travel-grant>

Healthcare Coverage

If you are a Teaching Assistant or a Graduate Assistant, you are a member of CUPE 3903 and covered under the healthcare plan negotiated by the union.

CUPE 3903 Health Plan

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 3903 Health Plan offers supplemental coverage for graduate students who are members of the CUPE 3903 Union. Benefits include prescription drugs, vision care and dental coverage. The health plan begins on the first day of your contract, provided that you ***enroll yourself*** by the deadline. For those who start work in September 2024, your health plan begins on the first day of your contract. Save all your receipts from September 1st onwards, and once you are officially enrolled you may submit them to the insurance company (Sun Life). You can check with the insurance provider about 4 weeks after submitting the enrolment form, to see if you have been enrolled by the insurance company.

NOTE: Benefits are retroactive to September 1 *only* for those who enrolled before the end of the month. After that date, you will be enrolled as of the day that you submit your Enrolment Form (see attachment) to Human Resources. The health plan ends five months after the completion of your last contract. *Further information:* <http://3903.cupe.ca/benefits-funds/benefits-plan>

The York University Graduate Student Association (GSA) Health Plan

The plan is compulsory for all full-time students without comparable coverage, and is optional for those registered part-time (i.e., part-time students can opt-in). Students also can opt-in spouses (including common-law and same sex spouses) and children. Those students with equivalent or greater coverage with another plan can opt-out. If you are a TA or GA you are in the CUPE 3903 plan. *Further information:* <https://www.yugsa.ca/health-plan>

Leave of Absence

The University recognizes that from time-to-time students may need to be absent from their studies while maintaining an affiliation with York University. To take such absences, students must make a request to the Dean of Graduate Studies through their graduate program office. If the request is granted, students must ensure that **they maintain continuous registration and pay the fees associated with the category of absence**. More information can be found on the Graduate Academic Petitions website. Please contact the program office if you have any questions. *Further information:* <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/regulations/graduate-academic-petitions/>

Important Note: All regulations concerning a leave of absence are set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. You should check the FGS website and important dates calendar in case any of the regulations have changed. <http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/regulations/registration/>

International Students

International students face some specific administrative issues relating to tuition fees, taxation, student visa authorizations, etc.

Even if you are an international student, you may be eligible for the domestic tuition rate if you fall into one of the provincial government's exempt categories. For more information on categories and the deadline dates to submit proof of your status, please visit York's Student Financial Services website: <https://sfs.yorku.ca/fees/academic-tuition-fee-categories>

Health Insurance Registration

After registration, you will be automatically enrolled in the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP). The annual (September-August) premium will be automatically charged to your student account. This is not a charge from which you can opt-out. If you have a TAsip with the University, you are a member of the CUPE union. Upon your enrollment in the CUPE benefits plan as a TA, you will be reimbursed part of your UHIP premium. This reimbursement will be credited to your student account in November. If you do not receive an email confirmation by the second week of September or if you have questions, please contact the UHIP office at uhip@yorku.ca. For more information, please visit: <http://yorkinternational.yorku.ca/current-international-students/health-insurance/>

Employment outside York

Full-time international students with a valid study permit are eligible to work on and off campus. For more information, please visit: <https://yorkinternational.yorku.ca/immigration-overview/working-in-canada-opportunitiesandrequirements/>

If you have questions or need support, please email York International at goglobal@yorku.ca.

Program Outcomes and Requirements

	MA	MSc	PhD
LO1	Value the breadth and interdisciplinary character of Geography as a discipline that bridges and synthesizes the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences.	Appreciate the emergence and transformation of sub-disciplines within Geography beyond the chosen field of scientific expertise.	Situates a field of expertise within the breadth of geographical knowledge and make a substantial original contribution to that field
LO2	Understand the diverse intellectual history of geographical thought, its sub-disciplines, and the current relevance of theoretical understandings of spatial relationships, human-nature interactions, and place.	Understand how scholarship in physical geography is situated in broader natural sciences studying biophysical processes.	Develops a competency in three sub-disciplinary fields. Competency refers to the ability to synthesize, critically assess and contribute theoretically and methodologically to outstanding debates in a selected field.
LO3	Develop critical reading and writing skills to articulate a geographical research problem and situate the problem in both critical geography and contemporary literature within and outside the discipline	Develop critical reading and writing skills to articulate a research design from hypothesis formulation to research dissemination.	Develop a robust research design to allow for an original theoretical and/or empirical contribution to an existing field of geographical knowledge.
LO4	Design and execute research project that is firmly rooted in coherent ontological, epistemological, and methodological frameworks that adhere to ethical practices and respect for participants and their communities	Execute research and scholarship that contributes to knowledge in ways that adhere to ethical practices, academic integrity, and respect for participants and human-natural communities.	Independently execute an original research project that generates new knowledge in the context of rapidly changing theoretical advancements unpredictable research conditions in a timely manner.

	MA	MSc	PhD
L05	Apply existing geographical knowledge and research processes to a persistent research issue in a new setting or case study.	Apply field methods and data collection techniques in project or lab-based setting.	Identifies the implications of original geographical scholarship to theoretical and methodological advancements and policy innovation.
L06	Identify the relevance and application of research findings to issues of public policy and/or stakeholder development.	Evaluate, select and employ appropriate techniques for data analysis and interpretation	Contributes to the academic and professional development of the field through innovations in research process.
L07	Appreciate the transferability of critical geographical thinking, writing and speaking skills as crucial to future advanced degrees and employment.	Appreciate the transferability of critical geographical thinking, writing and speaking skills as crucial to future advanced degrees and employment.	Actively develops collegial, ethical, and individual and collective responsible practices in academic life through mentoring others and participation in unit level, university-wide and professional association governance.
L08	Understand collegiality, ethical behaviour, and individual and collective responsibility as fundamental to intellectual and professional development.	Develops collegiality, ethical behaviour, and individual and collective responsibility as fundamental capacities that are transferable skills.	Demonstrates the ability to disseminate findings in peer reviewed publications and communicate ideas in professional venues with other experts.
L09	Develop oral and written communication skills for potential dissemination of research findings and ideas in venues beyond the program (i.e., academic publications, conference papers and posters, etc.).	Disseminate research findings and ideas in venues beyond the program (i.e., academic publications, conference papers and posters, etc.).	Communicates complex ideas to the public via popular and social media, workshops, public lectures, or other venues in ways that make advanced geographical scholarship accessible.

	MA	MSc	PhD
LO10	Appreciate the importance of engagement with public policy forums and popular/social media as research dissemination.	Appreciate the importance of engagement with policy venues and popular/social media as part of research dissemination.	Appreciate that geographical research extends beyond the confines of the formal discipline as geographic problems are much larger than any one discipline.
LO11	Appreciate that geographical research extends beyond the confines of the formal discipline as geographical problems are much larger than any one discipline.	Appreciate that physical geographical research extends beyond the confines of the formal discipline and the many forms geographical knowledge takes in diverse communities.	Recognition that knowledge is shaped by asymmetrical relations of power and appreciates efforts to decolonize geographical knowledge.
LO12	Recognition of the limits of all knowledge and how geographical knowledge itself is shaped by asymmetrical relations of power.	Recognition that research findings can be over-extended and must be represented accurately given the power and responsibility of scientific authority.	Engages in practices that respect the potential of other ways of knowing and incorporates different knowledges into geographical research.

Recommended Master's Degree Completion Timeline

Year 1		
Fall Term	Winter Term	Summer Term
<input type="checkbox"/> Enroll in 2 courses <input type="checkbox"/> Attend colloquium (5011) <input type="checkbox"/> Assemble supervisory committee <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for tri-council funding Develop proposal	<input type="checkbox"/> Enroll in 2 courses <input type="checkbox"/> Register for colloquium and make proposal presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize and defend proposal	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Fieldwork
Year 2		
Fall Term	Winter Term	Summer Term
<input type="checkbox"/> Take 2 additional courses, if doing MRP <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap up research/fieldwork <input type="checkbox"/> Start analysis and writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Revision and defend thesis/MRP

Past 2 years (6 terms), if you have not completed your degree, you can withdraw until you are ready to defend or continue part-time for a maximum of 4 years.

Recommended Doctoral Degree Completion Timeline

Year 1		
Fall Term	Winter Term	Summer Term
<input type="checkbox"/> Start coursework <input type="checkbox"/> Establish supervisory committee <input type="checkbox"/> Attend colloquium (5011) <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for tri-council funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Finish coursework <input type="checkbox"/> Draft reading lists for comprehensive exams <input type="checkbox"/> Attend colloquium	<input type="checkbox"/> Finish coursework, if needed <input type="checkbox"/> Approve reading lists and start reading for comprehensive exams
Year 2		
Fall Term	Winter Term	Summer Term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to prepare for comprehensive exams/take comprehensive exams <input type="checkbox"/> Begin to prepare proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Attend colloquium (5011) <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for Tri-Council funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Take comprehensive exams <input type="checkbox"/> Register for colloquium and make proposal presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for fieldwork funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Finalize and defend proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Submit approved proposal and ethics application (if applicable) to program
Year 3		
Fall Term	Winter Term	Summer Term
<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> Research/fieldwork <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for Tri-Council funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> Research/fieldwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> Research/fieldwork
Year 4		
Fall Term	Winter Term	Summer Term
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwork/analysis/start writing <input type="checkbox"/> Apply for tri-council funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwork/analysis/writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Analysis/writing
Year 5-6		
Fall Term	Winter Term	Summer Term
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing

Past 6 years (18 terms) of full-time study, you must withdraw from the program until you are ready to defend or apply for an extension into part-time study if you will defend in the near future.

Your Supervisory Committee

Master's Supervisory Committee

An MA or MSc supervisory committee will consist of a minimum of two members from the Faculty of Graduate Studies: your supervisor and one other faculty member. The second member can come from Geography or from another graduate program. Your second committee member is usually chosen in consultation with your supervisor during your first semester.

The membership of the supervisory committee, including the Supervisor, must be approved by the Director of the Graduate Program and the Dean of Graduate Studies by **January 15** of your first year of study.

PhD Supervisory Committee

A PhD supervisory committee will consist of a minimum of three members from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. One member of the committee can come from outside the Geography program. You will normally choose your other committee members in consultation with your supervisor.

Students must have a committee identified by the end of the first month of their 4th semester in the program (but most students will start to identify a committee in their 2nd semester) The supervisory committee must be approved by the Director of the Graduate Program and the Dean of Graduate Studies **no later than September 15 in the second year of study**. In practice, however, it is advisable to have your supervisory committee in place even earlier, as you will normally be starting to prepare for your comprehensive examination towards the end of the Winter term of your first year.

For more information on Graduate Supervision, please visit:

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/graduate-supervision/>

Course Requirements

Below are the details of courses requirements for each program. One elective can come from outside Geography. Always discuss your course selections with your supervisor.

M.Sc. with Thesis	M.Sc. with MRP
GEOG 5010	GEOG 5010
GEOG 5011 (register in Winter Term, year 1)	GEOG 5011 (register in Winter Term, year 1)
GEOG 5600	GEOG 5600
Two electives	Four electives

M.A. with Thesis	M.A. with MRP
GEOG 5010	GEOG 5010
GEOG 5011 (register in Winter Term, year 1)	GEOG 5011 (register in Winter Term, year 1)
GEOG 5025	GEOG 5025
GEOG 5209	GEOG 5209
One elective	Three electives

Ph.D. Science	Ph.D. Arts
GEOG 5010	GEOG 5010
GEOG 5011 (register in Winter Term, year 2)	GEOG 5011 (register in Winter Term, year 2)
GEOG 5600	GEOG 5025
Three electives	GEOG 5208
(GEOG 5800 and 6800 are strongly recommended)	Two electives

If you have taken taken 5010 as a MA/MSc student at York, the supervisory committee will recommend alternative courses which will be counted as equivalent.

*Please note that PhD students are expected to attend colloquium through their first two years, but only register in winter term of the second year when they present their proposals.

Courses

The program offers the courses listed below. Not all elective courses are offered every year.

'F' after the course number indicates Fall Term. 'W' indicates Winter Term. 'Y' indicates Fall and Winter Terms.

These two courses are required of all students in all degree programs:

GEOG 5010 3.OY: Seminar in the Theory and Practice of Geography

Bi-weekly Friday, 1:00-3:30, alternating with GEOG 5011

This course focuses on contemporary theories in geography. Emphasis is placed on the diversity of forms of enquiry used by geographers and on the development of the principal conceptual frameworks currently favoured. This will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

GEOG 5011 1.OF/W: Graduate Colloquium

Bi-weekly Friday, 11:30-12:30, alternating with GEOG 5010

The Graduate Colloquium is a student-faculty seminar with reports on research by York faculty members, guest speakers, and students, and operates through the Fall and Winter terms. All candidates in residence are required to attend and participate. In addition, M.A./M.Sc. students during their first year of study and PhD students during their second year of study must register during the Winter term. This course requires an oral presentation to the Graduate Colloquium, subsequently written up as a thesis or research paper proposal which is assessed by the student's supervisory committee. This will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Critical Human Geography

GEOG 5208 3.0W: Doctoral Seminar in Critical Human Geography

An advanced seminar which examines current approaches to studying critical human geography, drawing on recent books and articles framed in both the humanities and the social science traditions, with an emphasis on the theoretical underpinnings of critical work. The course introduces students to current research styles, conceptual approaches, and substantive issues in critical human geography. Open to Geography students only.

GEOG 5209 3.0F: Master's Seminar in Critical Human Geography

This seminar for Master's students introduces current approaches to studying critical human geography, drawing on recent books and articles framed in both the humanities and the social science traditions. Seminars will examine current research styles, conceptual approaches, and substantive issues in critical human geography. Open to Geography students only.

GEOG 5025 3.0W: Research Design and Formulation in Human Geography

The objectives of this course are to develop a critical position with respect to methodology, given an ontological and epistemological location with respect to the phenomena under investigation. A primary pragmatic focus [and specific outcome] is on the development of a problematique relevant to the student [i.e., negotiated among seminar participants], the research proposal that responds to its demands, and the development of grounded arguments in terms of subsequent methodological choices.

GEOG 5326 3.0: Critical Political Ecologies

This course explores how power and knowledge shape intertwined social and ecological relationships, drawing on theoretically-informed ethnographies and other empirical studies, with an emphasis on global south research. Same as Social Anthropology 5030 3.0, Sociology 6312 3.0.

GEOG 5327 3.0: Matters of Nature: Theories and Politics of Social Natures

This course critically engages with the vast and growing body of work in anthropology, geography, and science studies that addresses the discursive and material contours of society – nature relations in historically situated and geographically diverse sites. Same as Social Anthropology 5195 3.0.

GEOG 5350 3.0: Geographies of Migration and Mobility

Geographies of migration and settlement have become increasingly complex over the course of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This course discusses several overarching issues related to migration and settlement, including policy at multiple scales, identity and social change, economic pressure and opportunity, processes of urbanization, and political violence. Topics may include geopolitics and migration policies; residential, employment and other geographies of ethnic and racial groups, particularly in cities; migration for education; and cultural geographies of home and identity. The focus is primarily on migration flows in the post-World War Two period.

GEOG 5355 3.0: Seminar in Political Geography: Spaces of Territory, Identity and Power

This interdisciplinary seminar examines contemporary themes in political geography, focusing on the ways in which power and political processes are both shaped by and shape particular spaces, scales, networks, and other spatial relations. Course themes include territory and territoriality, environment and development, extractive economies (e.g., oil and diamonds), biopower and sites of surveillance, spaces of terror and the politics of fear, and the politics of human mobility.

GEOG 5370 3.0: Urban Geographies: Space, Power and the City

This course explores the geographies of inequalities in the city. The course reviews a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches that uncover the contested meaning of urban space and interrogate the nature of power in the city. Topics may include social policy, community and civil society organizations, cultural policy, governance, everyday territorialization, and spatialities and spatial orders of identity. The geographies of critical race theory, colonialism, and the legacies of imperial systems in the production of urban space are explored. Questions of concern relate to: how are marginal groups discriminated in the city? Is the urban form and design of cities exclusionary in nature? How do societies collectively struggle and negotiate for social welfare that is in need of an equitable, socially just and cohesive citizenry? The inherent spatialities and tensions between rationality and power, recognition and redistribution, subjugation and contestation are central themes of the course.

Geography 5375 3.0: Economic Geographies: Capital, Labour and Space

This course examines the political economy of capitalism from a geographic angle. Topics may include the spatial and environmental aspects of capitalism, labour organization, globalization, development, special economic zones, innovation and the digital economy.

Geography 5580 3.0: Global Cities

This course offers an introduction to the literature on global cities and a systematic review of a distinct field of research in urban studies which concerns itself with the globalization of a network of global or world cities.

Same as Environmental Studies 5023 3.0.

GEOG 5700 3.0: The Making of Asian Studies: Critical Perspectives (YCAR Diploma Core Course)

This course offers a historical examination of the multiple, overlapping processes through which Asian identities and regions were constituted. It will also examine new directions in Asian studies in an era of intensified global flows, transnationalism, and the presence of Asian diaspora in Canada and elsewhere.

Same as Anthropology 5500 3.0; Communication and Culture 6536 3.0; History 5480 3.0; Humanities 6135 3.0 and Sociology 6745 3.0.

Bio Geophysical Processes

GEOG 5600 3.0W: Research Seminar in Physical Geography

This course examines current major research issues in physical geography and related disciplines, drawing on recent books and articles recognized as major contributions. Students will be introduced to current research styles, conceptual approaches, and substantive issues that inform research in physical geography. Open to Geography students only.

GEOG 5800/6800 3.0: Practical Methods in Physical Geography

Students work individually and collectively according to a customized syllabus which is oriented towards the accumulation of necessary skill for field, lab and computing research. Plans are developed in consultation with the students' supervisors, and supervised and assessed by the course director. PhD students may enroll in this course twice in different years (first as 5800, then as 6800).

Reading Courses

Geography 6050 3.0: MA/MSc Directed Reading Course

An independent directed reading course on a topic approved by the supervisory committee and the Graduate Program Director in Geography. *This* course may complement the reading required for the literature review of a Thesis/MRP, but will not *in toto*, constitute the reading required for the thesis/MRP. *Students wishing to enroll in this course must complete a Directed Reading Course Permission Form and submit the syllabus for the course to the GPD for approval **prior to the term** in which the course will run.*

Geography 6060 3.0: PhD Directed Reading Course

An independent directed reading course on a topic approved by the supervisory committee and the Graduate Program Director in Geography. A reading course will sometimes complement the reading undertaken for the comprehensive examination, but will not *in toto* constitute the reading required for that examination. *Students wishing to enroll in this course must complete a Directed Reading Course Permission Form and submit the syllabus for the course to the GPD for approval **prior to the term** in which the course will run.*

International Political Economy and Ecology Summer School

Since 1991, the International Political Economy and Ecology (IPEE) Summer School has offered a course each year on a salient issue within the IPEE field. Every year an internationally renowned scholar in the field is invited as the course instructor. The course offering is sponsored by the Departments of Politics (LA & PS) Environmental Studies and Geography (EUC). *More information:* <https://political-science.gradstudies.yorku.ca/ipee-summer-school/>

Graduate Colloquium

The colloquium is held bi-weekly on Fridays from 11:30-12:30 (and may begin at 11 am to facilitate student presentations). It is a requirement for all first-year students to attend both Fall and Winter Colloquia. First-year Master's students and second-year PhD students will formally register in this course for the Winter Term. It is, however, expected that all Geography graduate students will attend regularly during their careers at York. Further, we encourage all students to participate in collegial discussions.

The colloquium is a required course for all our graduate degree programs. There are three requirements to pass this course:

- Attend the various talks by colleagues and visiting speakers
- Present your own research proposal
- Submit a proposal approved by your supervisory committee

A requirement of our program is that Year I Master's and Year II PhD students give a research proposal presentation in colloquium. Your presentation date is scheduled by the colloquium coordinator.

For MA/MSc students your colloquium presentation should be 10-15 minutes in length, leaving time for 5-10 minutes of Q & A. Each student will have about 20 minutes in total.

For PhD II students your colloquium presentation should be approximately 30 minutes, leaving 10-15 minutes for Q & A. Each student will have about 45 minutes in total.

Your supervisor should attend your presentation, so you should let them know when you are scheduled to present.

All students are required to submit an abstract to the GPA at least **one week** before you present. This abstract will be circulated to students and faculty members in the program. It should include your project title, names of supervisor and committee members, and the date.

For Master's students, the abstract should be 1 page in length; for PhD students, no more than 2 pages.

PhD Comprehensive Examinations

Purpose

The purpose of the PhD Comprehensive Examination in Geography is twofold: i) to ensure that the student has sufficient knowledge of the broad fields in which his/her research and future teaching is situated, and ii) to ensure that the student is capable of engaging in a sophisticated way with the current theoretical, methodological or empirical debates that constitute those fields, and is therefore in a position to make a contribution to such debates through their own doctoral research. The exam thus tests both knowledge of the field and the ability to independently synthesize, critique, and frame an argument about the literature.

Although the comprehensive exam creates an artificially constrained timeframe for producing written work, it also reflects some of the skills required in the academic profession - to quickly absorb, synthesize and critique large bodies of knowledge - and in that sense the process itself serves a useful pedagogical purpose.

Fields

The comprehensive examination in Geography involves the selection of three specific fields. The fields should each be broad enough to encompass a range of theoretical or methodological approaches, but each should also cohere sufficiently that it will lend itself to synthesis in the examination essays. The precise definition of the fields is to be determined by students and their supervisory committees, thereby allowing flexibility in defining fields to suit the needs, backgrounds, and interests of individual students. The fields should, however, require reading that is broader than would ordinarily be needed in support of the student's specific research plans - comprehensive examinations are not simply opportunities to complete literature reviews needed for a particular dissertation, and they should not, therefore, be seen as the beginning or as a direct part of the dissertation.

A variety of possibilities exist for the definition of fields. They might, for example, be framed according to: sub-disciplinary areas of Geography in combination with specific research areas within them; specific contemporary or past debates in the geographical and cognate literatures; 'classic' or canonical literature in a particular area of research. Fields may also be refined through an emphasis on particular regions or historical periods. Given, however, that comps fields are understood to represent an area of expertise that might be reflected in the student's teaching portfolio in the future, the designation of fields should reflect this breadth requirement in some way.

Students are encouraged to select at least two of their three fields from the following list:

- Cultural Geography
- Economic Geography
- Feminist Geography
- Geographies of Development
- Geographies of Empire, Postcolonialism and Settler-Colonialism

- Geographies of Migration and Settlement
- Historical Geography
- Indigenous Geography
- Labour Geography
- Political Ecology
- Political Geography
- Queer Geographies
- Social Geography
- Urban Geography

Students are further encouraged, where appropriate, to add a subtitle and organize part of the reading list around the student's own specialized interest within the field. (e.g. Political Geography: Territory, Resource Conflicts, and Biopolitics).

Process

PhD students should, in consultation with their supervisors, identify their committee members during their second semester in the program. A committee usually comprises three members (including the supervisor), of whom two must be appointed to the Graduate Program in Geography. No more than one committee member will come from outside Geography. The three members of the committee should reflect the areas of expertise needed to guide students through corresponding comprehensive fields. It is possible (although not common) for a comprehensive exam committee to be different from the supervisory committee that subsequently guides the planning and execution of the doctoral research project. This is because a different set of expertise may be required to guide students through their comps than to guide them through proposal development, fieldwork, analysis etc.

Students must have a committee identified by the end of the first month of their 4th semester in the program (but most students will start to identify a committee in their 2nd semester). Prior to the end of the student's 4th semester in the program (and preferably starting in their 2nd or 3rd semester), they should have had 2 committee meetings. The first one should identify three comprehensive examination fields. For each field, a reading list may be compiled in consultation first with the supervisor and/or the primary committee member responsible for that field, and secondarily with other committee members. During the first meeting faculty members will provide some initial guidance on the readings that should be included for each field. It is then the responsibility of the student to research and assemble the reading list, submitting drafts to the relevant committee member(s) who will provide advice on the composition of the lists. (Copies of previous comprehensive reading lists, which provide a useful starting point in this process, are available in the graduate program office).

A second, separate meeting of the committee should finalize the scope and contents of all three reading lists. In addition to the reading lists themselves, the student should also submit a one-page (approx. 250 words) statement with each of the three lists, outlining the ways in which it

has been conceived and the debates or issues that it is intended to cover. When the reading lists and accompanying statements have been approved by the committee, they should be sent by the supervisor to the graduate program assistant. After that point, students may add to their reading lists if they wish, but faculty members must not make further additions.

After the reading lists have been finalized, a period of no less than 3 months must elapse before the written examination takes place. For the student, this is a period of intense reading and reflection and should therefore be as free as possible from other academic activities. Students should therefore usually plan not to be taking courses at that time, unless they integrate well with the readings required for the comprehensive fields. Where the committee determines that a longer period of preparation is needed in order to cover the necessary literature, then a commensurately longer preparation period should be allowed. The comprehensive exams must, however, be successfully completed by the end of the 5th term in the program.

After successful completion of the comp materials, an oral examination by the members of the comps committee will be scheduled normally within two weeks following the submission of written materials. In the event that an examination must be rescheduled, students and all faculty members involved must be informed normally no later than 5 business days prior to the examination date.

Scope

There is no minimum or maximum number of readings. The supervisory committee, in discussion with the student, will determine the appropriate literature necessary for comprehensive coverage of the field. Students are expected to have read ALL of the readings on the 3 lists.

Students should not view the written examination as requiring them to review/synthesize all of the material they have read. Rather, written answers should address the question posed in a focused and concise manner, based on the readings. Expectations concerning the length of the written answers will reflect the time allowed for writing. Answers should employ normal citation practices, although no bibliography is needed unless citations do not appear on the reading lists.

Questions in the oral examination might focus on the written answers, the student's thoughts on the questions posed but not answered, or any other aspect of the relevant reading list. Like the written questions, however, comprehensive oral examinations are limited to testing a student's understanding of the material in the agreed-upon reading lists.

The written and oral components of the comprehensive exam process must be completed within 5 terms of registration in the program.

Accommodation

Following Senate Policy, students needing accommodation in the process should consult with the Office for Students Accessibility Service for recommendations of appropriate accommodation, and discuss possible changes to the examination process with their committee.

<https://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-guidelines-procedures-and-definitions/>

Assessment Criteria, Outcomes, and Feedback

Examination questions are designed by committee members. The questions will be developed with the aim of allowing the student to engage with the material in the field. In some cases, more than one question may be asked to examine one field. However, the responses to these questions will be weighted equally with the written responses in the other fields where only one question is posed.

The members of the committee will read all parts of the examination. In the oral examination, the student will be asked to leave the room at the beginning so the committee can discuss the written responses and develop a strategy (e.g. order of questioning) for the oral examination. Normally, students will be orally examined on all the written material.

At the end of the oral responses, the student will be asked to leave the room momentarily to allow the committee to deliberate on the outcome. All three fields will be weighted equally. It is possible, that students provide a very strong answer in some fields and less so for others. Uneven responses can be taken into account by the committee when determining the outcome of the exam.

The outcome of the comprehensive examination is based upon both written answers and performance during the oral exam. The examining committee should seek to arrive at a consensus verdict on the outcome of the examination among members of the committee. The supervisor will inform the graduate program director of the outcome of the examination.

Students should note that the university's policy on academic integrity applies to comprehensive examination answers just as it would to any other piece of written work.

Three possible outcomes of the examination are: 'Pass'; 'Pass with Conditions'; and 'Unsatisfactory' are outlined in the below table.

EXAMINATION OUTCOME	CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT AND DECISION
<p><i>Pass.</i> Student completes the examination successfully.</p>	<p><i>Synthesis:</i> Student demonstrates advanced understanding of the chosen fields’ development and/or its major concepts.</p> <p><i>Critique:</i> Student is able to identify historical and contemporary debates in the fields and/or existing gaps in the literature.</p> <p><i>Framing:</i> An overall argument structures the answers and the student suggests new articulations or solutions that attempt to move the field forward.</p>
<p><i>Pass with Conditions.</i> Student will be required to re-write one or more of their answers and if deemed appropriate, submit to a second oral examination by the committee.</p>	<p><i>Synthesis:</i> The student demonstrates limited understanding of field and/or major concepts.</p> <p><i>Critique:</i> The student’s critique does not adequately engage with the field in any substantial way beyond reviewing the content.</p> <p><i>Framing:</i> An inadequate argument is made about the literature that lacks sophistication and/or coherence.</p>
<p><i>Unsatisfactory:</i> Student demonstrates shortcomings that will not be overcome with revision to one or more parts of the exam and will be asked to withdraw from the program.</p>	<p><i>Synthesis:</i> Students fails to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the chosen material and major concepts as significant errors are evident (e.g., conflation of concepts, misattributing ideas).</p> <p><i>Critique:</i> No critique is offered of the chosen fields and literature.</p> <p><i>Framing:</i> The student is unwilling and/or unable to frame an argument about the chosen field.</p>

Where the verdict is ‘Pass with Conditions’, the examining committee, through the supervisor, will provide, within 48 hours, a written statement explaining the elements of the exam that were unsatisfactory and the format and expectations of the components to be repeated. A copy of this statement should be provided to the student and to the graduate program director.

Students who receive a “pass with conditions” will be allowed to continue in the program, even if this takes them past the time limit of 5 terms. Where repeated elements of the exam are not completed satisfactorily, the committee may deliver a verdict of ‘Unsatisfactory’.

An ‘Unsatisfactory’ verdict means that a student will be required to withdraw from the program. Where the verdict is ‘Unsatisfactory’, the examining committee will provide a written statement to the student and the graduate program director explaining the reasons for its verdict based upon the criteria in the above table. Regardless of the outcome of the exam, supervisors will be

strongly encouraged to ‘debrief’ with the student shortly after the examination. At the meeting further feedback in terms of the strengths and weaknesses that emerged during the examination will be given and discussed.

Appeals

Where a student, committee member or supervisor feels that the processes described in these guidelines have been contravened at any stage in the process, they should voice their concerns initially to each other and attempt to find a mutually agreeable resolution. Where this is not possible, the graduate program director can be contacted by any of the parties in order to intervene in the process and attempt to find a resolution if it is determined that the guidelines followed were not academically or procedurally sound. The graduate program director may choose to take the matter to the Graduate Program Executive and/or Graduate Program Council for consultation.

MA/MSc Proposals

Master’s students (whether working towards a thesis or an MRP) should normally complete their proposals towards the end of the second semester. This allows time for the necessary approvals to be sought and for fieldwork to be conducted during the summer months.

A proposal would normally: introduce the field of research and explain its importance; outline the relevant literatures to which the research project will contribute; explain the research question(s) being addressed; outline the circumstances or context in which the study will take place; describe the methodologies to be employed (including sample interview questions or survey instruments where appropriate); address any ethical considerations; and provide a budget and timeline for the research. These components are intended only as a general guide – the precise content of a proposal is determined by the student in consultation with their supervisory committee.

MA/MSc proposals should be 20-25 pages in length.

PhD Proposal

PhD students should usually be preparing their proposal after passing comprehensive exams.

This would normally mean that their attention turns to proposal development in the second half of the Winter semester of their second year. We encourage students to present and complete their proposal during their second year, but you have the option of waiting until your seventh semester (Fall of the third year). Program regulations (see below) require that the

proposal be defended and submitted in full to FGS (through the GPA in the graduate program office) by 28 months (i.e., December of PhD III).

A proposal would normally do all of the following: introduce the field of research and explain its importance; outline the relevant literatures to which the research project will contribute; explain the research question(s) being addressed; outline the circumstances or context in which the study will take place; describe the methodologies to be employed (including sample interview questions or survey instruments where appropriate); address any ethical considerations; and provide a budget and timeline for the research. These components are intended only as a general guide – the precise content of a proposal is determined by the student in consultation with their supervisory committee.

PhD proposals should be 30-35 pages in length.

Program regulations concerning PhD proposals:

The dissertation proposal must be defended in an oral exam with the candidate's supervisory committee. The defense of the dissertation proposal is held shortly after the comprehensive examination and no later than twenty-two months after the student first registers as a candidate (PhD I). A final written dissertation proposal that has been approved by the supervisory committee must be submitted no later than twenty-eight months after the student first registers as a candidate (PhD I). Should the candidate fail to produce a dissertation proposal that is satisfactory to the supervisory committee, withdrawal from the program is required.

Ethics and Risk Assessment Procedures

Any research projects involving Human Subjects, Animals and Biohazardous Materials are subject to review by the appropriate University committee. York University has formulated policies for the conduct of research involving all three of these areas. In geographical research, it is most commonly the Human Participants Review Committee that must review and approve research proposals. The full procedure and relevant forms are available at: <http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/thesis-dissertation/research-ethics/#forms>

If your research will involve human participants, it is essential that you familiarize yourself with these procedures and complete the review requirements BEFORE you start your data gathering.

The approval of research ethics is different for MRP projects, which are assessed by a review committee that is internal to the program.

The Graduate Program in Geography also has a Risk Assessment procedure for any off-campus fieldwork. This involves careful assessment of the personal risks involved in a field research project and consideration of measures that will be taken to mitigate risks. This too must be completed before off-campus research is undertaken. Forms for risk assessment are available from the GPA.

Progress Reports

Each Spring, the Graduate Program office will circulate progress report forms to all registered graduate students. Completion of these reports is accompanied by a meeting with the supervisory committee. These reports are designed to update the committee on progress over the previous academic year, provide a realistic timeline for completion of remaining program requirements, and to raise and discuss any concerns or challenges with meeting program milestones.

Completion Timeline

The normal completion time for a Master's degree in Geography is TWO years. This implies completing coursework in your first two terms, your empirical work in the Summer term (and perhaps Fall) that follows, and writing in the Fall and Winter (and perhaps Summer) semesters of your second year.

Faculty requirements stipulate that all requirements for a master's degree must be fulfilled within 12 terms (4 years) of registration as a full-time or part-time master's student. Terms in which students are registered as Leave of Absence, Maternity Leave, Parental Leave, or No Course Available are not included in these time limits. Continuous registration at York University must be maintained.

Completion times for PhD degrees in Geography vary depending on the type of fieldwork undertaken. Normally, doctoral students should complete coursework requirements, sit comprehensive examinations, and complete an approved proposal by the end of their sixth term (i.e., end of PhD II). Program requirements stipulate that the comprehensive exams must be completed within 20 months of registration in the program, and proposals should be completed within 28 months. After that, a year of fieldwork and a year of analysis and writing would result in completion in four years.

Faculty rules stipulate that the requirements for a PhD degree must be fulfilled within 18 terms (6 years) of registration as a full-time or part-time doctoral student. Terms that

students register as Leave of Absence, Maternal Leave, Parental Leave, or No Course Available are not included in these time limits. Continuous registration at York University must be maintained. *Further information:* <http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/student-status/registration/>

Thesis/Dissertation Guidelines

A Master's Major Research Paper may include original, primary-source/fieldwork research but it is not required.

All Master's theses and PhD dissertations require original, primary-source/fieldwork research and analysis.

An MA MRP or thesis in human geography requires research methods from the social sciences (including quantitative methods), humanities and/or creative arts. It may also include scientific methods, but this is not required.

An MSc MRP or thesis in physical geography requires research methods from the natural, physical and/or geomatic sciences. It may also include methods from the social sciences, humanities and/or creative arts, but these are not required.

Switching between the human and physical geography programs after admission requires the support of the student's committee and approval from the Graduate Executive Committee.

The Geography Graduate Program Council has approved length requirements for Master's theses and Major Research Papers, as follows:

Thesis: Minimum 20,000 words to a maximum of 40,000 words.

Major Research Paper: Minimum 15,000 words to a maximum of 20,000 words.

The Geography Graduate Program Council has approved length requirements for Doctoral theses, as follows:

A PhD dissertation in human geography should be a minimum of 50,000 words with an absolute maximum of 100,000 words (not including bibliography or appendices). It is recognized that a PhD dissertation in physical geography is often considerably shorter in physical geography.

Acceptable thesis/dissertation formats in the geography graduate program are monograph and manuscript based. Complex digital and multimodal theses may be permitted for MA and MSc students with supervisory committee approval.

A monograph dissertation is the preferred and default format for all theses/dissertations. The monograph thesis/dissertation will contain distinct chapters including: an introduction;

methodological discussion; review of relevant literature; substantive chapters with original research, and a concluding chapter.

A manuscript thesis/dissertation should also be a coherent work. This means that if a thesis/dissertation contains separate manuscripts, there also needs to be introductory and concluding chapters that explain the project's methodology and how the separate manuscripts fit together into a unified body of research. If this produces repetition in the overall document, an explanation should be provided in the introduction. Further, if previously published materials are included, then it should be made clear what exactly is the student's own work and what is the contribution of other researchers.

MA and MSc students may propose a format of the final thesis project other than a monograph or manuscript thesis (e.g. complex digital or multimodal component theses as defined by the Faculty of Graduate Studies). The alternate format must be part of the thesis proposal and expectations must be articulated with specificity, so that expectations of the final document are clear. The same proposal approval process applies.

An additional faculty member may be added to a supervisory committee, as appropriate. Whatever the format, the thesis/dissertation project must remain a Geography research project, and no more than one member of the committee should come from outside the geography graduate program. All theses/dissertations are subject to oral examination.

Note that there are specific requirements concerning the format of completed theses/dissertations that must be met before the final version will be accepted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Check the FGS website and be sure to conform to these requirements.

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/>

Examining Committees

Thesis/Dissertation Examining Committees

Normally all members of examining committees must be members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. All examining committee members **MUST** be present at the oral examination, except where prior permission has been granted under exceptional circumstances. External Examiners for PhD oral exams are expected to be established academics, normally members of a graduate Faculty at another university. Students may not initiate the invitation to external examiners; this is the responsibility of the Graduate Program Director and/or the supervisor. *Further Information:* <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/>

Important Note: Regulations concerning theses and examinations are set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. You should therefore check the FGS website and calendar in case any of the regulations have changed.

MRP Examining Committee

The research paper will be examined by two members of faculty. One will be the supervisor (or one of the supervisors), the other will be a member of the graduate program in Geography at arm's length from the research project. The second examiner will not have been involved in the candidate's research project.

The supervisor is responsible for recommending the membership of the Examining Committee to the Graduate Program Director, along with the date, time and place of the oral, not less than TWO WEEKS before the date set for the oral exam. Normally, all committee members must agree to be present on the date set. Members of the master's examining committees must receive a copy of the thesis **at least TWO WEEKS** before the oral exam is held.

Professional Development

Graduate Program in Geography Professional Development Series

We run occasional professional development workshops each academic year for graduate students, scheduled according to interest. The workshops are designed to help you to navigate some of the challenges you may face during (and after) graduate school. A range of different topics may be covered in these workshops (e.g., applying for scholarships, doing conferences, getting published, writing a research proposal, research ethics, and preparing for fieldwork.) Further details on the workshops and the guest speakers will be posted on our website:

* NOTE: whether or not you are planning an academic career, and whether you are in a Master's or PhD program, the University has resources that can help you. For information on applying for academic and non-academic jobs after your graduate program, go to the Careers website: <https://careers.yorku.ca/>

Organized Research Units

York has a wealth of research centres and institutes (known as 'organized research units' or ORUs). You can find a full list on the York Research website (<http://www.research.yorku.ca/>). It is well worth signing up for membership of any ORUs that fit with your research interests. Once you are on their mailing lists you will receive information about upcoming seminars and other activities. Some ORUs also have sources of funding that can help with fieldwork costs or language training, offer diplomas or certificates that you can take as part of your graduate program, or have data sets that are available to affiliates.

Professional Listservs

It is important that you are engaged with debates in your branch of geography and there are numerous listservs that you can subscribe to, depending on your interests. Everyone should sign up for the CAG-list – the discussion forum of the Canadian Association of Geographers (see below for more on the CAG). For specific sub-disciplinary areas there are lists such as Critical Geography Forum, H-SEASIA (for Southeast Asian Studies), and the CWAG list for women in Canadian Geography. The CAG, AAG and IBG all have specialty groups with their own listservs. These lists sometimes host debates, but they are also the venues in which job opportunities, conferences, and other events are announced. They are especially important if you plan to attend a professional conference, as organized sessions on particular themes will usually be announced on these specialty group listservs.

For a list of CAG specialty groups and contact persons: <https://www.cag-acg.ca/study-groups>

For AAG specialty groups and contact persons: <http://www.aag.org/cs/education>

Also, you may want to look into the CRIT-GEOG-FORUM listserv. It is a useful listserv for critical and radical human geographers to join.

<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=CRIT-GEOG-FORUM>

Journal Content Alerts

A good way of staying on top of new literature in your field is to subscribe to a ‘current contents alert’ for relevant journals. If you find yourself using certain journals frequently (e.g. Antipode, Gender Place and Culture, Earth Surface Processes and Landforms), you can visit the publisher’s home page (just Google the name of the journal to find it). Most publishers now have a system of current contents alerts that you can subscribe to. Every few months, the publisher will automatically email you the latest table of contents for the journals you have requested. You can then download the electronic version of an article from the York library.

The Canadian Association of Geographers

As a professional geographer you are strongly encouraged to join our national association – the Canadian Association of Geographers. York has a long history of supporting the CAG and many of our faculty members and graduate students have held elected positions with the CAG or have been awarded prizes by the association. The student membership is reasonably priced and comes with a subscription to the Canadian Geographer, an annual directory, reduced conference registration fees, and other benefits. The CAG offers student travel funding to its annual conference, but you need to be a member in both the year of the conference and the year preceding it. So, we encourage you to join this year. Visit www.cag-acg.ca for details.

You can also join the Association of American Geographers and the Institute of British Geographers as an associate member through CAG. If you plan to attend an AAG conference, it is worth joining as there is a significant difference in conference fee for members versus non-members.

Off-Campus Library Resources

Many York students, especially those who live downtown, use the library resources at the St George campus of the University of Toronto. An annual fee for a [U of T library card](#) is \$310. York has similar direct borrowing arrangements with most other major Canadian universities. See further details on the York library website:

<http://www.library.yorku.ca/cms/graduate/borrowother/>

Training Courses

You will be taking courses as part of your degree requirements, but there are other training opportunities on the campus. In particular, look out for training courses at the library that will help you with referencing software and bibliographic databases

(<http://www.library.yorku.ca/cms/citation-management/refworks/>). Check the library website for details: <http://learningcommons.yorku.ca/workshops/>

For human geographers (and some physical geographers) the Spring mini-courses offered by the **Institute for Social Research** are valuable introductions to quantitative and qualitative methodologies (e.g. survey design; interviewing) and computer software (e.g. NVivo, SPSS, Access). Check the ISR website for more details: www.yorku.ca/isr

Facilities

Office Space

All geography graduate students who hold a TA position are assigned shared office space. You will be advised when the keys become available. If you have questions about TA office keys, you may contact Syyed Hosein, EUC Facilities and Support Services Assistant at shosein@yorku.ca.

Photocopying, Printing and Mail

The photocopier/printer in Room 123 HNES is only for faculty and staff use. If you need to copy material you will be using as a TA, you may contact Syyed Hosein, EUC Facilities and Support Services Assistant at shosein@yorku.ca. Please give advance notice if you need a substantial number of copies (e.g., for a handout).

You have a mailbox assigned in Room 137 HNES (EUC OSAS Office). All incoming mail and correspondence will be delivered here. You will have access only during office hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm).

Please note as per York University's policy, students are not permitted to use University letterhead.

Computing

York University provides a good array of services and tools to suit the diverse needs of its graduate students. Most of these are administered by the campus-wide York Computing Services (<http://www.yorku.ca/computing>); while the University's IT service management system supports the geography graduate program's computer labs and offices.

Geography Computing Facilities

In addition to the general grad lab, there is a Geoinformatics Research Facility and computer lab in 253 HNES.

Please do not bring food in the lab or hold TA office hours in the lab.

Websites and Listservs

You should also familiarize yourselves with the websites of the [Faculty of Graduate Studies](#), [CUPE 3903](#), and the [York University's Graduate Student Association](#), all of which contain important information.

The geography graduate program's website also contains information you will find useful concerning faculty and student research interest, publications and projects.

Graduate students have individual profiles on the program's website – so do provide the program office with updated content for yours.

Collegial Life

GeoGSA (the Geography Graduate Student Association)

Being a graduate geography student automatically makes you a member of GeoGSA. GeoGSA holds meetings regularly, with discussions focusing on important issues occurring in the department, or on the planning of social and sports events. GeoGSA organizes several of the social events in the department, including orientation, Friday coffee mornings, slide shows, guest lecturers, movie nights and pub nights. As you get to know York, feel free to contact any of the members of the GeoGSA for a chat, cup of coffee or guided tour of the university.

Geo Grad Hub (109 HNES)

The Geo Grad Hub is a space for all graduate students (but not undergraduate students) in the geography program. There is a microwave and refrigerator available for your use. This is a shared space so please remember to keep it clean.

Coffee Morning (120 HNES)

Coffee morning is an informal social gathering of faculty members and graduate students from 10:30 to 11:20 on Friday mornings before the bi-weekly colloquium.

Peer-mentoring

A few graduate students have volunteered to act as peer mentors for members of the incoming class. They will be able to offer you advice, help you navigate various bureaucratic waters, and will introduce you to other people in the program. This program is organized by GeoGSA.

Student Counselling, Health & Well-being

The Student Counselling, Health & Well-being Office, through its professional staff, provides a range of psychological services to the York University community in order to optimize the quality of the scholarly and communal life. These services include personal counselling, group development workshops, learning skills training, and support for learning disabilities and psychiatric dis/abilities. If you have any ongoing health issues that is impacting your academic work, do contact their office as soon as possible. The Student Counselling, Health & Well-being website provides further information: <https://counselling.students.yorku.ca/>.

All resources available to graduate students can be accessed by getting in touch with the Faculty of Graduate Students Wellness Office. Their website has a lot of useful information: <https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/students/current-students/grad-wellness-counselling/>

You can also write directly to the coordinator at gradwell@yorku.ca for assistance.

Campus Safety and Mobility

GoSAFE Program

This is a complimentary service providing a safe and secure means of transporting York community members to selected campus locations. *More information:* <http://www.yorku.ca/gosafe/>

VAN Go

VAN GO is a mobility service initiative, designed to assist students and staff with disabilities to get around campus. This service is a joint effort between the Office of Student Affairs and Transportation Services, in consultation with ABLE York. *More information:* <https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/van-go>

Security

York has a Security Service which patrols the campus and issues bulletins when incidents occur. If you require any security related information or if you would like to contact them, their general number is 416-650-8000 or Ext. 58000. If you have an urgent matter, please contact 416-736-5333 or ext. 33333. The Security Control Centre is staffed 24 hours every day.

For more information, go to: <http://www.yorku.ca/security/index.html>

Graduate Program in Geography Faculty, Staff and Students

Graduate Program Director

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Our Faculty:

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/geography/about-us/our-faculty/>

Our Graduate Students:

<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/geography/about-us/our-students/>

York Geography Alumni Association (YGAA)

While you might not be Alumni as yet, there are opportunities available through the YGAA to assist you as a graduate and undergraduate student in Geography. The Association works with the Department of Geography and plays an important role in promoting and supporting its students. The following is a summary of the YGAA and the ways in which it contributes to your student experiences, and provides information about how you can be involved with the Association.

Of 200,000+ graduates of York University, over 5,000 have majored or done graduate work in geography in Geography.

All graduates of geography of York University are automatically full members

Who we are?

The YGAA is a voluntary organization, active since 2002.

The Associations objectives are to, enhance both professional and social communications between the Department of Geography and its alumni; foster links between alumni and current undergraduate and graduate students; strengthen educational outreach with teachers of geography and other professionals; and support the development of geography. The YGAA has a governing body of executive members, and has representation of both Presidents from the Geography Graduate Students Association and the York Undergraduate Students Geography Association to address your needs.

What we do?

Our key business activities include the preparation of the Contour lines which is the YGAA newsletter published twice a year, an Annual General Meeting, lecture/alumni speaker series, supporting two scholarship funds, and promoting and building are community networks and capacity. We also extend our business activities to include social indulgences for the purposes of networking. Our social activities provide the best opportunities to learn about training in geography and its careers pathways.

How the Alumni supports you and the Department of Geography?

- Provides financial opportunities for geography students (Graduate and undergraduate- i.e., Friends of Geography Fund) which helps finance activities for faculty and students (e.g., field trips, visiting speakers).
- Participates in professional development workshops organized by the Department of Geography to inform students about the applicability of training in geography with career pathways, and as a way of building capacity for students to navigate the workforce sectors beyond academia.

- Contributes financially to the Geography Association of Graduate Students to host social networking activities at conferences such as Canadian Association of Geographers and the American Association of Geographers.
- Co-sponsors Distinguished Guest Lecture Series and Alumni lectures to enhance and promote geography, while creating professional opportunities to link geography students to profiled alumni and geographers.
- Hosts social activities to engage students with other fellow geographers and alumni members.

How can you be involved in YGAA activities as a Geography student?

- Run for President of the Graduate or Undergraduate Geography Association to be on our Executive Committee
- If you are doing an interesting piece of research or undertaking some unique fieldwork; have a write-up done about it in the Contour Lines newsletter. It's a good way to promote your-self.
- Attend the Geography Alumni Distinguished Lecture Series; it is one way to build a network outside of the department
- Participate in the sponsored conference networking receptions hosted by the Department and YGAA. Social networking activities at conferences is key to building a profile for yourself in the discipline and marketing yourself for career prospects
- Come out to our Annual General Meeting. Meet new people and it's an opportunity for you to socialize and take a break from the academic world.

We hope you will connect with us during the upcoming year whether it is by attending one of our many alumni events, or networking opportunities, by volunteering at Executive meetings, or by engaging in conversation with us through our social media outlets (Facebook and LinkedIn). By getting involved, the Association will be able to better represent your interests.

Led by alumni volunteers, YUGAN delivers innovative and meaningful initiatives that enable alumni to connect with one another, to fuel student success and to support the York community. If you are interested in learning more, contact EUC's Alumni Engagement Officer, at eualum@yorku.ca.