



Community & Environmental Sociology / Sociology 875: Special Topics “Spatial Thinking”

Spring 2022

Course credit: 1-3, default is 1

Requisites: Graduate / professional standing

Meets: Thursdays 12:15-1:30

Modality: In person at Ag Hall 354 and/or virtually via Zoom

Instructor: Katherine Curtis, Professor of Community & Environmental Sociology

Email: kcurtis@ssc.wisc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30 & Thursday 11-12, schedule via <https://katherinecurtis.youcanbook.me/>

Course description:

This course introduces students to cutting-edge research in spatial social science, giving focus to diverse disciplinary orientations and methodological approaches. The course spans the major subject area dimensions in spatial social science drawing from theoretical and empirical scholarship in sociology, demography, geography, history, political science, public health, epidemiology, and environmental science, with an emphasis on research themes of particular focus among scholars affiliated with the graduate program in Sociology.

Course requirements:

Students are expected to attend seminars each week for the duration of the seminar, engage in discussion, and ask follow-up questions of faculty and students in attendance. In most cases, we will circulate research papers in advance to read before the seminar. Students are expected to lead **at least one** discussion on (a) their research, (b) a scholar’s research, or (c) the practice of spatial social science. Professor Curtis will circulate a sign-up sheet at the beginning of the semester.

Please note that one credit is the normal load and does not require consent; registering for 2 or 3 credits demands consent of the instructor. Students registered for one credit are expected to attend regularly and engage in constructive criticism of the work being presented by faculty, fellow students and visiting scholars, and to lead at least one seminar meeting. Consistent with the course credits and the UW-Madison Credit Hour Policy, the total time students will spend in course meetings (75 minutes

weekly), reading, preparing for seminars, and meeting with visiting scholars will total 45 hours for the semester.

Students registered for two to three credits are expected to fulfill all expectations of the one-credit course. In addition, they will prepare a research paper over the course of the semester that advances their own research agenda using the theoretical and/or empirical insights from the spatial social sciences and the tools of spatial analysis. They will meet with Professor Curtis once a month during the semester to discuss progress. Consistent with the course credits and the UW-Madison Credit Hour Policy, the total time students will spend engaging in course learning activities will be 90 hours for two credits and 135 hours for three credits for the semester. Registration for two or three credits requires consent of Professor Curtis.

Course Learning Outcomes:

The course has five learning outcomes.

1. Students will gain knowledge about major theoretical debates in the spatial social sciences.
2. Students will enhance their ability to consider and critique applications of new methodological tools in the spatial social sciences, thereby advancing their quantitative and qualitative literacy, as well as their capacity for inquiry and analysis.
3. Students will enhance their ability to constructively critique the presentation of research in spatial social sciences, thereby strengthening their own oral communication skills. Learning to *ask* constructive, thought-provoking questions in research seminars is needed to subsequently provide excellent *answers* to questions in one's own research presentations.
4. Students will enhance their professional networking skills by meeting and engaging with leading and emerging spatial social science scholars within and outside of UW-Madison. Beginning to build a professional network is an essential step toward post-degree employment.
5. Students will enhance their ability to describe and discuss their own research and research interests with leading and emerging spatial social science scholars, thereby facilitating oral communication skills, as well as the specific skills needed when on the academic or non-academic job market.

Grading:

Grades for the course will be assigned on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis, contingent on attendance and participation in required activities.

Schedule:

The seminar schedule is posted and updated regularly online [here](#). Seminar meetings will be held virtually and/or in-person, the status of which will be updated over the semester.

Diversity and Inclusion:

[Diversity](#) is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. This course adheres to these principles.

Academic Integrity:

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#)). Please reach out to Professor Curtis immediately with your needs to provide reasonable accommodations.

Academic Calendar and Religious Observances:

The beginning of the fall 2021 semester coincides with Rosh Hashanah. Establishment of the [academic calendar](#) for the University of Wisconsin-Madison falls within the authority of the faculty as set forth in *Faculty Policies and Procedures*. Construction of the academic calendar is subject to various rules and guidelines prescribed by the Board of Regents, the Faculty Senate, and State of Wisconsin legislation. For additional dates and deadlines for students, see [the Office of the Registrar's pages](#). Please reach out to Professor Curtis immediately as scheduling conflicts emerge.