SSCI 490, Directed Research

Syllabus

Units: 1- 8

Term — Day — Time: Fall 2024 – TBD

Location: Campus - TBD

Instructor: Diana Ter-Ghazaryan, PhD, GISP
Office: AHF B55K
Regular Office Hours: Thursday, 1:00-3:00pm
Also available most days and times by appointment via email.
Contact Info: terghaza@usc.edu, 213-821-1190

Library Help: Andy Rutkowski
Office: LIPA B40-A
Office Hours: By appointment
Contact Info: arutkows@usc.edu

IT Help: Myron Medalla
Office: AHF B56B
Office: By appointment via email
Contact Info: spatial_support@usc.edu, 213-740-4415.

Course Scope and Purpose

The purpose of a Spatial Sciences Directed Research is for a student to gain practical research experience to apply and further his/her/their understanding of the principles presented in his/her/their degree program. The research must be completed with a Spatial Sciences faculty or Affiliate faculty member.

During the semester, the student will remain in contact with the professor who has agreed to supervise him/her/them and will report regularly as agreed upon between the student and the professor. There are deliverables to the course Blackboard that reflect research progress throughout the term as well.

By the end of the semester, the student will produce a report of his/her/their research activity, problems investigated, significant results, and any follow-up projects in which the student may have engaged. This report is not a duplicate of research deliverables (i.e., cannot only be a poster submission or other research product). If a different format is used other than a report, that format must meet the same intellectual standard as that described here. In this case, the faculty supervisor will document the definition of an alternative deliverable of intellectual merit equivalent to a report.

In the course of the research project, the student must not violate the University's policies on intellectual property and/or confidentiality and must abide by all other relevant policies.

Students may register for 1.0 - 8.0 units per semester, commensurate with number of hours dedicated to research. No more than 12 units of SSCI 490 are allowed for credit towards a single degree; units applicable to major or minor requirements are limited.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- articulate the relevance of the research project in the context of the broader discipline;
- describe a scope of the research project and his/her/their individual contribution;
- demonstrate application of principles and concepts learned in the academic program to research protocols; and
- produce documentation as to the benefits of the research experience.

Students may vary in their competency levels on these abilities. You can expect to acquire these abilities only if you honor all course policies, attend classes regularly, complete all assigned work in good faith and on time, and meet all other course expectations of you as a student.

Requirements for Enrollment:

- To enroll, students must be in good academic standing (cumulative and degree GPA of at least 2.50). On a case-by-case basis, students with a cumulative or major GPA below 2.50

may be permitted to take this course. The student may be ineligible to receive University or outside funding for the research simultaneously, depending on the funding restrictions.

- Students must attain D-Clearance to enroll with a verifiable research offer/agreement from an SSI faculty or Affiliate faculty member.

Prerequisite(s): None
Co-Requisite (s): None
Concurrent Enrollment: None
Recommended Preparation: None

Class Conduct

Harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, and stalking are not tolerated by the university. All faculty and most staff are considered Responsible Employees by the university and must forward all information they receive about these types of situations to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for assisting students with supportive accommodations, including academic accommodations, as well as investigating these incidents if the reporting student wants an investigation. The Title IX office is also responsible for coordinating supportive measures for transgender and nonbinary students such as faculty notifications, and more. If you need supportive accommodations you may contact the Title IX Coordinator directly (titleix@usc.edu or 213-821-8298) without sharing any personal information with me. If you would like to speak with a confidential counselor, Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) provides 24/7 confidential support for students (213-740-9355 (WELL); press 0 after hours

Technological and Communication Requirements

ArcGIS is provided online via the SSI Server; hence, you do not need to install it on your own computer. Instead, every student must have the following technology requirements:

- A computer with a fast Internet connection.
- A functional webcam and a microphone for use whenever a presentation or meeting is scheduled.
- An up-to-date web browser to access the Server

If a student does not have access to any of these, please speak with the faculty research supervisor at the start of the semester. Also, see the USC ITS Student Toolkit here: https://keepteaching.usc.edu/students/student-toolkit/

Faculty research supervisors may provide or require access to additional software and hardware. It is the responsibility of the student to understand and meet these requirements.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

None required. Readings and materials may be recommended by the faculty supervisor.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Introduction, Proposal, and Semester Progress Reports

At the inception of the course, the student must submit an email confirmation of research offer and enrollment in SSCI 490, including number of units.

By drop/add deadline of the relevant semester, the student must obtain the approval of the supervising professor for the proposed research in writing.

The student and supervising professor must agree upon the format, schedule, and content for the two semester reports.

The student is expected to fulfill the terms of the research.

Final Report

The format and requirements of the final research deliverables (i.e., poster presentation or manuscript submission, etc) will be determined by the supervising professor, as agreed to by the student. A separate final report for SSCI 490 must be submitted, the recommended minimum length of the report is 2-3 pages single-spaced, exclusive of a cover sheet, table of contents, charts, figures, or tables.

The final report is due by date listed on the syllabus, unless otherwise noted by the supervising professor.

The report must be the student's authorship, without merely replicating research materials or deliverables. If materials from the research group are relevant, those materials must be properly cited and can be included as appendices. Define any acronyms.

The final report should follow an outline such as:
Introduction to the project:
- Describe the broader research project goals and how the student's work contributed to the broader project
- Describe the organization of the directed research and the role in the broader discipline

Description of the project:
- What were the project goals? What were the specific activities that the student undertook and specifically accomplished? How many hours in the semester were dedicated to the research project?

- What problems or challenges were encountered in this project and how did the student address or resolve them?
- Describe the over-arching project results
- Describe the importance of the directed research project to the scientific community

Value of directed research:
- What was learned in this directed research, focusing especially what was new or provided exposure beyond what has been covered in a USC course?
- How did this research add value to the student's degree experience?
- How does the student anticipate translating the experiences from this directed research into his or her career trajectory?

Appendices:
- Students may list significant deliverables (such as a literature review, conference presentation, or manuscript draft) from throughout the semester as Appendices.

Grading Breakdown

This course is graded on the standard University letter grade scale (A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.) and based on these deliverables and research faculty evaluation.

Assignments	Points	% of Grade
Introduction email to faculty approval and units	5	5
Preliminary research proposal with approval of research director	15	15
Mid-semester project report 1	15	15
Mid-semester project report 2	15	15
Final report	50	50
Evaluation of research faculty		
TOTAL	**100**	**100**

Course Schedule

	Topics/Daily Activities	Deliverables/Due Dates
Week 1	Defined by research proposal	Introduction email to faculty
Week 2	Defined by research proposal	Preliminary research proposal
Week 3	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 4	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 5	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 6	Defined by research proposal	Mid-semester research report 1
Week 7	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 8	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 9	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 10	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 11	Defined by research proposal	Mid-semester project report 2
Week 12	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 13	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 14	Defined by research proposal	No deliverables
Week 15	Defined by research proposal	Final report

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Students and Disability Accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu

Support Systems
Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086
eeotix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

osas.usc.edu

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710
campussupport.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
[dps.usc.edu](dps.usc.edu), emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
[dps.usc.edu](dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
ombuds.usc.edu

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

*Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-334*0 or otfp@med.usc.edu
chan.usc.edu/otfp

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.