Geography programmes instructions for spring 2020 (due to corona situation)

Geography programme board has decided in the meeting March 18th about these guidelines for spring 2020, until the end of University of Helsinki intensive period. Instructions will be updated if needed.


AND


TEACHING

In order to take the necessary actions against the spread of covid-19, the following actions took effect on Monday the 16th of March.

- In geography, we do not organize any teaching that brings together our students and teachers in classrooms, seminar halls or labs. We thus also seek to minimize the need of students to use public transport regarding studies in our programmes.
- We start implementing various methods of distant teaching by utilizing all kinds of platforms available (Moodle et al).
- Courses that cannot be re-organized will be cancelled.
- Responsible teachers inform their students by mail and on their course-pages.
- Teachers should also appoint substitute person(-s) for their courses.
- Master’s seminars will continue, but the actions take place on digital platforms.
- Thesis supervision continues normally, but via telephones, Skype, Zoom or the like.
- Master’s thesis examination events are cancelled. Examiners provide a short written assessment on thesis. Opponents are not required at this situation.
- In order to give students a bit more time in this challenging situation to get their theses approved, an additional programme board meeting will be organised on June 22, 2020. Proposals must be announced to agenda on Friday, 12th June, 2020 at 2 p.m. the latest.

GIS-CLASSES A111-112 and A113-114

- GIS-classrooms A111-112 and A113-114 in Physicum are closed for all students, starting at the Monday, March 23, 2020. The reason for quarantine is that we can't ensure the hygiene of the classroom, the keyboards, or the furniture.
- If you have some data or important files in any of computers in the classrooms, a students has one week time to bring that data to some cloud service or to a students own external hard drive.
- If you need a special software for your thesis or practical report, take contact to GIS teachers or your supervisor.

EXAMS

- General geography exam dates in March, April and May are cancelled. The situation will be re-evaluated at the end of May. Please note: the general exams may still be organised in April & May, but you won’t be able to take geography exams.
- We continue utilizing the Examinarium workspaces as long as they stay open, according to UH general instructions. At this point, Kumpula and Viikki rooms are open, but the ones in Aleksandria closed. It is possible that all Examinarium-rooms will be closed.
- However, during March, April and May, the Geography Bachelor’s and Master’s Programmes book exams, either on general exam dates or in Examinarium (also repeated lecture exams), can be organised in other ways (Moodle-exam, essay writing etc.).
- Please contact the responsible teacher, who will give you detailed instructions & completion methods for the course / book exam!
- Geography programme board decided the following about book exams: a 5 credit book exam should be about the same for everyone, about 30 pages, line spacing 2, font size 12

FIELD WORK AND LABORATORIES

- Laboratories of Department of Geosciences and Geography are closed until April 13th, 2020. In case you’re working on Master’s thesis that requires lab work, please contact laboratory engineer Juhani Virkanen (juhani.virkanen@helsinki.fi). Students may be allowed to laboratories later this spring, but only if the general instruction of UH states so.
- Geography field courses are cancelled at least until May 31st, 2020. Detailed information on each course page. Contact person: Olli Ruth (olli.ruth@helsinki.fi).
- It is highly recommended, that all field work related to theses is postponed.
- It is NOT allowed to work on the field alone. Contacts with larger groups of people must be avoided, and in case of even the mildest symptoms of flu, field work must be cancelled immediately.
- If you’re planning to do field work during summer 2020, you have to make a careful plan beforehand, and send it to your thesis supervisor before you start.

UPDATED INSTRUCTIONS FOR LAB-WORK (March 26th, 2020)

- The study programs in geography are currently in distant learning mode. This rule also concerns the use of laboratories.
- The process in the Department of Geosciences and Geography for possible exceptions on this rule is as follows:
  - Teacher of the course informs the head of the degree programme about the need for the exception (sami.moisio@helsinki.fi)
  - The programme director applies for the exception through “education/covid19” Teams, channel: “Applications for exceptions to remote teaching”
    - A rationale needs to be given, e.g. how and why it is “imperative for graduation”
    - How safety regulations as well as covid-19 specific regulations and instructions are followed and enforced
- The vice-dean for teaching approves or rejects the application
• The head of studies informs the UH director of studies of the exception
• Before starting the approved exceptional arrangements the teacher of the course or the supervisor of the thesis needs to inform the head of the Department, Annakaisa Korja of the schedule (annakaisa.korja@helsinki.fi).
• In case the student is to work in any of the laboratory facilities, the head of the laboratory, Juhani Virkanen (juhani.virkanen@helsinki.fi) needs to be informed to arrange the work. The head of the laboratory has a right to suspend work in laboratories in case of misconduct or the change in security conditions etc.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

• Teachers’ office hours are cancelled, but please do not hesitate to contact them by email or phone!
• You’ll find all contact information here: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/faculty-of-science/faculty/geosciences-and-geography/geosciences-and-geography-contacts
• You may still reserve an appointment for education coordinator Katariina Kosonen via VIHTA (https://secure.vihta.com/public-ng/studenthelsinki/#/home), but the practical implementation of an appointment is that Katriina will call you at the beginning of your appointment. So please make sure your contact info in oodi is up to date!

A COMMON VIRTUAL COFFEE ROOM FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS EVERY TWO WEEKS

• The board decided, that a virtual coffee room for all geography students and teachers alike, will be open every two weeks on some virtual platform.
• Everyone is welcome to share their thoughts, discuss and ask questions.
• First meeting "Geography afternoon coffee" will be held on Friday 3rd April, at 2 pm in Zoom (address via e-mail-lists)!
• In case you have ideas about discussion topics etc. please contact (organizers Julia Viertola, Venla Bernelius, Katriina Kosonen and Arttu Paarlahti).

All the best for everyone, and remember, things will work out! Let’s stay together and healthy!