

GEOG 2008 Researching Human Geography

Dr Nick Clarke

What we aim to achieve

This module introduces 2nd Year students on the BA Programme to the basics of human-geographical research. By the end of the module, students have a better understanding of: what ‘real-world’ problems human geographers attempt to solve; how they identify those problems in the first place; how they translate those problems into research questions amenable to research; how they attempt to answer those research questions using a range of methods; and the ‘real-world’ uses to which human-geographical research is often put.

What we do

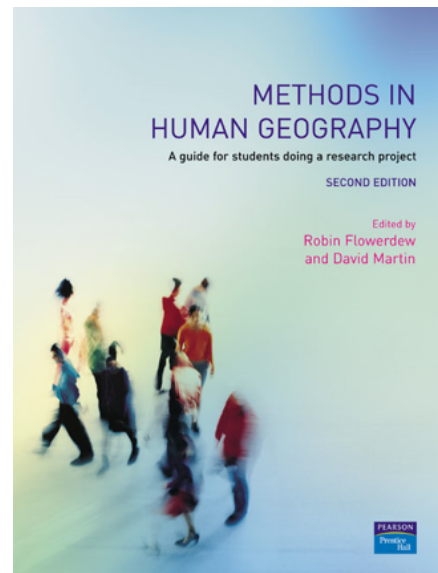
Lectures introduce students to the range of contemporary approaches and methods used in Human Geography. Students read journal papers written by staff at Southampton that provide examples of particular approaches and methods. Seminars allow students to discuss approaches among themselves and with members of staff, or to practice methods for the first time in a supportive environment. Throughout the module, small groups of students meet with different members of staff who discuss their own research programmes with students. These tutorials allow students to get to know staff and to see what research is possible at Southampton in the rest of their degree programme.

Assessment

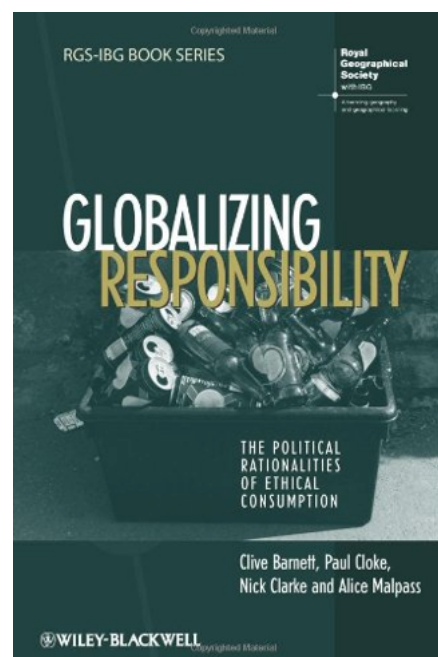
An essay roughly half-way through the module provides the opportunity for students to write at length about their preferred approaches to Human Geography. An exam at the end of the module tests knowledge of research design and methodology essentials in Human Geography.

Future careers

Understanding how to design and interpret research helps students after university in their roles as citizens and workers. Many news stories and political debates on which citizens get asked to make judgements – from climate change to urban regeneration – involve claims based on research that need interpreting by citizens. Many graduate-level jobs – in universities, research institutes, the civil service, consulting, think tanks, the news media etc. – demand research skills and understanding of the kind covered by this module.



One of the leading research methods textbooks for human geographers, co-authored by a member of staff at Southampton.



An example of the module convenor's research on globalisation and consumption.