

# URGEO

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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### **Work Places and Comfort Levels**

Our work as the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Northwestern University is done in a variety of settings, including within our local academic spaces (on campus, university labs, national labs, other universities), local community (schools, campsites), the United States (conferences, field sites) and international settings (Mexico, Oman, Greenland, ships, conferences). Due to the wide range of work spaces within our field, we are cognizant that all of these locations may come with inherent discomfort for people of color. In particular, we note the risk of discomfort in: areas with established or connotated racism (field sites near confederate flags, geographic areas that are perceived as racist), travel (airport TSA, driving with the risk of police), places with limited diversity, and work spaces with police presence (campus police, campus security, law enforcement).

### **Reporting**

- **Northwestern Resources**

- Office of Equity (great resource to help guide where to report).  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/>
  - For reporting cases of sexual misconduct or discrimination/harassment.  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/resources/report-an-incident/index.html>
- Northwestern Community Standards  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/>
  - Contains the student handbook, report a general concern about a student or student's conduct. In addition a concern related to hate or bias.
- Graduate School specific resources  
<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/academic-policies-procedures/academic-student-services/>
  - Inquiries concerning The Graduate School's academic policies and procedures.
- Graduate student handbooks for the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences and Northwestern University  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/graduate/graduate-program/graduate-student-guidebooks.html>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/student-conduct/about-us/student-handbook/assets/student-handbook.pdf>

- The Northwestern University graduate student handbook outlines policies and procedures for reporting incidents in higher detail.
- The Office of Equity released their data for the 2018-2019 in a public report, and have surveyed campus climate in 2015 and 2019.

<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/documents/office-of-equity-annual-report-18-19.pdf>

<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/about/statements-initiatives/campus-climate-survey.html>

- General policies at the University level can be found here.

<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/policies-procedures/policies/index.html>

- **Conference Resources**

- AGU: <https://www.agu.org/Learn-About-AGU/About-AGU/Ethics/SafeAGU#:~:text=Contact%20our%20Member%20Service%20Center.6900.>
- Goldschmidt: Email [codeofconduct@geochemsoc.org](mailto:codeofconduct@geochemsoc.org) to report violation. <https://goldschmidt.info/2020/codeOfConduct> outlines these processes further.
- GSA: You also may report the behavior by emailing GSA at [ethics@geosociety.org](mailto:ethics@geosociety.org) or by calling (720) 507-7523. For more information: [https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Events/EventConductCode/GSA/Events/Conduct.aspx#:~:text=Reporting%20Unacceptable%20Behavior&text=You%20also%20may%20report%20the.\(720\)%20507%2D7523.](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Events/EventConductCode/GSA/Events/Conduct.aspx#:~:text=Reporting%20Unacceptable%20Behavior&text=You%20also%20may%20report%20the.(720)%20507%2D7523.)

- **Department personnel involved with reporting:**

- Department Chair: Matthew Hurtgen (Currently holding position 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/hurtgen-matthew.html>
- Assistant Department Chair: Patricia Beddows (Currently holding position 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/beddows-patricia.html>
- Director of Graduate Studies: Suzan van der Lee (Currently holding position as of 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/van-der-lee-suzan.html>

- Director of Undergraduate Studies: Daniel Horton (Currently holding position as of 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/horton-daniel.html>
- Ombudspeople: Yarrow Axford, Steve Jacobsen (Currently holding position 2021-2022)  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/axford-yarrow.html>  
<https://www.earth.northwestern.edu/our-people/faculty/jacobsen-steven.html>

### **Training resources**

- Wilderness first aid training is available through REI/NOLS. It is not required by our department but is encouraged by some PIs. There are many offerings in the Chicago area throughout the year. It costs a few hundred dollars (cost should be written into grants). *Required and more accessible department level field safety training is being considered.* <https://www.nols.edu/en/coursefinder/courses/wilderness-first-aid-WFA/#sessions>
- The equity series training has just been launched by the Office of Equity for faculty and staff in our Department. This will consist of around four 1 hour long sessions. Series topics may include: what we talk about when we talk about power, privilege, and oppression: building a common language; understanding implicit bias; action planning for justice and inclusivity. It is required for faculty and staff to attend. <https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/resources/training/campus-training.html>
- TGS programming through the Office of Institutional Diversity offers a wide variety of talks and trainings. <https://www.northwestern.edu/diversity/news-and-events/events/index.html>  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/equity/resources/training/campus-training.html>
- Northwestern university is developing digital anti-racism training for all students, faculty and staff, which will be customized to the experience of multiple groups and will highlight the expertise of Northwestern faculty and staff. The anticipated launch date for the first module is September 2021. *We will consider requiring it as a department if it is not required at launch.*
- Responsible Conduct in Research (RCR) training is a quarter long series with six to eight 1.5 hour meetings and 10 brief online modules on a variety of topics. Meeting topics include: ethical research, personnel management, conflict of interest, research misconduct, authorship, peer review, data/sample management, international collaborations, safety in the field, outreach and public education, discrimination and gender bias. It is required for all first year post-docs and graduate students. *We will consider expanding the amount of time spent on topics of discrimination and harassment by requiring those enrolled in RCR to participate in at least one training (from a list of options) that is relevant to their field/lab work. We also hope to add more regarding the*

*importance of cultural sensitive training in gathering research and creating full collaborative partnerships with indigenous people.*

### **Pre-Departure Checklist**

- Modified from the Health, Safety, and Emergency Planning checklist
- <https://www.northwestern.edu/global-safety-security/resources/forms-documents/pre-departure-checklist.pdf> and Demery and Pipkin 2021 (Safe Fieldwork Strategies for At-Risk Individuals) <https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202008.0021/v1>
  - Enroll in GeoBlue Travel Insurance through Northwestern (individual)
  - Book your travel through the department (individual)
  - If you take prescription medication, prepare enough for your trip (individual)
  - Students with disabilities and/or chronic conditions should share trip information with accessibleNU (individual)
  - Plan to leave behind non-essential valuables and make a plan to keep track of the valuables you bring (individual)
  - Take advantage of training opportunities to increase field safety and promote awareness, like those listed above (individuals)
  - Follow local alcohol customs for your field site or guidelines set by trip leader (individuals)
  - In the event that a trip leader is unwilling to minimize risk then use the Northwestern reporting guideline and policies outlined in this document (individuals)
  - Prepare needed valid identification (passport, driver's license, institutional ID) (individuals)
  - Research health risks for your destination on the CDC travelers health page (individuals)
    - Talk to your doctor about your travel plans and update your immunizations, if needed
  - If the field experience is longer in duration, look over the Office of Global Safety and Security mental health resources (provided by trip leaders, information shared with individuals)
  - Store emergency contact numbers (local first-responders) on your phone and in a field book (trip leader, information shared with individuals)
  - Review policy for sexual misconduct abroad and remain aware of NU resources for survivors (trip leader, information shared with all individuals)
  - Review the reporting options below (trip leaders, information shared with all individuals)
  - Develop a communication plan (trip leaders, information shared with individuals)

- Consider who you will communicate with (within and outside of the group), how, and how often
- Reach out to individuals that have been to the site before (trip leaders, information shared with individuals)
- Develop a safety plan that addresses the risks associated with the field destination e.g., weather, topography/uneven terrain, temperature, hydration, evacuation, shelter, transportation, water safety, local laws/customs (trip leaders, information shared with individuals)
  - Be aware that trip leaders that do not share the same identity as the researchers may be unaware of potential risks
  - *A more detailed safety plan is being drafted by department members*
- Establish connections to individuals located/managing the field site and inform them of your plans (trip leaders)
- Look into and obtain any needed permits (trip leaders)
- Establish lines of communication to discuss personal safety concerns and preparation (trip leaders)
- Provide participants with a packing list and advice specific for that trip to the participants well in advance (trip leaders)
  - *We will consider making a departmental field gear borrowing program.*
- Determine the experience levels (see Code of Conduct) of your team members (trip leaders)
- Provide materials to properly identify researchers in the field e.g., signage for vehicles and safety vests (trip leaders)
- Have a meeting to discuss the safety plan and communication plan where you can distribute resources (trip leaders)
- Establish safe housing, travel, and food accommodations (trip leaders, EPS)

## **Code of Conduct**

- **Northwestern**

- **On Discrimination.** We prohibit discrimination as defined in the Northwestern University Graduate Student Handbook: "Discrimination is treating someone differently because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, parental status, marital status, age, disability, citizenship status, veteran status, genetic information, reproductive health decision making, or any other classification protected by law."

<https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/student-handbook/student-handbook-2020-21.pdf>

- **On Harassment.** We prohibit harassment as defined in the Northwestern University Graduate Student Handbook: "Harassment is verbal or physical conduct or conduct using technology directed toward someone" that is intended to "substantially interfere with, limit or deprive a member of the community from accessing or participating in the academic or employment environment, and/or substantially interfering with an individual's academic performance or work performance." It also includes "creating an academic or working environment that a reasonable person would consider to be intimidating, hostile, or offensive."  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/student-handbook/student-handbook-2020-21.pdf>
  
- **On Sexual Misconduct.** We prohibit any instances of sexual conduct without consent. Consent, as defined by the Northwestern University Graduate Student Handbook, must be knowing, active, voluntary, present, ongoing, and able to be withdrawn at any time. We also prohibit all instances of stalking and sexual harassment as defined by the Northwestern University Graduate Student Handbook.  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/student-handbook/student-handbook-2020-21.pdf>  
<https://www.northwestern.edu/communitystandards/student-handbook/student-handbook-2020-21.pdf>
  
- **General Conduct Guidelines.** Our community respects the code of conduct guidelines put forth by Northwestern University. EPS students, staff, and faculty treat one another with respect, kindness and consideration for comfort levels that allow for integrity and advancement in science, especially for our community members of different cultural backgrounds.
  
- In addition:
  - Graduate students in our department are required to complete a Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training in their first year of the program.
  - Harassment, sexual misconduct, and discrimination outlined above are not tolerated.
  - Active attention to make community members feel safe, secure, and included is emphasized.
  - Reporting avenues for violations are well communicated and are never withheld.

- **Conference Experiences**

- **American Geophysical Union (AGU)** outlines the following interpersonal guidelines in their code of conduct:

- "Treat everyone with respect.
- Respect your fellow participants by using good practices for intercultural collaborations.
- Be mindful of your surroundings and of your fellow participants.
- Provide your true professional identity, affiliation, and, where appropriate, contact information, at registration, and during attendance and participatory sessions, as required.
- Respect the rules and policies of the meeting venue, hotels, AGU contracted facility, online platform, or any other venue.
- Be Accountable: When we as organizers or participants fail to meet these guidelines, work together to identify problems and adjust policy and practice together."
- See more at: <https://www.agu.org/Plan-for-a-Meeting/AGUMeetings/Meetings-Resources/Meetings-code-of-conduct>

- **Goldschmidt** Conference outlines the following interpersonal guidelines in their code of conduct:

- "The GS and EAG endorse and expect a professional and respectful atmosphere that values a diversity of views and opinions. All meetings and sponsored activities shall be conducted in a professional atmosphere in which all participants are treated with courtesy, respect and consideration. The societies promote a professional and respectful atmosphere where participants communicate openly, with civil attitudes that are considerate, collegial, and collaborative and that is free of inappropriate behavior and harassment by or toward all participants, including scientists, students, guests, exhibitors, staff, vendors, and other suppliers. Participants must respect the work of others by giving proper credit when using someone else's ideas, processes, results, or words...Attendees will not engage in dishonest misrepresentation, coercive manipulation, censorship, or other misconduct that alters the content, veracity, or meaning of research findings. Attendees will not engage in harassment, intimidation, or discrimination of any meeting participant. This includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal abuse or threats of harm; stalking or uninvited physical contact and inappropriate use of sexual images in public spaces or in presentations; or disruption of presentations at oral or poster sessions or other events organized by the GS and EAG at the meeting venues, hotels, or field trips."
- See more at: <https://goldschmidt.info/2020/codeOfConduct>

- **Geological Society of America (GSA)** Conference outlines the following interpersonal guidelines in their code of conduct:
  - "Treat others with respect and consideration.
  - Be considerate, collegial, and collaborative.
  - Communicate openly, with civil attitudes, critiquing ideas rather than individuals.
  - Avoid personal attacks directed toward other event registrants, guests, volunteers, exhibitors, GSA staff, service providers, and all others in attendance.
  - Pay attention to your surroundings and other participants. If you notice a dangerous situation or someone in distress, call 911 or alert facility security personnel or GSA staff/ leadership.
  - Do not engage in harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination in any form.
  - Do not make verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, national origin or any other identified characteristic outlined in the [GSA Diversity Position Statement](https://www.geosociety.org/documents/gsa/positions/pos15_Diversity.pdf).  
  
[https://www.geosociety.org/documents/gsa/positions/pos15\\_Diversity.pdf](https://www.geosociety.org/documents/gsa/positions/pos15_Diversity.pdf)
  - Do not touch or make physical contact with anyone unless you know the contact is welcome.
  - Do not make real or implied threats of, physical, professional or financial harm.
  - Do not stalk registrants, guests, volunteers, exhibitors, GSA staff, service providers, or other attendees.
  - Do not physically or verbally abuse any registrant, guest, volunteer, exhibitor, GSA staff, service provider, or other attendee.
  - Do not disrupt presentations at oral or poster sessions, in the exhibit hall, on field trips, or at other events organized by GSA at the meeting venue, hotels, or other GSA-contracted facilities."
  - See more  
at: [https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Events/EventConductCode/GSA/Events/Conduct.aspx#:~:text=Reporting%20Unacceptable%20Behavior&text=You%20also%20may%20report%20the,\(720\)%20507%2D7523.](https://www.geosociety.org/GSA/Events/EventConductCode/GSA/Events/Conduct.aspx#:~:text=Reporting%20Unacceptable%20Behavior&text=You%20also%20may%20report%20the,(720)%20507%2D7523.)

## **Field experiences**



- All members of the field experience, no matter where the field experience takes place, should review and follow the Northwestern Code of Conduct.

### **Pre-Departure**

- Group members should have Wilderness First Aid training (not required, but we recommend at least one group member completes training and encourage all who are able).
- Trip leaders should include flexibility in the schedule and conduct additional research on alternate field sites to better accommodate comfort levels with field sites, transportation, safety, and health-related needs.
- Trip leaders should remain aware and discuss prior experience with outdoor activities such as camping and hiking given that comfort levels vary greatly due to disparities in prior experience, cultural background, and/or personal needs.
- All members of the field experience should refer to the pre-departure checklist. Trip leaders should make this document easily accessible to all members.

### **In The Field**

- Constant vigilance and situational awareness is expected.
- Use the buddy system! Never go off on your own or leave a team member behind. Be considerate of varying levels of comfort and experience.
- Follow your safety plan (pre-departure checklist).
- Follow your communication plan (pre-departure checklist).
- The trip leader should introduce the group/leave a note to neighbors surrounding the field site or managers of established field site to let them know what you are doing.
- Carry identification (personal) and any needed permits (trip leader).