

Geography 350

STUDENT PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

Here is a list of “grand challenges” for **Geog 350 paper topics**. Each student must choose from among them and:

- use academic literature to establish a basis for approaching the issue (at least one reading assigned for the course, and at least two other academic works).

For topics 1-11:

- identify at least three difficulties in trying to accomplish the task,
 - find some empirical data to quantify the difficulties, and
 - use academic or trade literature to suggest ways around the difficulties.
1. Develop a strategy for retail improvement (number, variety, and longevity of retailers) along University Way from 41st to 55th: What are the barriers? What’s been tried? Why has it failed? What are the most important environmental factors (definition, characteristics, and economic capacity of the immediate and larger market areas; competing centers; zoning; property ownership), and how are they likely to change (if at all) in the next 5-10 years? (You’ll need some hard data for this.) What actors (property owners, entrepreneurs, larger businesses, city government) need to take what steps?
 2. Develop a strategy for retail improvement of downtown Tacoma: define the area, and see the questions above.
 3. Develop a strategy for retail improvement of downtown Everett: define the area, and see the questions above.
 4. Identify a “food desert” in metropolitan Seattle, using academic and non-academic sources to develop your own definitions and criteria. What specific steps could public and private actors take to eliminate it?
 5. Develop a business plan for providing reasonably priced, fresh produce in a specific low-income area in metro Seattle.
 6. Develop a business plan (including location and direct marketing, potentially including online) for independent, in-store new-book retailing in metro Seattle.
 7. Develop a business plan (including facility location, service area, transport logistics, and direct marketing) for online grocery retailing in metro Seattle.
 8. Research the City of Seattle’s policy that requires new multistory office and residential developments to have street-level retail space, and assess the success of that policy.
 9. Geographically target a marketing campaign (direct marketing? targeted media?) and point-of-service location for flu vaccination in a specific area in metro Seattle where this is needed.

10. Geographically target a marketing campaign (direct marketing? targeted media?) and point-of-service location for prenatal care in a specific area in metro Seattle where this is needed.
11. Geographically target a marketing campaign (direct marketing? targeted media?) and point-of-service location for counseling, tutoring, and completion motivation for high-school students in metro Seattle at risk of dropping out.
12. From academic and trade literature, develop a set of potential geographic implications of corporate consolidation among department stores (or food retailers): i.e., what geographic outcomes would you expect, and why? Then use empirical information to present the actual results of corporate consolidation in your chosen sector. (“Geographic implications” would include change in the location, number, and variety of retail outlets at the national, regional, and local scales.)
13. Present some of the legal, cultural, and geographic issues facing a US-based retailer (you decide the type of retailing) that plans to open a set of outlets in Beijing or Shanghai, and propose how that retailer should try to manage those issues.
14. What changes have been seen in retail employment, retail payroll, number of retail establishments, (tax receipts from retail sales, if available) and location of retail activity before versus 5-10 years after the opening of a Wal-Mart (or Wal-Mart Supercenter) in a county? Compare these changes (in percentage terms) in two counties, and use that comparison to suggest how context influences the impact of Wal-Mart on local retailing.