

**Group of Experts on
Geographical names**

**Twelfth Session
Geneva, 29 September - 7 October 1986**

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Agenda Item 6(c)

**Training Course in the Standardization of Geographic Names
A Syllabus Developed by the United States Board on Geographic Names**

Submitted by the United States of America

29 September 1986

12th Session

Geneva, Switzerland, 29 September - 7 October 1986

Agenda Item No. 6.(c): Working Group on Courses in Toponymy

TRAINING COURSE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

A SYLLABUS DEVELOPED BY THE UNITED STATES BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES

Introduction

For a number of years, the US Board on Geographic Names has offered training to individuals from other countries in the principles, policies, and procedures followed by the Board to standardize names for official US purposes. This training has taken various forms. In some cases, an individual has worked with the staff and members of the Board for several months to learn methods of standardization. The primary goal in such instances was to resolve toponymic problems associated with the student's country. More recently, individuals from other nations have come to the United States to learn techniques associated with names standardization work of the Board's Domestic Names Committee and its Foreign Names Committee. In all cases, students worked with technical experts to examine problems, study papers, receive lectures, and exchange ideas on names standardization. They also attended formal meetings of the committees and of the full Board where they observed how the committees report to the Board and receive approval of their work or further guidance.

The training followed various lines, depending on the requirements of the students and on lessons learned by BGN staff and members in dealing with training. As experience was accumulated it was decided that the work should be guided by a more formal syllabus that defined specific topics and provided a timetable of events. This step was also seen to have the advantage of giving the student a useful outline of the planned educational experience. Representatives of the Board's Domestic Names Committee and the Foreign Names Committee have worked to prepare such a syllabus, which is hereby published and offered for distribution to interested individuals. The course work takes place at the US Geological Survey and at the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic/Topographic Center. These agencies, which are located near Washington, D.C., provide professional staff to support the work of the Domestic Names Committee and the Foreign Names Committee, respectively. At present, the work does not involve field exercises to any appreciable degree; this reflects the fact that in the United States most names have been identified and standardized; but in the future some activities in field methods will be added.

Submitted by the United States of America

The purpose of the BGN training program is to accomplish several objectives. First, students are be able to learn techniques which could be applied to efforts in their own countries to establish national standardization bodies or to modify existing agencies. Second, it helps establish a mutually beneficial link with names experts in other countries. Additionally, the program promotes goals of international standardization. In summary, the BGN training program--which has been offered at no cost to participating students--serves the interests of both parties.

This syllabus is submitted to the 12th Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names as a contribution to the development of a UNGEGN outline for use in planning and implementing national or regional courses in names standardization.

**A FIVE-WEEK COURSE
on
THE STANDARDIZATION
of
GEOGRAPHIC NAMES**

United States Board on Geographic Names

This is an outline of a 5-week course intended to provide beginning and advanced instruction on the standardization of domestic and foreign geographic names. Instruction is provided by the Board on Geographic Names domestic names support staff at the U.S. Geological Survey in Reston, Virginia and the foreign names support staff at the Defense Mapping Agency in Washington, D.C. The course is given in English and includes lectures, seminars, open discussions, reports, special projects, and hands-on work.

Outlines prepared by Donald J. Orth, U.S. Geological Survey and
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Session	Subject
First Week	
1 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Introduction and description of course; general orientation and logistical matters.
	<u>Discussion:</u> Student objectives and goals of course; getting acquainted.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> History of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, its current organization and functions.
2 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Introduction and description of course dealing with national/domestic standardization; its goals.
	<u>Tour:</u> Office and research facilities.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Purpose and advantages of a national program for the standardization of domestic geographical names.
3 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Toponymic terms and their definitions.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> History of standardization and organizations that have contributed to the standardization of geographic names.
	<u>Lecture:</u> The standardization of domestic geographical names within the framework of the United Nations; toponymic guidelines.
4 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> The nature of geographical names; their role in spoken and written language; cartographic applications.
	<u>Lecture:</u> Transformation of writing systems; transliteration and transcribing names from unwritten languages.
p.m.	<u>Seminar:</u> The nature of geographical names and their use in student's area.
	<u>Lecture:</u> The scholarly study of geographical names and its relationship to a standardization program; the International Congress of Onomastic Sciences and other organizations devoted to the study of names.

Session	Subject
5 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Introduction to national standardization; what standardization means; methods and procedures; relationship between national and international standardization.
p.m.	<u>Seminar:</u> Current standardization programs in various countries.
	<u>Project:</u> Assignment of an exercise on map reading and the comparison of names and their applications on maps of different scales, including manuscript maps.
6 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Beginning a standardization program; methods of approach; geographical, political, and social factors.
	<u>Seminar:</u> Previous and current programs in each student's country or area; factors that encourage or inhibit domestic names standardization in his or her country or area.
p.m.	<u>Project:</u> Map names exercise.

Second Week

7 a.m.	<u>Discussion:</u> Review of previous week's sessions.
	<u>Lecture:</u> Establishing a permanent national geographical names authority; organization and membership; sources of authority; use of regional authorities.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Staff support; central geographical names office; staff support duties; communication and relationship between staff and names authority.
	<u>Seminar:</u> Report and evaluation of map names exercise.

Session	Subject
8 a.m. <u>Seminar:</u>	A suggested standardization plan for each student's country or area.
<u>Lecture:</u>	United Nation's recommendations; i.e. Resolution 4, First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
p.m. <u>Lecture:</u>	Establishing standardization criteria; principles, policies, and procedures for a national program; standardization criteria for the comparison of programs in Canada and the United States.
9 a.m. <u>Lecture:</u>	Socio-linguistic issues associated with national standardization; the treatment of minority language names; multiple language names for a geographical entity; possible solutions to plural naming situations.
p.m. <u>Seminar:</u>	Treatment of minority language names in various countries.
<u>Project:</u>	Assignment of a controversial names research exercise.
10 a.m. <u>Lecture:</u>	Boundary names; problems and solutions.
<u>Lecture:</u>	The nature of other geographical names problems; conflicting names, spellings, applications and generic usage; name changes.
p.m. <u>Lecture:</u>	Documentary research methods; finding source documents.
<u>Project:</u>	Controversial names research exercise.

Session	Subject
11 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Introduction to field and office treatment of geographical names.
	<u>Seminar:</u> Field collection and investigation of geographical names information; methods of accomplishing field inquiry; pre-field preparation; qualifications of field personnel; informant selection; local community approach; methods of inquiry; and methods of recording information.
p.m.	<u>Project:</u> Controversial names research exercise.
<u>Third Week</u>	
12 a.m.	<u>Discussion:</u> Review of previous week's sessions.
	<u>Lecture:</u> Special field problems and possible solutions.
	<u>Lecture:</u> Field and office record keeping; toponymic files.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Name application and place identification.
	<u>Discussion:</u> Report and evaluation of controversial names research exercise.
13 a.m.	<u>Seminar:</u> Special name problems; name duplication, offensive names, long/nonfunctional names, historical/legal usage vs. current local usage, numbers in names, politically imposed names, unique generics, and commemorative names.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Symbiotic relationship between a national mapping program and a names standardization program.
	<u>Project:</u> Assignment of automated data processing applications exercise.

Session	Subject
14 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Automated data processing and the national standardization program; demonstration and "hands on" instruction.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Application of principles, policies, and procedures in the standardization process.
	<u>Project:</u> Automated data processing applications exercise.
15 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Editorial treatment of geographical names.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Promulgation of information about the national standardization program and official names; publication of official gazetteers and reports.
	<u>Seminar:</u> National name standardization and the public; avoiding political and ethnic conflicts; obtaining public cooperation.
	<u>Project:</u> Automated data processing applications exercise.
16 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Updating/maintenance of the official geographical names file and other records.
	<u>Lecture:</u> Developing a toponymic research library and a system of professional and local/regional information contacts.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Gazetteer information, layout, and preparation.
	<u>Seminar:</u> Review and evaluation of course and open discussion of particular issues of concern to each student.
	<u>Project:</u> Completion of all projects.

Session	Subject
<u>Fourth Week</u>	
17 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> DMA orientation; tour of office research holdings.
p.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Discussion of the reading list and of pertinent research tools. Opportunity for students to express special concerns, interests and/or needs.
18 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Introduction to names files: organization, file maintenance procedures.
p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>
19 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Introduction to toponymic nomenclature: designations with their respective definitions; categories of names - conventional name and local official names (dual names).
p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>
20 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Supplementing the geographic names data base; topographic and hydrographic Standard Operating Procedures.
p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>
21 a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Basic principles of romanization: discussion of transliteration and transcription on the basis of appropriate BGN/PCGN romanization systems.
p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>

Session		Subject
<u>Fifth Week</u>		
22	a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> The status of the standard literary language of a country or area in the names standardization effort as opposed to regional dialectal name forms; treatment of minority language names.
	p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>
23	a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Review mechanisms (quality control) in gazetteer and file update projects: technical/geographic review; linguistic review.
	p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>
24	a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Procedures regarding implementation of name changes: in-office; submission of formal recommendation to the Foreign Names Committee of the Board on Geographic Names.
	p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>
25	a.m.	<u>Lecture:</u> Promulgation of standardized place names: gazetteers (discussion of source evaluation and production specifications), maps, and charts.
	p.m.	<u>Work Project</u>
26	a.m. and p.m.	<u>Discussion:</u> Review of topics covered in the program and further attention to students' special concerns, interests and/or needs which have not already been addressed; course critique.

Activities for each afternoon will generally consist of exercises/small projects which will exemplify and reinforce the material presented in the lectures, e.g., practice in the interpretation of map symbolization and feature identification on day 20; applying a romanization system to an assigned non-Roman script map on day 21.

A reading list will be provided.