

COMP RESEARCH TOPICS  
ADVICE TO SOPHOMORES and JUNIORS

**Topics for the junior year comp model and senior project**

As you know, a senior-year research project ("comp" or thesis) is required by Allegheny College. During the second semester of the junior year you are required to present a topic and written plan (the "comp model") which has been carefully read about and thought out.

This is not a trivial last minute exercise. To make this an enjoyable and meaningful experience, you are strongly encouraged to begin the process of topic selection much prior to the second semester of your junior year. As a Sophomore or first-semester Junior you should be thinking about, and looking for, various topics that you may wish to pursue. In addition to classroom and laboratory experiences, you should talk with seniors about what they are doing, peruse geological literature, attend geological meetings (such as, Sectional GSA), think about topics while on field trips or during labs, talk to other people, etc. For example, it is an excellent idea to visit Pelletier Library once in a while and simply leaf through the geological journals which are on display or in the stacks in order to see the kinds of things being done. Also survey topics by means of the computer, such as, *GPO* or *Web of Science*, which can be demonstrated by the Reference Librarian at Pelletier. Not only is it helpful for comp topics, but surveying the geological literature on a casual basis will help you immensely in becoming a more informed and better student. We can not over emphasize the need to start your thinking about topics as early as possible rather than leave it to the second semester of the junior year when time is extremely scarce. If you leave your topic to sometime later on in the second semester, you will not be able to do sufficient reading to prepare your comp model. In many cases you will want to explore potential research sites near your home so that you can do field work during the summer rather than during the fall or winter of your senior year. Casual exploration can most conveniently be done during the summer between your Sophomore and Junior years or in the fall of the Junior year. During the second semester of the Junior year, such exploration is either impossible or too late to do any good.