

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY, UPPSALA UNIVERSITY  
**Research Practice in Geography**  
**Spring 2012**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to the philosophical and methodological approaches to research in geography. Through seminar and lecture modules, students will acquire an understanding of different research paradigms, quantitative and qualitative methods, and the knowledge necessary for developing sound and reflective geographic research strategies. The goal of the course is to prepare students to formulate research questions, develop a geographic research proposal and to conduct rigorous research in the field.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Participation:** Students are expected to complete all readings each week, submit one weekly question for discussion and to provide insightful classroom discussion. Remember - what you get out of a class reflects what you put into it.

**Chaired session:** Each student must sign up to chair the discussion for one week. Depending on the class size, this can be done in groups of two. The chair is required to lead the initial discussion (this requires more than just summarizing the readings – we have all read them) and to sustain discussion throughout the class. Try to be creative and/or challenging in generating the discussion. In-class exercises and role-playing often work well.

**Mini research proposal:** The purpose of the mini proposal is to initiate some thoughtful reflection on what you want to do and how you want to do it. The proposal should be no longer than 2 pages single-spaced and should contain the following: i) intro paragraph to contextualize the research (i.e., introduce topic of research and justification for its importance including its geographic and/or planning relevance); ii) research question; iii) description of proposed methods (e.g., population to be studied, data to be collected and/or analysed, methods for collecting– this just represents your initial thoughts and ideas); and iv) timeline for conducting the research.

### **Week 1: Introduction and Overview**

### **Week 2: Developing and Answering Research Questions: Quantitative vs. Qualitative**

Valentine, G. (2001). At the drawing board: developing a research design. Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates. M. Limb and C. Dwyer. London, Oxford University Press: 41-54.

Winchester, H. P. M. (2005). Qualitative Research and its Place in Human Geography. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 3-18.

Crang, M. (2002). Qualitative methods: the new orthodoxy? Progress in Human Geography **26**(5): 647-655.

Essletzbichler, J. (2009). Should Economic Geographers Count? Geography Compass **3**(1): 237-255.

Barnes, T. (2009). "Not Only ... But Also": Quantitative and Critical Geography. The Professional Geographer **61**(3): 292-300.

### **Week 3: Ethical and Rigorous Research**

Dowling, R. (2005). Power, Subjectivity, and Ethics in Qualitative Research. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 19-29.

Miller, T. and M. Boulton (2007). Changing constructions of informed consent: Qualitative research and complex social worlds. Social Science & Medicine **65**: 2199-2211.

Madge, C. (2007). Developing a geographers' agenda for online research ethics. Progress in Human Geography **31**(5): 654-674.

Baxter, J. and J. Eyles (1997). Evaluating Qualitative Research in Social Geography: Establishing 'Rigour' in Interview Analysis. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers **22**(4): 505-525.

Baxter, J. and J. Eyles (1999). Prescription for research practice? Grounded theory in qualitative evaluation. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers **31**(2): 179-182.

Bailey, C., C. White, et al. (1999). Response. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers **31**(2): 182-183.

Bradshaw, M. (2001). Contracts and member checks in qualitative research in human geography: reason for caution? Area **33**(2): 202-211.

James, A. (2006). Critical moments in the production of 'rigorous' and 'relevant' cultural economic geographies. Progress in Human Geography **30**(3): 289-308.

### **Week 4: Conducting Surveys**

Parfitt, J. (2005). Questionnaire design and sampling. Methods in Human Geography: A guide for students doing a research project. R. Flowerdew and D. Martin, Prentice Hall: 78-109.

Curtis, S., W. Gesler, et al. (2000). Approaches to sampling and case selection in qualitative research: examples in the geography of health. Social Science and Medicine **50**: 1001-1014.

Campbell, L. M., N. J. Gray, et al. (2006). Gatekeepers and Keymasters: Dynamic relationships of access in geographical fieldwork. The Geographical Review **96**(1): 97-121.

## **Week 5: Conducting Interviews**

Dunn, K. (2005). Interviewing. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 79-105.

Valentine, G. (2005) Tell me about...: using interviews as a research methodology. Methods in Human Geography: A guide for students doing a research project. R. Flowerdew and D. Martin, Prentice Hall: 110-126.

Hughes, A. (1999). Constructing economic geographies from corporate interviews: insights from a cross-country comparison of retailer-supplier. Geoforum **30**: 363-374.

Elwood, S. A. and D. G. Martin (2000). "Placing" Interviews: Location and Scales of Power in Qualitative Research. The Professional Geographer **52**(4): 649-657.

## **Week 6: Conducting Focus Groups, Observational and Participatory Research**

Conradson, D. (2005). Focus groups. Methods in Human Geography: A guide for students doing a research project. R. Flowerdew and D. Martin, Prentice Hall: 128-143.

Hyams, M. (2004). Hearing girls' silences: thoughts on the politics and practices of a feminist method of group discussion. Gender, Place & Culture **11**(1): 105-119.

Kearns, R. A. (2005). Knowing Seeing? Undertaking Observational Research. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 192-206.

Laurier, E. and C. Philo (2006). Possible geographies: a passing encounter in a café. Area **38**(4): 353-363.

Kindon, S. (2005). Participatory Action Research. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 207-220.

## **Week 7: Conducting Cross-Cultural and Community-Based Research**

Howitt, S. and S. Stevens (2005) Cross-Cultural Research: Ethics, Methods, and Relationships. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 30-49.

Mohammad, M. (2001). 'Insiders' and/or 'outsiders': Positionality, theory and praxis. Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates. M. Limb and C. Dwyer. London, Oxford University Press: 101-120.

Miraftab, F. (2004). Can You Belly Dance? Methodological questions in the era of transnational feminist research. Gender, Place & Culture **11**(4): 595-604.

Mullings, B. (1999). Insider or outsider, both or neither: some dilemmas of interviewing in a

cross-cultural setting. Geoforum **30**: 337-350.

Lopez, G. I., M. Figueroa, et al. (2008). Translation Barriers in Conducting Qualitative Research With Spanish Speakers. Qualitative Health Research **18**: 1729.

### **Week 8: Analyzing Qualitative Data and The Final Research Proposal**

Crang, M. (2005). Analyzing qualitative materials. Methods in Human Geography: A guide for students doing a research project. R. Flowerdew and D. Martin, Prentice Hall: 218-232.

Cope, M. (2005). Coding Qualitative Data. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 223-233.

Schiellerup, P. (2008). Stop making sense: the trials and tribulations of qualitative data analysis. Area **40**(2): 163-171.

Crang, P. (1994). It's Showtime: on the workplace geographies of display in a restaurant in southeast England. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space **12**: 675-704.

Monk, J. and R. Bedford (2005). Writing a Compelling Research Proposal. Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. I. Hay. Oxford University Press: 51-66.