

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
GGR/JPG1111H: Research Practice in Geography and Planning
Winter 2010

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12-2

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 goals of the course will be to provide students with the knowledge needed to effectively evaluate research, understand the process of research design, formulate research questions and develop a geographic research proposal.

EVALUATION

The final grade will be based on the following criteria:

Class participation and weekly readings	10%
Chaired class session	10%
Mini research proposal (2 pages single-spaced, Due Date February 2)	20%
Research proposal (20 pages double-spaced, Due Date April 6)	50%
Research proposal presentation	10%

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.

DUE DATE: February 2, 2010. The late penalty is one grade point per day.

Research proposal: The research proposal should be no more than 20 pages in length (double-spaced) and should include:

- an introduction that includes a statement of the research question, discussion of the research context, identifies geographic and/or planning relevance of the research
- brief literature review (no more than 5 pages)
- a detailed discussion of all research methods including justification for all methods selected
 - research setting and research participants
 - proposed sample size and sampling methods (e.g., recruitment)
 - data collection methods (e.g., interviews, surveys, archival research)
 - a discussion of ethical issues and rigour
- appendix that includes a timeline for completion as well as survey/interview scripts

DUE DATE: APRIL 6, 2010. The late penalty is one grade point per day.

Research proposal presentation: All students are required to give an oral presentation of their proposal to faculty and student members of the department. The purpose of the presentation is to improve your oral speaking skills but to also provide you with valuable feedback. Each student will be allocated 10 minutes for speaking and for answering questions from the audience.

**Week 1: Introduction and Overview
(January 5)**

**Week 2: Developing and Answering Research Questions: Quantitative vs. Qualitative
(January 12)**

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: Survey Research
(January 19)**

Hannah, M. G. (2001). "Sampling and the politics of representation in the US Census 2000." Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 19: 515-534.

Bauder, H. (2001). "Visible minorities and urban analysis." Canadian Journal of Urban Research **10**(1): 69.

Markovich, J. and S. Hendler (2006). "Beyond "soccer moms": Feminist and new urbanist critical approaches to suburbs." Journal of Planning Education and Research **22**: 410-427.

Week 4: Sampling and Selecting Participants (January 26)

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.

Elliot, M. N., D. Golinelli, et al. (2006). "Sampling with Field Burden Constraints: An Application to Sheltered Homeless and Low-Income." Field Methods **18**: 43.

Week 5: Research Ethics (February 2)

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.

Israel, M. (2004). "Strictly Confidential: Integrity and the disclosure of criminological and socio-legal research." British Journal of Criminology **44**(5): 715-740.

Week 6: Assessing Rigour in Research (February 9)

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.

Bailey, C., C. White, et al. (1999). "Response." Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.

Baxter, J. and J. Eyles (1999). "Prescription for research practice? Grounded theory in qualitative evaluation." Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.

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 7: READING WEEK (February 16)

Week 8: Conducting Interviews and Focus Groups (February 23)

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

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.

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.

Week 9: Conducting Observational and Participatory Research (March 2)

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.

Burgess, J. (2006). "Participatory action research: First-person perspectives of a graduate student." Action Research **4**(4): 419-437.

Cahill, C. (2007). "The Personal is Political: Developing new subjectivities through participatory action research." Gender, Place & Culture **14**(3): 267-292.

Week 10: Conducting Cross-Cultural Research (March 9)

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

Bhat, S. B. and T. T. Hedge (2006). "Ethical international research on human subjects research in the absence of local institutional review boards." Journal of Medical Ethics **32**: 535-536.

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 11: Community-Based Research (March 16)

Savan, B. and D. Sider (2003). "Contrasting Approaches to Community-based Research and a Case Study of Community Sustainability in Toronto, Canada." Local Environment **8**(3): 303-316.

Kellet, L., L. Peter, et al. (2008). "The City of Saskatoon's Local Area Planning Program: A Case Study." Social Indicators Research **85**: 159-167.

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

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.

Week 12: Analyzing Qualitative Data and Preparing to Enter the Field (March 23)

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.

Week 13: The Final Research Proposal/(Practice) Presentations (March 30)

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

Week 14 – Presentations (April 6)