

GEOGRAPHY 450:602

Research Design

Spring 2008

Meeting time and place

Monday 10:20am to 1:00pm, B120 Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus

Contact Information

Instructor: Robin M. Leichenko
Office: B-220 Lucy Stone Hall
Office hours: Monday 1-3 or by appointment
Email: rleichen@rci.rutgers.edu
Phone: 723-445-4056

Overview

This course provides a graduate-level introduction to research design in geography. Basic research approaches will be reviewed through lectures and readings on general research methods and research methods in geography. Class discussion will focus on the identification of research problems, construction of hypotheses, and development of research projects. Class time will also be devoted to development and discussion of each student's individual research program and research proposal.

Objectives

The objective of this course is to expose students to the process of doing geographic research:

- to enable students to identify, formulate and pursue appropriate and interesting research questions in geography;
- to introduce students to key methods and tools in geography;
- to provide students with experience in use of research methods;
- to provide students with the relevant knowledge and skills to design a rigorous research project and to write a research proposal

Required texts: (Available at Livingston Campus Bookstore)

Babbie, E. 2007. The Practice of Social Research, 11th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Clifford, N. J. and G. Valentine, eds. 2003. *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage.

Other readings

Other assigned readings will be made available via pdf files posted to the Sakai course web site.

Policy regarding incompletes

Incompletes will not be granted except in the case of documented serious illness or documented family or personal emergency

Evaluation

Evaluation of grades will be based on weekly preparation (40%), assignments (10%), and a research proposal (50%).

Weekly preparation and participation (40% total)

Reading and active participation in seminar discussions are vital to your success in this class. For the discussion portion of each weekly meeting, each seminar participant will contribute a question or issue pertaining to the readings. These will be recorded on the board and will structure our discussion for the week.

Assignments (10% total)

There will be two assignments that will each entail use of different research skills that we are learning in class, including, for example, survey techniques, sampling, data collection, and construction of indexes.

Proposal (50% total)

Over the course of the semester, each student will develop research proposal in their chosen research area. This proposal will ideally serve as a 'dry run' for your M.A. or PhD thesis proposal. For those of you who are still somewhat undecided about your research focus, you should think of this proposal as a way to explore one possible research area, with the caveat that you may decide (after writing the proposal), that you would prefer to pursue another area. The research proposal will include the submission of a single page introductory outline sheet, an annotated bibliography, a rough draft, and a final draft. Research topics and paper drafts will be critically reviewed during class discussions. Students will be expected to present the research proposals in class. It is expected that each of you will seek outside guidance on your proposal topic/approach from your faculty advisor.

Weekly Plan Geography 602

Students are expected to do the assigned readings and to be prepared to discuss the readings in preparation for each week's class. Additional readings will be added as needed.

Week 1 (1/28): Introduction

Week 2 (2/4) Theory in Geographic Research

Babbie Chap 1 and 2, Hay (pdf), Guba and Lincoln (pdf), Thorn (CV chap 16)

Week 3 (2/11) Ethics and Politics of Research

Babbie Chap 3, Hay (CV chap 3) Bullard (CV chap 4), Smith (CV chap 12), Winchester (pdf)

Week 4 (2/18) Literature Review and Research Topic Identification

Babbie Chap 17, Appendix A, Clifford and Valentine (CV chap 1) Healey (CV chap 2)

Class discussion of research topic ideas

Week 5 (2/25) Research Design

Babbie Chap 4 and 5

Week 6 (3/3) Indexes and Sampling

Babbie Chap 6 and 7, Rice (CV chap 15)

Research Topic and Problem Statement Due

Week 7 (3/10) Unobstrusive Research: Using existing data

Babbie Chapter 11, White (CV chap 5), Ogborn (CV chap 7), Bartram (CV chap 10), Souch (CV chap 13), Black (cv Chap 27), Doel (CV chap 28)

Week 8 (3/24) Survey Methods: Creating new data

Babbie Chap 9, McLafferty (CV chap 6), Longhurst (CV chap 8)

Annotated Bibliography is due

Week 9 (3/31) Field Methods and Qualitative Analysis

Babbie Chap 10 and 13, Moss (pdf), Merrifield (pdf), Laurier (CV chap 9), Breibart (CV chap 11), Cope (CV chap 25),

Week 10 (4/7) Quantitative Analysis

Babbie Chap 14 and 16, Lane (CV chap 17), Dorling (CV chap 21)

Detailed Proposal Outline is Due

Week 11 (4/14) No Class -- AAG week

Week 12 (4/21) Graduate Faculty: Readings to be announced

Draft Proposal is Due

Week 13 (4/28) Graduate Faculty: Readings to be announced

**Week 14 (5/4) Student Presentations
Final Proposal is Due**