

QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Development Studies, Brown University
Spring 2013

Course Instructors:

Sukriti Issar

Tues 4-6:20pm, in Watson 112

Office Hours:

S. Issar: Mon 10am-1pm (sign up for a slot online) OR Tues 10am-12pm (walk-in)

All office hours are held in the Development Studies Office, Watson 124

Course description

The Development Studies thesis requires conducting original research (usually qualitative) through field research, analysis of documents or analysis of datasets. In this course, students will learn to design rigorous and imaginative research. The main learning goal is to understand the relationship between research question, methods, and academic literature. What is an effective research question? How do you find a good empirical case? How do you link question, method, and literature into a coherent research proposal? These questions will be answered through lectures, how-to assignments, deconstructing research papers, class debate, work-shopping of student writing, and reading examples of BA theses. For their final assignments, students will write a 15-20 page prospectus containing the research design and theoretical framework of their thesis.

The concrete objectives of the course are:

- a. The use of the entire range of qualitative methodological instruments
- b. The writing of a complete research proposal for the DS senior thesis.

The course meets once a week. Lectures, readings, and in-class discussions will focus around critically analyzing research papers, sample theses, and the students' own writing and experiences conducting research. Topics will include writing up theory in conjunction with your data, building analytical and theoretical arguments, developing theoretical ideas, organizing and structuring your writing, editing and revising your own writing, correct citation procedures, and research ethics. Readings include chapters or articles on research methods and empirical articles that serve as exemplars. The course is loosely organized around the stages of research. Readings focus on observational research, interviews, content analysis, case studies, components of a research study, hypotheses and questions, and writing the literature review.

In order to ensure that students build hands-on research skills, the course requires participants to carry out practical exercises for each of these qualitative methodological tools. For example, students will conduct an interview, transcribe and analyze it, and write up the results in light of theory. Prior to receiving interview assignments, the class is given training in conducting face-to-face interviews. These assignments ensure that students find faculty advisors and have a developed thesis topic before summer break (a period that can be used for data collection).

DEVL1500 ensures that students are fully aware of the ethical issues of conducting research with human subjects. The course concludes with the presentation of senior thesis proposals at the Watson Institute. All development studies concentrators are encouraged to participate in this public event.

Requirements

Participation: This is a participatory course, oriented toward learning research skills and applying these to your own project. Therefore you are expected to complete assignments and readings on time as well as contribute to class discussion. Lectures and discussions are intended to supplement, not replace, the readings. Upcoming topics will be previewed briefly at the conclusion of each class to assist students in making the most of their reading.

Conferences: Bi-monthly individual conferences will be held during office hours. You must sign up online for a 20-minute time slot. Conferences provide a valuable opportunity for you to receive individual attention about your progress in finding a thesis topic, finding an advisor, and planning fieldwork. Attendance at conferences is mandatory, and students are expected to be fully prepared and to participate actively. Please email me 24 hours ahead of time if you can't make it to a conference in order to reschedule.

Written Assignments: All written assignments should be formatted in double-spaced, 12 pt., Times New Roman, 1" margin. Careful proofreading is a must. Please submit your assignments to Canvas. Place your name and the assignment due date as the filename.doc. Submit all assignments as Word documents – this will make it easier for your instructor to give you in-text comments and revisions. Late assignments will be penalized. If you have a disability and need accommodations for assignments please speak with me about it.

1. **February 10:** Assignment 1: Observing Social Life 10/100 points (4-5 pages plus appendix with field-notes). 10/100 points
2. **March 3:** Assignment 2: Prospectus Draft 1 – finding your question (2-3 pages). 5/100 points
3. **March 17:** Assignment 3: Interviewing 10/100 points (4-5 pages plus appendix with interview transcript).
4. **April 7:** Assignment 4: Content Analysis. (4-5 pages plus appendix with codes). 15/100 points.
5. **April 21:** Assignment 5: Prospectus Draft 2 – finding the literature (5-10 pages, including at least 5 readings for your topic).15/100 points
6. **May 15:** Assignment 6: Final Thesis Prospectus – putting it together (15-20 pages). 30/100 points
7. Attendance, Class Participation, Writing Conferences and Thesis Progress Reports: 15/100 points

Late Paper Policies:

Unexcused (i.e., no doctor's note; extraordinary personal circumstances, to be determined by the course professor) latenesses will result in the following penalties:- One-third letter grade for each 24 hour period late (i.e. A- becomes a B+).- Even if the lateness penalty will result in a failed grade, all papers must be turned in to satisfactorily complete the course.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work or ideas without acknowledging them as the source. This rule applies to all writing assignments in this course, and applies to both published sources (e.g. books, research papers) and your data (e.g. newspaper reports, interviews). Plagiarism is seen as a

serious violation of academic ethics and will be punished according to the regulations in force at Brown University. Please do acknowledge your sources whenever your work has relied on the written or spoken words or thoughts of others.

Readings: there are two required books. Other readings will be posted to Canvas.

Required readings: please purchase the following books:

1. Schutt, Russell K (ed.). 2009. *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*. Sage Publications.
2. Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory G., and Williams, Joseph M., (2008) *The Craft of Research*, University of Chicago Press.

COURSE SCHEDULE: ASSIGNMENTS DUE SUNDAY BEFORE CLASS

Week 1 (Jan 29): Introduction to the course

Presentation and general administration of the course

1. How to write a successful thesis
2. Stages of research
3. Preparation for Assignment 1: Observing Social Life

Week 2 (Feb 5): Observing Social Life and Writing Field-notes

- Chapter 9: Qualitative Methods; *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, edited by Russell K. Schutt.
- Wolfinger, Nicholas H. 2002. On Writing Fieldnotes: Collection Strategies and Background Expectancies. *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 2(1): 85-95.
- Chapter 2, from Latour, Bruno and Steve Woolgar. 1979. *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. Sage Publications.

Week 3 (Feb12): Key concepts in research design: topics, questions and hypotheses

****DUE: Assignment 1 (Feb 10): Observing Social Life**

1. Chapters 3 and 4 'From Topics to Questions' and 'From Questions to Problems'. In Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory G., and Williams, Joseph M., (2008) *The Craft of Research*, University of Chicago Press.
2. John W. Cresswell (2009), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Sage Publications). (Read: Chapter 7, "Research Questions and Hypotheses")
3. Lee Alexander. 2011. Who Becomes a Terrorist?: Poverty, Education, and the Origins of Political Violence. *World Politics*, Vol. 63 (2): 203-245.

Week 4 (Feb 19): NO CLASS

Week 5 (Feb 26): Key concepts in research design: indicators, variables, sampling

1. Chapter 4: Conceptualization and Measurement; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.
2. Chapter 5: Sampling; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.
3. David Snow et al. 2007. "Framing the French Riots: A Comparative Study of Frame Variation," *Social Forces*, 86(2): 385-425 (read annotated version).
4. Chapter 1 (Introduction) of thesis by Sophie Fuchs (read annotated version).

Week 6 (March 5): Conducting Interviews

****DUE: Assignment 2 (March 3): Prospectus Draft 1: Finding a Research Question**

1. Chapter 8: Survey Research; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.
2. Kathryn Roulston, Kathleen deMarrais, Learning to Interview in the Social Sciences, *Qualitative Inquiry*, Jamie B. Lewis, Vol. 9, No. 4, 643-668, 2003.
3. How-to guides
 - a. Watch the Youtube video on interviewing at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t-hYjAKww&feature=iv&annotation_id=annotation_554130v
 - b. *World Bank guide to semi-structured interviews*:
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEV/0,,contentMDK:21234374~isCURL:Y~menuPK:3291499~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:3177395,00.html>
 - c. *Using unstructured interview guides in development studies*:
<http://www.unu.edu/Unupress/food2/UIN04E/uin04e06.htm>

Week 7 (March 12): Analyzing Data: Coding

1. An Introduction to Codes and Coding. From *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, by Johnny Saldana, 2009. Sage Publications.
2. Chapter 10: Qualitative Data Analysis; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.
3. Becker, Howard. 1953. Becoming a Marijuana User. *American Journal of Sociology*, 59:3: 235-252.

Week 8 (March 19): Content and Document Analysis

****DUE: Assignment 3 (March 17): Interview analysis**

1. Read pg. 430 onwards: Chapter 13: Secondary Data Analysis and Content Analysis; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.
2. Keith Macdonald and Colin Tipton. 1993. Using Documents. In *Researching Social Life*, edited by Nigel Fielding. Sage Publications. Pg. 187-200.
3. Read Chapters 1 and 2, annotated. Macdonald, Colleen. 2011. DS Thesis. *'It's a human tragedy and these bastards who are bringing these boatpeople should be shot': Framing people smugglers in Australian news media*.
4. Weber, Robert Philip. 1990. *Basic Content Analysis* (2 ed.). Sage Publications. (pgs. 9-24).

5. Coding Handout

Week 9 (March 26): NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (April 2): Comparative analysis: case studies and comparative-historical research

1. Chapter 12: Historical and Comparative Research; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.
2. Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2006. Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12: 2: 219-245.
3. Baiocchi, Gianpaolo, Patrick Heller and Marcelo Kunrath Silva. 2008. Making Space for Civil Society: Institutional Reforms and Local Democracy in Brazil. *Social Forces*, Vol. 86 (3): 911-936.
4. Read chapters 1 and 2. Murphy, Joelle A. 2010. DS thesis. *The nationalist neoliberalism of your desires: The Case of Egypt*.

Optional readings for comparative-historical research [if you are interested in this method]:

- Riley, Dylan J. and Manali Desai. The Passive Revolutionary Route to the Modern World: Italy and India in Comparative Perspective. 2007. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 49(4):815–847.
- Mahoney, James. 2003. Long-Run Development and the Legacy of Colonialism in Spanish America. *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 109 (1): 50-106.

Week 11 (April 9): Theorizing and writing the literature review

****DUE: Assignment 4 (April 7): Content Analysis**

1. Alasuutari, Pertti. 1996. Theorizing in Qualitative Research: A Cultural Studies perspective. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(4): 371-384.
2. Chapters 5 and 6 'From Problems to Sources' and 'Using Sources'. In Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory G., and Williams, Joseph M., (2008) *The Craft of Research*, University of Chicago Press.
3. Duneier, Mitchell. 2011. How not to lie with Ethnography. *Sociological Methodology*, 41: 1-11.

Week 12 (April 16): Research Design and Causation

1. Chapters 1 and 2, 'A Model for Qualitative Research Design' and 'Goals: Why are you Doing this Study', in Maxwell, Joseph A. 2005. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Sage Publication.
2. Chapter 6: Research Design and Causation; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.

Week 13 (April 23): Introduction to Quantitative Research

****DUE: Assignment 5 (April 21): Prospectus Draft 2**

1. Chapter 14: Quantitative Data Analysis; Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research, edited by Russell K. Schutt.

2. Posner, Daniel N. 2004. The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi. *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, (4): 529-545.

Week 14 (April 30): Conducting Fieldwork and research paths

1. Hertel, Shareen, Matthew M. Singer and Donna Lee Van Cott. 2009. Field Research in Developing Countries: Hitting the road running. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42 (April): 305–09.
2. Interview with Adam Przeworski. In Munck, Gerardo L. and Richard Snyder. 2007. *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

Week 15 (May 7): Student Presentations

***DUE: Assignment 6: Final draft of prospectus May 15th**