GEOGRAPHY 700
RESEARCH DESIGN IN GEOGRAPHY
SPRING 2009
WED 2:00-4:40
STORM HALL 321

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Instructor:	Dr. Kathleen A. Farley
Office:	Storm Hall 313
Phone:	594-8472 (worst way to reach me!)
Email:	kfarley@mail.sdsu.edu (best way to reach me!)
Office hours:	Wed 12-1, Thurs 1-2, or by appointment (don't hesitate to make an appointment; I am happy to meet with students individually)

REQUIRED TEXT: Creswell, JW. 2009. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

OPTIONAL TEXT: Montello, DR and PC Sutton. 2006. Introduction to Scientific Research Methods in Geography. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

COURSE OVERVIEW:
The goal of this course is to help you advance with identification of specific research questions and to develop a research strategy for completing your masters thesis or doctoral dissertation. The principal written product of this semester will be a research proposal produced in the format of an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant. The amount of reading assigned in this course is modest in order to allow you sufficient time to concentrate on reading in your specialty area and developing your own research proposal. Early in the semester you need to agree on a research topic with your advisor and on a reading list appropriate for your proposal topic.

The success of this course depends on each student's identification of an area of research and specific research questions early in the semester. There will be a large range in the specificity of students' research plans at this stage and it is understood that some proposals will be more advanced than others, but everyone is expected to have a research proposal completed by the end of the semester. It is essential that you seek advice from your advisor and work with him/her to develop and define your thesis topic. If you do not yet have an advisor, you must find one by the second week of class, as his/her input will be a very important part of the work you do for this course.

GRADING:
Grading for the class will be divided as follows:

- Class participation: 10%
- Colloquium attendance and evaluation: 5%
- Short writing assignments and short oral presentations: 40%
- Oral presentation on research proposal: 10%
- Written research proposal: 35%

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Class participation:

All students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. Some weeks will involve extensive class discussion while others will not; however, you are expected to do the reading and be prepared to discuss it every week. I encourage you to post discussion comments on Blackboard about the reading no later that 6pm the day before class. You should also be prepared to talk about the status of your proposal each week, as we will use any additional time at the end of class for students to get feedback from each other. In addition, you are expected to give feedback to other students on some of the written assignments and on the oral research proposal presentations, and to actively participate in the mock-NSF panel. Partway through the class, you will be asked to evaluate your own participation in class and I will let you know how I would evaluate you at that time.

Grade	Criteria
F	Absent
D	▪ Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. ▪ Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in class (either in discussion or in giving other students feedback). ▪ Demonstrates negative energy via hostile or bored body language.
C	▪ Demonstrates adequate preparation: familiar with readings, but does not show evidence of trying to think through them. ▪ Offers straightforward information without elaboration. ▪ Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. ▪ Demonstrates sporadic involvement in class (including giving feedback to others).
B	▪ Demonstrates good preparation: knows readings well, has thought through them. ▪ Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way. ▪ Demonstrates consistent, ongoing involvement in class.
A	▪ Demonstrates excellent preparation: has read and analyzed the readings exceptionally well, relating them to previous readings, discussions, experiences, etc. ▪ Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps discussion focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments. ▪ Ideas offered are usually substantive, provides insights as well as direction for other students or for the class as a whole. If this person were not a member of the class, its quality would be diminished.

These criteria are based on those outlined by Martha L. Maznevski, University of Virgina ("Evaluating Participation").

Colloquium attendance and evaluation:

Attendance at weekly departmental colloquia is mandatory. You will choose 5 speakers over the course of the semester and write a short (1/2-page) description of his or her *research approach and methods*. This description must be posted to Blackboard by 5pm on the Monday following that colloquium. After you have completed the 5 descriptions, you will

post a 6th entry comparing and contrasting the five approaches and relating them to your own research (In what ways were their approaches similar and in what ways did they differ? Did any of them employ methods similar to those you plan to use for your research?).

Oral presentations:
Over the course of the semester, you will do several 5- to 15-minute oral presentations and one 45-minute presentation. Note that these are *maximum* speaking times. We will use a model similar to professional meetings: someone in the class will be responsible for letting the speaker know when he/she has 5 minutes remaining, 2 minutes remaining, and is out of time. All speakers will be cut off when they reach the time limit, so it is important to practice the timing of your presentations in advance.

Written research proposal:
Your proposal must follow the model of a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant proposal (for general guidelines: http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf06605; for Geography and Regional Science Program information: http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs/grs/suppdiss.jsp; for examples of successful proposals: http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs/grs/propsamples.jsp). It is essential that you get *feedback from your advisor* as you prepare your proposal and on the complete version that you will turn in at the end of the semester.

SCHEDULE:

WEEK (DATE)	TOPIC	READING
	RESEARCH IN GEOGRAPHY	
1 (1/28)	*Course orientation and problem statements* Overview of the course and assignments; student introductions; discussion of areas of research interests; turning your area of interest into a problem statement **Assignment due:** Prepare a ½-page written and 5-minute oral description of your area of interest. Consider these questions: Which topics are you interested in pursuing? What sub-field of Geography do they fall under? Who is your advisor and how does he/she fit within the sub-field? Does your area link to other sub-fields or disciplines?	Creswell ch.1; review one sample NSF proposal
2 (2/4)	*Literature reviews and the use of theory* What is a literature review and what should it accomplish? **Assignment due:** Prepare a 1-page problem statement, describing your thesis or dissertation topic and compile a reading list appropriate to this topic in consultation with your advisor (*all students must have an advisor by this class*). You will continue to develop this reading list over the semester.	Creswell ch.2-3

3 (2/11)	*Research design: methodologies in your subfield* **Assignment due:** Prepare a 10-minute presentation on an exemplary paper (case study or review paper) that had a significant impact on the way research is conducted in your subfield. This might be a paper that used a novel methodology or integrated methods in a new way, or a paper that offers new methodological direction. Use this assignment as an opportunity to think about *how* questions are addressed in your sub-field.	Journal article in your sub-field of your choosing (see assignment due)
4 (2/18)	*Research design: preparing a research proposal* We will discuss the practical aspects of developing a research proposal for a funding agency, including issues of style and structure of the proposal and the evaluation criteria. **Assignment due:** Prepare a 2-page literature review, drawing on the reading list prepared for week 2. The literature review should help establish the context and background for the research you plan to do and should provide a basis for the development of specific research questions later in the semester.	Creswell pp.73-87; carefully read 1 of the sample NSF DDRIG proposals that is closest to your area of interest; also read the *project summaries* of all 4 proposals and bring them with you to class [Montello and Sutton, ch. 1]
5 (2/25)	*Research design: introductions and the purpose statement* **Assignment due:** Prepare a 10-minute presentation on your ideas for methods that you might use in your thesis. You should draw on some of the literature included in your draft literature review and connect some of the methodological approaches used with the ideas in your problem statement.	Creswell ch.5-6 [Montello and Sutton, ch. 2]
6 (3/4)	*Research design: research questions and hypotheses* **Assignment due:** Prepare a 2-page draft of the introduction to your proposal. The introduction should set up the justification and describe how the research relates to a body of theory. For this version, you do not need to include your research questions; they will be added later.	Creswell ch.7-10 (note the differences and similarities in ch.8, 9, and 10) [Montello and Sutton, ch. 3-12]
ISSUES IN RESEARCH ETHICS		
7 (3/11)	*Ethics in practice* We will discuss issues of data handling and interpretation as well as ethical issues that arise in a variety of scenarios. **Assignment due:** Prepare a draft of your research questions (and hypotheses, if relevant). You will be assigned a partner, to whom you must email your assignment by 6 pm the night before class. You should also bring two copies of the assignment to class (one to turn in and one that you can use to work on with your partner).	Creswell pp.87-94; AAG Statement of Professional Ethics; Mattson 1996; Cahill 2007

8 (3/18)	*Ethics in conducting research* We will have a speaker from the Institutional Review Board who will discuss Human Subjects review. **Assignment due:** Prepare a revised version of your literature review. Your advisor must review and sign off on this version before you hand it in.	Elwood 2007; Bird 1996; Giles 2007 [Montello and Sutton, ch. 14]
9 (3/25)	**AAG Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, no class**	
10 (4/1)	**Spring break**	
COMMUNICATING RESEARCH RESULTS		
11 (4/8)	*Practice in the oral presentation of research results* **Assignment due:** Prepare a 15-minute research presentation. If possible, present research that you have conducted or that you have assisted in conducting. Otherwise, you can choose a published study by someone else to summarize. Prepare an abstract according to the instructions for the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers.	Pickett et al. 1991
12 (4/15)	*Writing and publishing scientific papers* **Assignment due:** Prepare a draft of the methods (or procedures) section of your proposal, using the sample proposals as a guide for how to structure it. You should also prepare a 5-minute presentation giving an overview of the methods you plan to use.	Lertzman 1995 Brunn 1988 [Montello and Sutton, ch. 13]
DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENT RESEARCH PROPOSALS		
13 (4/22)	*Student presentations* Each student will present and lead a 40-50 minute discussion on his/her research proposal. This should include a 30-40 minute presentation, allowing at least 10 minutes for questions.	
14 (4/29)	*Student presentations, continued*	
15 (5/6)	*Student presentations, continued* **Assignment due**: The written version of the research proposal is due in class on May 6. Bring 3 hard copies of your proposal and post it to Blackboard.	
16 (5/13)	*Panel review* This will be a mock-NSF-style evaluation of all the research proposals. Students will prepare anonymous reviews of all proposals and the class will discuss and evaluate each proposal (in the absence of its author). **Assignment due:** 2-3 students will be assigned to be the primary reviewers of a proposal and will write 1-2 page detailed	Read the proposals that you are assigned to review (see assignment due)

	critiques of that proposal. They will summarize the proposal and present their critique to the mock panel. As panel members, all students will read all the proposals and rank each one for potential funding. Do not reveal your identity in the written review.	

[ ] = optional

READING: (all available on Blackboard)

Week 1 and Week 4:
NSF DDRIG sample proposals:
http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/bcs/grs/propsamples.jsp

Week 7:
AAG Statement of Professional Ethics:
http://www.aag.org/Publications/EthicsStatement.html
Mattson DJ. 1996. Ethics and science in natural resource agencies. BioScience 46(10): 767-71.
Cahill C. 2007. Repositioning ethical commitments: participatory action research as a relational praxis of social change. *Acme: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 6(3): 360-373.

Week 8:
Elwood, S. 2007. Negotiating participatory ethics in the midst of institutional ethics. *Acme: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 6(3): 329-338.
Bird SJ. 1996. The role of science professionals in teaching responsible research conduct. BioScience 46(10): 783-786.
Giles J. 2007. Breeding cheats. Nature 445(7125): 242.

Week 11:
Pickett STA, Hall BE, Pace ML. Strategy and checklist for effective scientific talks. Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America, March 1991, pp.8-12.

Week 12:
Lertzman K. Notes on writing papers and theses. Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America, June 1995, pp.86-90.
Brunn SD. 1988. The manuscript review process and advice to prospective authors. Professional Geographer 40(1): 8-14.