

Research Methods

GUS 4197, Section 001, Spring 2010, CRN 088550

Tues. & Thurs. 2:00-3:20 PM
Wachman Hall G004
Office hours: Tues, 3:30-5:00
Wed. by appointment
Thurs. 11:30-1:00

Instructor: Ben Kohl
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321 Gladfelter Hall

Please note: Syllabus is subject to change

Description: This course is an introductory survey of research methods in Geography and Urban Studies. The course will provide students the opportunity to learn how to collect and analyze primary and secondary data. Methods covered include mapping, interview design and technique, analysis of census data, and tools commonly used in community and participatory action research. Individual assignments will build towards a community or neighborhood profile or other research project. This is a writing intensive course.

Course prerequisites: This course is designed for juniors and seniors. Students should have ability to read scholarly books and articles, write analytical essays, and do library and internet research. This is not a quantitative research methods course, but students should have completed the required courses in quantitative literacy and statistics before enrolling. If you have any questions about these requirements please ask me.

Course goals: Students will increase their ability to (a) read social science materials; (b) draw from different information sources; (c) distinguish fact from interpretation; (d) understand the role of theory in the social sciences; (e) interpret maps, charts, graphs and other visual representations; (f) write and revise reports; and (g) use a range of research techniques.

Readings and course materials: We use a single text, Emily Stier Adler and Roger Clark, *How it's done: an invitation to social research*, 3rd ed., available on-line, at the Temple bookstore, or on 2-hour reserve at Paley) available at the bookstore, and articles that are available in electronic form on Blackboard or on e-reserve through the Paley website. I recommend that you download or copy all materials and either save them on a CD or print them to guarantee access. You should also have a writing guide. I like *Write Right* by Jan Venolia. It's cheap and easy to use. You will be required to read between 30 to 100 pages per week, and I expect that you will need to go over the readings more than once.

Blackboard: Please 'enroll' in the class website on Blackboard if you have not been automatically enrolled. The site will allow you to ask questions on the readings or follow up on class discussion. (If you do not have access to the internet please see me

immediately.) I will check the site periodically throughout the week and respond to specific questions but hope that you use the site to engage with your peers. Throughout the semester I will post announcements, readings, and comments to help guide your reading, and links to relevant sites.

Expectations and evaluation: Attendance is mandatory. (You are allowed one unexcused absence per semester.) If you miss a class you should see me to ensure that we agree on a plan to make up the work. You must make up any missed work within 1 week of an absence to receive credit. I expect you to read – and think about – all assigned materials. You should do all reading for the week by Tuesday. There will be assignments almost every week: a range of written assignments, peer reviews, and revisions as well as in class exercises and quizzes. As we will review assignments in class, bring a hard copy (printed) to class. You must also turn in your work in electronically to the class Blackboard site in the discussion forum for the week (an assignment will not be considered complete until it is posted on Blackboard). **You should expect to devote six hours per week on average outside of class to earn a reasonable grade.** I expect students to use the web-based discussion board for comments and questions on readings and class discussions. Students who are not comfortable speaking in class may find it easier to raise issues on the Discussion Board (DB) on Blackboard than in class, and contributions to online discussions will contribute to the part of your grade determined by participation. See me during office hours for any problem related to our course or to your completion of any assignment for our course. I can also be reached by email and try to respond within 1 business day.

Note: you must keep all assignments as you will revise them for a portfolio as part of the neighborhood portrait.

Course Grade

Assignments will be weighted to determine the course grade:

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| • Exercises and revised neighborhood study | 40% |
| • Participation (incl. DB), peer reviews, and quizzes | 25% |
| • Exam 1 w6c2, 2/25 (1 hour) | 15% |
| • Exam 2 w12c1,4/13 (1 hour) | 15% |
| • Evaluation and course review (due w15) | 5% |

All assignments will be graded on a 4-0 point (A-F) scale. Test scores and quizzes will be adjusted to this scale. Letter grades will be assigned on the following scale: A= 4.00-3.85, A-= 3.84-3.50, B+ = 3.49-3.15, B = 3.14-2.85, etc.

I provide students who miss exams for health or personal reasons the opportunity to write take home essay exams of eight to twelve pages. (If you know in advance that you will miss an exam let me know.) In accordance with Temple University policy, incompletes are given only in case of illness or other documented emergency. If you have any questions about how you are doing during the semester please ask.

Class Schedule: Subject to change

Week 1, January 19 & 21, Introduction and Overview

Introductory exercises, course overview, personal history (in class), semester project

Reading: Emily Stier Adler and Roger Clark, *How it's done: an invitation to social research*, 2nd or 3rd edition (Adler & Clark), Chapter 1. Uses of social research (Note: chapter headings may vary depending on edition.)

Tracey Skelton, (2001) Cross-cultural research: issues of power, positionality and race, pp 86-100, in M Limb and Clarie Dwyer, eds. *Qualitative Research Methods for Geographers*

Assignment 1: Visit Blackboard, read the syllabus (due w1c2, 1/21)

Assignment 1A: Complete IRB materials (due w2c2, 1/28)

T. Introductions, power and positionality, personal histories

Th. Discuss text and semester neighborhood study project

Week 2, January 26 & 28, Ethics and institutional review

Guest speaker, Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Reading: Materials from www.research.temple.edu/irb.index.html

Adler & Clark, Chapter 2, Theory and Research Chapter 3, Ethics and Social Research, Codes of Ethics from planning and geography (online)

Assignment 2a: Personal history write up (due w3c1, 2/2)

Assignment 2b: Identify neighborhood, area, or topic of study (due w3c1, 2/2)

T. Discuss readings, personal history assignment

Th. Guest speaker: Richard Thom, ethics & the IRB

Note: February 1, last day to drop class

Week 3, February 2 & 4, Research design, positioning the researcher, using the library

Finding information, 'academic' and 'other' sources, avoiding plagiarism

Reading: Adler & Clark, Chapter 4, Selecting Researchable Topics and Questions

Guidelines on plagiarism

http://www.temple.edu/writingctr/student_resources/avoiding_plagiarism.htm

Assignment 3: Scholarly journal & article review: identify research journal of interest, from one article of interest, describe methods, key assumptions, biases, and ethical issues (due w4c1, 2/9)

T. Discuss ethics, IRB assignment, neighborhood project and Temple analysis
Th. Researchable topics and scholarly articles, visit by Greg McKinney, librarian

Week 4, February 9 & 11, World views and maps

Reading: R. Downs and D Stea (1977) Cognitive Mapping and Maps, from Downs and Stea, *Maps in Minds, Reflections on Cognitive Mapping*, pp 6-27
Kevin Lynch, "The City and Its Elements," from the *Image of the City*, 1960

Assignment 4: Cognitive mapping (3 maps and analysis) due w5c1, 2/16

T. Discuss scholarly article assignment and action research reading
Th. Cognitive mapping

Week 5, February 16 & 18, Sampling and measurement

Reading: Adler & Clark, Chapter 5 & 6, Sampling, and Measurement

Assignment 5: Neighborhood transect and map, due w7c1, 3/2

T. Discuss cognitive mapping results and sampling
Th. Measurement (grades & space as measures) and neighborhood transect and map

Week 6, February 23 & 25, Review and Exam 1

T. Discussion of maps, range of research, & review for exam
Th. Exam on material covered through w5c2 (2/18)

Week 7, March 2 & 4, Range of research, case studies, participatory and action research

Reading: Adler & Clark, Chapter 7 & 8, Cross-Sectional, Longitudinal and Case Study Designs, Experimental Research

Optional: R Chambers (1994) The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal. *World Development*, 22(7) pp 953-969.

R Chambers (1994) Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Analysis of Experience. *World Development*, 22(9) pp 1253-1268 (skim)

Chambers, R. (1994). "Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Challenges, Potentials and Paradigms." *World Dev.* 22(10): 1437-55. (skim)

T. Discussion of map assignment and readings (group presentations of readings)
Th. Discussion of readings and exam results, mid-semester review

Spring Break March 8-15

Week 8, March 16 & 18, Questionnaires and interviews

Reading: Adler & Clark, Chapter 9 & 10, Questionnaires and Structured Interviews, Qualitative interviewing

J Moyer (1999) Step-by-step guide to Oral History, available on Blackboard or at http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralhistory.html#INTRO

Assignment 6: Oral History or interview, due w9c1, 3/23

T. Discussion of structured interviews, neighborhood survey design

Th. Discussion of informal interviews and oral histories

Week 9, March 23 & 25, Observational techniques

Reading: Adler & Clark, Chapter 11, Observational Techniques

B Kawulich, Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method, 6(2) May 2005, #43

Assignment 7: Observation exercise, due w10c1, 3/30

T. Discussion of oral histories and readings (group reports)

Th. Readings continued and introduction to observation exercise

Note: March 29, last day to withdraw from class

Week 10, March 30 & April 1, Analyzing data

Reading: Adler & Clark, Chapter 12, Using Available Data

Tables and measurement (share, percentage changes, reading tables) (PDF online)

Assignment 8: Reading the census, analysis of census data (due w11c1, 4/6)

T. Discussion of observation exercise and readings

Th. Readings continued and reading the census exercise

Week 11, April 6 & 8, Evaluation and policy research & MPIP

Reading: Philadelphia Indicators Project, <http://www.metrophilaindicators.org/>

Adler & Clark, Chapter 14, Applied Social Research

If you need to review basic quantitative concepts you should also read Adler and Clark, chapter 15 sections on Quantitative Data Analysis,

Assignment 9: Money: yesterday, today, and tomorrow (due w12c1, 4/13)

T. Philadelphia Indicators Project, Guest Lecture TBA

Th. Discussion of census analysis, time value of money and reading

Week 12, April 13 & 15, Policy research, continued and exam

Reading: TBA: Research in planning

Optional: C Patton and D Sawicki, 1993 Chapter 7, Evaluating Alternative Policies, in *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, pp 257-301 (skim: see BB); Reading TBA on constant and current dollars, financial analysis

Assignment 11a: Narrative description of neighborhood, due (w13c1, 4/20)

Assignment 11b: Draft of neighborhood study or research report (due w13/1, 4/20)

T. Decision making, and review for exam

Th. Exam 2 W 12c2, 4/13

Week 13 April 20 & 22. Representing a neighborhood

Reading: Adler & Clark, Chapter 15, Qualitative Data Analysis

Assignment 12: Peer review of neighborhood study (due w14c1, 4/27)

T: Discussion of study, peer review assignment

Th. Qualitative analysis

Week 14, April 27 & 29, Peer reviews

Reading: Editing, writing, and peer reviews, links and materials on Blackboard

T. Neighborhood studies, from memos to reports

Th. Last class! Wrapping up

Assignment 13: Course evaluation and self evaluation (due May 7)

Assignment 14: Revised neighborhood project with portfolio (due May 7)

Neighborhood study/portfolios due May 7, 2:00 p.m. Grade will be reduced by one grade (one full point) for each day your portfolio is late.

Policy on Religious Holidays: If you will be observing any religious holidays this semester which will prevent you from attending a regularly scheduled class or interfere with fulfilling any course requirement, I will offer you an opportunity to make up the class or course requirement if you make arrangements by informing me of the dates of your religious holidays **within two weeks** of the beginning of the semester (or **three days** before any holidays which fall within the first two weeks of class).

Policy on Cell Phones: Cell phones, pagers and beepers **must be turned off** during class except with special permission.

Disability Statement: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should

contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link:
http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.

Policy on Academic Honesty: The following text is from the Temple University Bulletin for 2006-2007.

Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, or another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism.

Academic cheating is, generally, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work or the specific rules of the individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course which was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or another's work; or actually doing the work of another person.