

FIELD RESEARCH METHODS
SOCY 3401 FALL 2008

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You are responsible for everything in this syllabus, the text, articles, the registration handbook, and material covered in lecture.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide you with the guidance and tools to conduct original research “in the field” on a topic of your choice. Most social science research strives to be objective and often requires that the researcher never interact directly with the participants. This type of research is referred to as quantitative. In contrast, field research or ethnography embeds the researcher in the social phenomena of interest as the researcher observes and interacts directly with the participants. The goal of ethnography is to provide the subjective meaning and experience of the participants, not the researcher’s interpretation of the participants’ lives. This makes for a fundamentally different research experience and findings. Field research stands out as a research method because of the close relationship between the researcher and the participant. This type of research is referred to as qualitative.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid that constitutes academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening or intimidating behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council and those students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member involved and non-academic sanctions given by the Honor Code Council (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Please refer to www.colorado.edu/honorcode to view the specific guidelines. If you have any questions related to this policy, contact the Honor Code Council at honor@colorado.edu. Honor code violations will result in a 0 for the assignment at a minimum and may also result in failing this course, probation, or expulsion.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to disciplinary measures. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, nationalities, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and gender variance.

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, you should notify me at least two weeks ahead of time to request special accommodation if you have a conflict. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Students with Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

REQUIRED READINGS

Lofland, John, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide To Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 4th Ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Lois, Jennifer. 2003. *Heroic Efforts: The Emotional Culture of Search and Rescue Volunteers*. New York: New York University Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **This course is labor-intensive.** You will need to spend a lot of time outside of the classroom in your field setting to succeed in the class. I expect you to spend at least eight hours a week in your setting and an additional two hours writing your field notes.
2. Readings for the day need to be completed *before* the class meeting. Class activities and discussions will primarily draw from the assigned readings.
3. This class will be taught as a quasi seminar and workshop. Therefore, talking, working, and thinking with others are an important part of this class. In order for discussions to take place, you will be required to share your experiences and questions. I will encourage all students to express opinions, critiques, and thoughts about others' comments and experiences. Remember, that we will be discussing the ideas, philosophies, and methodologies of field research, not each other.
4. Emails will be answered Monday thru Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM.
5. **All assignments must be turned in on time. I do *not* accept electronic versions. I will deduct 10% of the grade for the assignment every class a hard copy is late.**
6. Exams: There will be two in-class essay exams.
Each exam is worth 30 points.....2 x 30 = 60 points

7. Group Presentation: You will be assigned into small groups. Each group will lead the discussion concerning the assigned reading and facilitate a class exercise.
Presentation is worth 40 points.....40 points
8. Assignments: You will be able to get each assignment from the CULearn page for this class. All assignments must be stapled, typed, double-spaced, font size 12, 1 1/4 -inch margins (top/bottom, left/right), black ink, left justified, page numbered, and use correct spelling and grammar.
Each assignment is worth 20 points.....5 x 20 = 100 points.
9. Paper Sections: During the later half of the class, you will start writing sections of a formal research paper. A full draft of your section is due on the day when we will be editing each others papers. A deduction of 10% will occur if you do not have a full draft or miss class. Each section will be due at the beginning of the class.
Each assignment is worth 25 points.....3 x 25 = 75 points
10. Final Presentation: The final part of the class will be spent presenting your analysis and conclusions to the class.
Final presentation..... 25 points.

CLASS POINTS DISTRIBUTION

300 – 270 A – A- 269 – 240 B+ - B- 239 – 210 C+ - C- 209 – 180 D+ - D-

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The following provides the class topics, readings (R) and assignments (A) that are due for that day. This schedule is tentative and any modifications will be announced on the CULearn page for this class. On days designated as “Individual Meetings” we will not meet as a class, but each of you will have the opportunity to meet with me to discuss your project.

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Reading and/or Assignment</u> |
|-------------|---|
| M 8/25 | Course Introduction |
| W 8/27 | Course Introduction & Writing: R -- Lofland et al ch 10 |
| M 9/1 | NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. |

GETTING STARTED

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| W 9/3 | Library Research Norlin E303 |
| M 9/8 | R – Lois Intro – ch 2; A1– Article Paper |
| W 9/10 | R – Lois ch 3 – 5 |
| M 9/15 | R – ch 6 – 8 |
| W 9/17 | Starting Where You Are & Evaluating Research Sites: R -- Lofland et al Ch. 1 and 2 |
| M 9/22 | A2 – Decision on Research Setting |
| W 9/24 | Getting In & Research Ethics and Issues in the Field: R – Lofland et al. Ch. 3 and Brown (CULearn) |

GATHERING DATA

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|---------|---|
| M 9/29 | Getting Along: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 4 A3 – Informed Consent (CITI tutorial completion certificate due (If this is NOT turned in, you will not be allowed to turn in any assignment after this date. You will be penalized.) |
| W 10/1 | Logging Data: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 5 A4 – Description of Research Setting |
| M 10/6 | Field Notes |
| W 10/8 | Individual Meetings |
| M 10/13 | Individual Meetings |
| W 10/15 | Individual Meetings |
| M 10/20 | A5 -- Field Notes I |
| W 10/22 | EXAM ONE |
| M 10/27 | Introduction/ Literature Review draft |
| W 10/29 | Thinking Topics: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 6; Revised Introduction due |
| M 11/3 | Asking Questions: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 7 |
| W 11/5 | Arousing Interest: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 8 |

ANALYZING DATA & WRITING THE ETHNOGRAPHY

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|----------------|--|
| M 11/10 | Methods draft |
| W 11/12 | Coding: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 9: Revised Methods due |
| M 11/17 | Data Analysis draft |
| W 11/19 | EXAM TWO |
| M 11/24 | FALL BREAK |
| W 11/26 | FALL BREAK |
| M 12/1 | Conclusion draft: Revised Data Analysis due |
| W 12/3 | Individual Presentation: Revised Conclusion due |
| M 12/8 | Individual Presentation |
| W 12/10 | Individual Presentation |
| R 12/18 | 4:00 PM class Final starts at 10:30 AM |
| M 12/15 | 5:30 PM class Final starts at 7:30 PM |