

FIELD RESEARCH METHODS
SOCY 3401 SPRING 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.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know by the end of the third week of the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Services Office in Willard 322 at 303.492.8671.

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.

Strunk, William Jr. and E. B. White. 2000. *The Elements of Style*. 4th Ed. New York City, NY: Longman Publishers.

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 read and answered only during the weekday during regular hours. This means Monday thru Friday from 9 AM til 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 50 points.....2 x 50 = 100 points
7. Group Presentation: You will be assigned into groups of three. Each group will present an outline for each reading. Each group will lead the discussion concerning the assigned reading for that class.
Presentation is worth 50 points.....50 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. I require that you buy Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style." It is a small book with lots of information about grammar and writing. It does not cover everything, but is an excellent resource for most grammar questions. I own one.
Each assignment is worth 10 points.....5 x 10 = 50 points.
9. Paper Sections: During the later half of the class, you will start writing sections of a formal research paper. Each section will be due at the beginning of the class.
Each assignment is worth 50 points.....3 x 50 = 150 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

350 – 315 A – A- 314 – 280 B+ - B- 279 – 245 C+ - C- 244 – 210 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. I recommend that you meet with me during these days.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading and/or Assignment</u>
M 1/14	Course Introduction
W 1/16	Course Introduction & Writing: R -- Lofland et al ch 10
M 1/21	NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

GETTING STARTED

W 1/23	Library Research Norlin E303
M 1/28	R – Lois Intro – ch 2; A1 – Article Paper
W 1/30	R – Lois ch 3 – 5
M 2/4	R – ch 6 – 8
W 2/6	Starting Where You Are & Evaluating Research Sites: R -- Lofland et al Ch. 1 and 2
M 2/11	A2 – Decision on Research Setting
W 2/13	Research Ethics and Issues in the Field: R – Brown (CULearn); 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.)

GATHERING DATA

M 2/18	Getting In & Logging Data: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 3 & 5 (p. 81-98; 108-115)
W 2/20	Interviewing & Getting Along: R – Lofland et.al. Ch. 5 (p. 99-107; 116) & Ch. 4
M 2/25	A4 – Description of Research Setting
W 2/27	Individual Meetings
M 3/3	Individual Meetings
W 3/5	Individual Meetings
M 3/10	A5 -- Field Notes
W 3/12	EXAM ONE
M 3/17	Introduction/ Literature Review draft (bring Strunk & White)

W 3/19 Thinking Topics: **R** – Lofland et.al. Ch. 6; Revised Introduction due

M 3/24 SPRING BREAK

W 2/26 SPRING BREAK

ANALYZING DATA & WRITING THE ETHNOGRAPHY

M 3/31 Asking Questions: **R** – Lofland et.al. Ch. 7

W 4/2 Arousing Interest: **R** – Lofland et.al. Ch. 8

M 4/7 Methods draft (bring Strunk & White)

W 4/9 Coding: **R** – Lofland et.al. Ch. 9: Revised Methods due

M 4/14 Coding

W 4/16 **EXAM TWO**

M 4/21 Data Analysis & Conclusion draft (bring Strunk & White)

W 4/23 Individual Presentations: Revised Data Analysis & Conclusion due

M 4/28 Individual Presentation

W 4/30 Individual Presentation

W 5/7 3:00 PM class Final starts at 7:30 AM

R 5/8 4:30 PM class Final starts at 10:30 AM