

The American University
School of International Service
International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program

“Research Seminar in Peace and Conflict Resolution”
or
“Qualitative Research Methods in IPCR”

SIS 612-003
Fall 2011, Mondays 8:10 P.M. – 10:40 P.M., SIS 113

Professor: Susan Shepler, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 4-7 PM, or by appointment

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to introduce a range of qualitative methods for social science research, especially for students in IPCR and EPGA who are planning research for SRP or thesis projects. We will discuss the relationship between honing a research question, performing a literature review, and selecting an appropriate methodology. Methods covered will include interviewing, focus groups, case studies, participant observation, content analysis, and action research. Issues discussed will include human subjects protocols, negotiating access, and the ethics of working with war affected populations. We will learn by doing, and will practice each of the methods here in Washington. IPCR and other professors will visit throughout the semester to share their research experiences with the class.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students will be able to...

- Frame a doable research project, including an answerable question in the context of related literature with an appropriate method of investigation
- Distinguish among various qualitative research approaches, and select an approach appropriate to a question
- Identify ethical issues in research on human subjects and in conflict affected settings
- Practice interviewing, participant observation, and content analysis
- Write a research proposal

Grading:

Your course grade will be based on class participation (10%) and the completion of five assignments throughout the semester.

Assignment 1: Literature Review (15%). 5 pages.

Assignment 2: Interview and analysis (15%). 5 pages transcript, 2 pages analysis.

Assignment 3: Ethnographic fieldnotes (15%). 5 pages.

Assignment 4: Content Analysis (15%). 5 pages.

Assignment 5: A research proposal (30%). 10 pages.

You will receive more guidance on each of the assignments in class. For each assignment, you will be placed into a different small group. Each group will read the work of all its members. The general rule is that assignments are due to Blackboard on Thursdays a week and a half after the class period in which we discuss the respective topics. During the Monday class meeting exactly two weeks after an assignment, the small groups will meet in class to reflect on their experiences and give a friendly critique of each other's work. You will have longer to complete the fifth assignment, and you will have a chance for peer feedback before you turn in your final draft.

These are the dates:

Assignment	Introduced Monday	DUE Thursday	Discussed Monday
#1	9/26	10/6	10/10
#2	10/10	10/20	10/24
#3	10/24	11/3	11/7
#4	11/7	11/17	11/21
#5	11/21	12/1	12/5

Final draft of Assignment #5 is due by e-mail 12/12

Required Texts:

Berg, Bruce L. (2009). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Seventh Edition. Allyn and Bacon.

Nordstrom, Carolyn, and Antonius Robben. (1995). *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. University of California Press.

Other readings are (or will be) available on Blackboard.

Class meetings:

8/29/11: Introduction to the Course

9/12/11: How do we know? What is Evidence in the Social Sciences?

Readings:

- Berg, Chapter 1
- Cresswell, John. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Third Edition. Los Angeles: Sage. Chapter 9, "Qualitative Procedures." Pp. 173-202. (Available on Blackboard).
- Tickner, Jo Ann. (2005). "What Is Your Research Program? Some Feminist Answers to International Relations Methodological Questions." *International Studies Quarterly*. 49. 1-21.
- Coomans, Fons *et al.* (2010). "Methods of Human Rights Research: A Primer." *Human Rights Quarterly*, 32: 179-186.

In-class assignment on Peace Research Journals.

9/19/11: What is Peace Research?

Readings:

- Galtung, J. (1985). "Twenty Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Some Responses." *Journal of Peace Research*. 22(2). 141-158.
- Rogers, Paul and Oliver Ramsbotham. (1999). Then and Now: Peace Research – Past and Future. *Political Studies*, XLVII, 740-754.
- Juttila, Matti; Samu Pehkonen and Tarja Väyrynen. (2008). "Resuscitating a Discipline: An Agenda for Critical Peace Research." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*. 36(3): 623-640.

9/26/11: Research Question/Literature Review/Methodology

Readings:

- Berg, Chapter 2
- Cohen, Nissim and Tamar Arieli. (2011). "Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling." *Journal of Peace Research*. 48(4): 423-435.
- "How to do a literature review" website
(http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html)
- How to Cite Online Sources (handout)

<i>Assignment #1:</i> Select a research question and write an appropriate literature review.
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10/3/11: Power and Ethics in Social Science Research

Readings:

- Berg, Chapter 3
- Robben, Antonius. (1995). "The Politics of Truth and Emotion among Victims and Perpetrators of Violence," in *Fieldwork Under Fire*. 81-103.

- Green, Linda (1995). "Living in a State of Fear," in *Fieldwork Under Fire*. 105-127.
- Nordstrom, Carolyn. (1995). "War on the Front Lines," in *Fieldwork Under Fire*. 129-153.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. (2006). "The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones." *Qualitative Sociology*. 29: 373-386.

10/10/11: Interviews and Focus Groups

Readings:

- Berg, Chapters 4 and 5
- Fujii, Lee Ann. (2010). "Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence." *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(2): 231-241.

Assignment #2: Interview someone from a conflict affected country now residing in the U.S. Transcribe your interview (5 pages of it at least) and analyze your experience (in a further 2 pages). What went well? What might you have done differently?

10/17/11: Case Studies

Readings:

- Berg, Chapter 10.
- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. (2004). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. MIT Press. Chapters 1, 3 and 12.

10/24/11: Ethnographic Method

Readings:

- Berg, Chapter 6
- Rabinow, Paul. (1977). "Ali: An Insider's Outsider." In *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. University of California Press. 31-69.
- Emerson, Robert M. et al., (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1 and 6.
- Cohn, Carol. (2006). "Motives and methods: using multi-sited ethnography to study US national security discourses." Chapter 5 in, *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. Brook Ackerly, et al. eds. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 91-107.

Assignment #3: Go to a place where people from a conflict-affected country congregate and observe/participate. Write some ethnographic fieldnotes about your experience.

10/31/11: Action Research

Readings:

Berg, Chapter 7

Bowd, Richard, Alpaslan Özerdem and Derese Getachew Kassa. (2010). "A Theoretical and Practical Exposition of 'Participatory' Research Methods." In *Participatory Research Methodologies in Development and Post-Disaster/Conflict Reconstruction*. Ashgate. Pp. 1-18.

Manz, Beatriz. (1995). "Reflections on an *Antropología Comprometida*," in *Fieldwork Under Fire*. 261-274.

McIntyre, Alice. (2000). "Constructing Meaning About Violence, School, and Community: Participatory Action Research with Urban Youth." *The Urban Review*, 32(2): 123-154.

Angucia, Margaret, Jacques Zeelen, and Gideon De Jong. (2010). "Researching the Reintegration of Formerly Abducted Children in Northern Uganda through Action Research: Experiences and Reflections." *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 20: 217-231.

11/7/11: Content Analysis

Readings:

Berg, Chapters 8 and 11

Druckman, Daniel. (2005). *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*. Sage Publications. Part VI. (pp. 255-291).

Thies, Cameron. (2002). "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations." *International Studies Perspectives*, 3: 351-372.

Bernal, Victoria. (2006). "Diaspora, cyberspace and political imagination: the Eritrean diaspora online." *Global Networks*. 6(2): 161-179.

Assignment #4: Analyze some content (handouts, websites, other media products, transcripts, etc.) related to a clear research question.

11/14/11: Program Evaluation

Readings:

Lederach, John Paul. (1997). "Strategic and Responsive Evaluation." Chapter 10 in *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. USIP Press. 129-148.

Church, Cheyanne and Mark M. Rogers. (2006). *Designing for Results: Integrating Monitoring And Evaluation In Conflict Transformation Programs*. Search for Common Ground. Chapters 1 through 6.

New Routes: A journal of peace research and action. Volume 13, Special Issue on "Reflections on Peacebuilding Evaluation." Read pp. 1-27.

11/21/11: How to Write a Research Proposal

Readings:

Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon. (1995). "The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions."

SIS requirements for thesis and SRP proposals

USIP requirements for research funding

Some successful proposals

Assignment #5. Write a research proposal for your SRP, thesis, or external funding.

11/28/11: personal safety and positionality

Readings:

Zulaika, Joseba. (1995). "The Anthropologist as Terrorist." In *Fieldwork Under Fire*. 206-222.

Sluka, Jeffrey. (1995). "Reflections on Managing Danger in Fieldwork," in *Fieldwork Under Fire*. 276-294.

Passaro, J. (1997). "You can't take the subway to the field!": 'Village' Epistemologies in the Global Village." In *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Edited by Gupta and Ferguson. University of California Press. 147-162.

Coy, Patrick G. (2001). "Shared Risks and Research Dilemmas on a Peace Brigades International Team in Sri Lanka." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 30: 575

Ross, Amy. "Impact on research of security-seeking behavior." Chapter 12 in *Surviving Field Research: Working in violent and difficult situations*. Chandra Sriram, et al., eds.

12/5/11: IRBs (ethics revisited)

Readings:

American University IRB Requirements (<http://www.american.edu/irb/index.cfm>)

Some IRB samples from IPCR students (on Blackboard)

Byrne, Catherine C. (2009). "Proactive Versus Defensive Ethics: Re-Humanizing Psychology." *Peace and Conflict*, 15: 215-225.

Discuss Assignment #5 rough draft research proposals in small groups.

12/12/11: "Final Exam"

Final Draft of Assignment #5 due by e-mail.

Messages from our sponsors:

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements.

Academic Support Center (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228.

Counseling Center (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources.

Disability Support Services (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities.

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>). As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/ college-specific information.