

SOC 478
Analysis of Field Research Methods (3 units)
TR 12-1:15pm Saunders Hall 541
Fall 2011

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Nicholas Gibson

Office: Saunders Hall 217
Office Hours: Wednesdays 9am-12pm, Thursdays 4pm-7pm
Or email/appointment
Phone: (205) 265-1869 (If you leave a message, leave your name, callback number, and concern clearly and slowly)
E-mail: gibsonn@hawaii.edu
Prerequisite: N/A

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Techniques for collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Participant observation; small groups in natural settings; community studies. Grounded theory; theories of everyday life; reality construction.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through a group work and discussion-based approach to field research and data analysis, we will all conduct a field research project. As a class, we will explore the concepts and practices involved in field research, and how to apply theory to a research project. We will also explore the assumptions embedded within social point-of-views which color our sociological lenses and which we can critically evaluate in order to understand reflexivity. There will be extensive discussions based on the text, videos, short lectures, and our individual research experiences. **All students in this class will be expected to participate in small group work, larger classroom discussions and the presentation of research to the larger class.**

3. LEARNING GOALS IN GENERAL EDUCATION

This course meets the University of Hawaii Diversification Requirements in the Social Sciences (DS) for the Core Competency standards for each of the following areas: Critical Thought, Communication, Civic Engagement, Ethical and Moral Development, Cultural Respect and Tolerance, and Global Awareness

4. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Demonstrate understanding of practical field research methodologies through completion of an individual research project
- Illustrate and discuss through written work the role of social theory in explaining social phenomena/social behaviors
- Describe ethical concerns implicit and explicit in the field research process

- Identify and demonstrate working understanding of sociological theories and their application to understanding real-world behaviors and social control
- Demonstrate ability to critically analyze, critique and evaluate collected field research data, and how to ‘make sense’ of what the data tells us
- Complete a work of research that intends to fill a gap in current academic literature

5. REQUIRED TEXT

A guide to qualitative field research – Carol A. Bailey
 2007. 2nd Edition. Pine Forge Press
 ISBN: 9781412936507

(Bailey is a well-known and active academic in both social work and sociological research. Her style is clear and easygoing, and still demands rigor from the reader.)

We might explore certain concepts with outside readings, given appropriate time and availability of resources. These will be either posted on Laulima or handed out in class.

6. GRADING POLICY

Grading Criteria:

Quizzes 6 x 25 each:	200 points
Final Research Report:	300 points
 Total available points:	 500 points

Grading percentiles:

95 – 100%	A	90-94%	A-		
88 – 89%	B+	83-87%	B	80-82%	B-
78 – 79%	C+	73-77%	C	70-72%	C-
68 – 69%	D+	63-67%	D	60-62%	D-
59% or lower	F				

The ability to retain knowledge will be measured in the classroom, and the skills of critical thinking and deeper theoretical synthesis will be assessed through the written work. The quizzes will be due in the student portal class inbox by 10pm on the due dates listed in the schedule. Any late exams will be marked down by 10% for every day they are time stamped late. The participation grade includes group work during class time, and involvement in group discussions.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Medical, legal or personal reasons for absences with documentation will not count against the attendance portion of the grade. Participation in class will be documented in part by analysis of group participation by group members, and unplanned group work designed to measure the reading comprehension of students in the course.

Missed Exams

Any exam that is not turned in on time will not be counted toward the student's final grade. The exams will be posted on the student portal 5 (5) business days before their due date. Notification of an extenuating conflict is required, and a reasonable accommodation can be made.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities may present themselves over the duration of the session; however, given the nature of this course it is highly unlikely. Any extra credit opportunity will be accompanied by secondary options, and not turning in extra credit will not negatively impact a course grade.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating is the equivalent of trying to steal grades either through specific actions of plagiarism, or general dishonest academic work. Plagiarism is using specific ideas from someone else without citing the original source. Academic dishonesty will be handled at the class level through a failing grade for the assignment and the class as per the Student Conduct Handbook, as well as referral to academic services for investigation and sanctions.

Grading Disputes

Be sure to print out copies of the receipt of all exams turned in electronically, copies of extra credit work with grades, and any other communication between instructor and student in case of grade recording errors, which will be corrected if they can be proven by the student. If there are any further disputes, academic affairs personnel are always available to support students.

7. SPECIAL NEEDS/DISABILITIES

Any student with special needs will be accommodated. The student can make arrangements with the Kokua office, which is located downstairs in QLCSS 013; Phone: (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612.

8. CLASS MEETING ETIQUETTE

- **Cell phones will be turned off during class meeting times, except with prior approval from the instructor.**
- Computers will be used for academic purposes only during meeting times
- Discussion topics will sometimes be controversial. Therefore, we will respect the confidentiality of the classroom, the diversity of the student body, and the importance of engaging in substantive discussions of social inequality and political/societal issues.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week/Meeting Dates	Reading	Topics/Assignments
Week 1 Week of: August 22	About the Author, Preface, Part 1: Introduction to Qualitative Field Research	Introductions, overview, brainstorming and narrowing research topics
Week 2 Week of: August 29	Part 2: Ethical Issues in Qualitative Field Research	Informed Consent, Deception, Confidentiality, IRB applications Quiz on Friday, 09/02/11
Week 3 Week of: September 5 No class Monday, 09/05	Part 3: Prelude to Qualitative Fieldwork	Research topic exploration, how to prepare to go into the field Quiz on Friday, 09/09/11
Week 4 Week of: September 12	Part 4: The Infrastructure of Qualitative Fieldwork	Paradigms, theories, and traditions...what are they good for?
Week 5 Week of: September 19	Part 5: Methodology	The big ideas of being in the field, and what they mean to you Quiz on Friday, 09/23/11
Week 6 Week of: September 26	Part 6: Observations	Who/what to observe, why and how...and recording, or what making data really means
Week 7 Week of: October 3	Part 7: Interviews	The realities of interviewing and what they look like...practice makes better Quiz on Friday, 10/07/11
Week 8 Week of: October 10	Part 8: Field Notes and Leaving the Field	Write everything, twice at least...and does any invested researcher really ever leave the field?
Week 9 Week of: October 17	Part 9: Coding, Memoing and Descriptions	How to be useful to yourself Quiz on Friday, 10/28/11
Week 10 Week of: October 24	Part 10: Typologies, Taxonomies, Visual Representations and Themes	Creating classifications hierarchal or not, and to separate or not?

<p>Week 11 Week of: October 31</p>	<p>Part 11: Storytelling, Critical Events, and Analytic Induction</p>	<p>How enjoyable are most textbooks? Would you choose to read a dry, boring text? Quiz Friday, 11/04/11</p>
<p>Week 12 Week of: November 7 No class Friday, 11/11</p>	<p>Part 12: Evaluation Criteria and Final Manuscript</p>	<p>Participant voices should come first, but you should be there too</p>
<p>Week 13 Week of: November 14</p>	<p>Peer review</p>	<p>Read, evaluate, and suggest for your peers First drafts due 11/15/11</p>
<p>Week 14 Week of: November 21 No class Thurs/Fri 11/23, 24</p>	<p>Peer review</p>	<p>Read, evaluate and suggest for your peers</p>
<p>Week 15 Week of: November 28</p>	<p>Peer review</p>	<p>Read, evaluate and suggest for your peers</p>
<p>Week 16 Week of: December 5 Last class meeting Dec 7</p>	<p>Wrap-up & Review</p>	<p>Final chances for peer review, in-class instructor review, discussion of topics</p>
<p>Finals Week Week of: December 12</p>		<p>Final report due in Laulima by 10pm on December 13th.</p>