Anthropology 711 (Spring 2012)
Seminar in Research Design and Proposal Writing in Anthropology
Wednesdays 1:30-4 p.m. Saunders 329

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Course Description

This seminar focuses exclusively on the design of research and the preparation of a research proposal. First, we review how to build a research design: how research proposals are put together, and which criteria are used to evaluate them. We also examine different kinds of research, how research is conceptualized within each genre, and the creation of effective designs and proposals. We will also review and critique examples of funded research proposals. The focus on proposals is useful not only because grant writing is an important skill in its own right, but also because an effective proposal involves all elements of research design—from statement of the problem to data analysis. Finally, each student will write a research proposal. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Formulate a feasible research question, and design research to answer it.
- Discuss the ethical implications of research.
- Develop skills to read carefully and critically your peers' proposal drafts, and articulate questions and suggestions concerning their proposal drafts and planned research in a challenging but constructive manner.
- Think productively about critiques of your work, especially critiques that seem the most challenging, misguided or irrelevant.
- Submit a grant proposal for extramural funding of your dissertation research.

Structure of the Course

To get a sense of how well-planned projects are conceived, organized, and described, we'll read a selection of submitted grant proposals (funded and unfunded) that cover a wide variety of topics and approaches. Learning to develop concise, productive critiques of other scholars' work is imperative for becoming a responsible professional. Please remember that I serve as your teacher and guide for this class only. I expect each student to consult closely with her/his advisor throughout the semester about issues and strategies raised in the class concerning research projects.

Course Requirements

Your grade is determined by four activities: (1) grant proposal; (2) proposal reviews; (3) class assignments by week; and (4) class participation. The main requirement for this seminar is the preparation of a research proposal. For the sake of
consistency, we will use the National Science Foundation’s Dissertation Improvement Grant format. These proposals will be the object of discussion and evaluation for two class periods, during which we will provide constructive feedback to each proposal writer. The proposal will constitute **40% of your grade** for the seminar, and involves multiple components (research question assignment, research conceptualization worksheets, project summary, proposal in draft and final form [including full bibliography/references cited section]). You are also required to produce two (2) proposal reviews using the NSF reviewer format of previously submitted proposals. This is worth **20% of your grade**. Finally, teams of students will take responsibility for organizing one class session during the semester, in consultation with the professor. Your class attendance and general participation (which includes timely completion and submission of your class assignments by week) comprise **40% of your grade**. Your participation grade will be based on the following elements:

- Do you attend class on a punctual and regular basis?
- Do you demonstrate that you have completed the assigned readings?
- Have you completed the weekly assignments in a timely and thorough manner?
- Do you offer thoughtful analyses, and critiques of the topics discussed in class?
- Do your comments build on the comments of other class members?

**Please note:**

1. Your ANTH 711 instructor will guide your construction of a research design but will not help you identify a research topic. To succeed in this class, you must consult regularly with your graduate supervisor about your research topic relevance/feasibility and about the methodologies you wish to use.
2. Absolutely no late assignments will be accepted.
3. No incomplete grades will be given for this course.

**Bibliography**


The Bernard (2010), Przeworski & Salamon (1995), and Silverman (1991) readings are available in pdf format. Students from the course are expected to scan chapters from Creswell (2009) and Locke et al (2007) to make them available for class use. Other readings for this seminar are on individual research proposals and will be included in the “References Cited” section of the proposal.
# Class Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| 1 Jan 11 | **Course Overview**  
PREPARE IN CLASS: 1-paragraph description of your research project  
(topic, subfield, relevance) |
| 2 Jan 18 | **Choosing a Research Topic**  
ASSIGNED READING: Locke et al. 2007: Chap 1; What makes a good research question? [http://www.socscidiss.bham.ac.uk/s7.html]  
BRING TO CLASS: completed “What is a good research question” worksheet  
PREPARE IN CLASS: First draft of three (3) possible research topics & three (3) research questions for each topic. |
| 3 Jan 25 | **Basic Research: Humanities vs. Social Sciences**  
ASSIGNED READING: Creswell 2009: Chap 1  
BRING TO CLASS: Revised draft of three (3) refined research questions or hypotheses that you plan to examine in your work. |
| 4 Feb 1 | **Basic Research: Social Sciences as Empirical Science**  
ASSIGNED READING: Bernard 2010: Chaps 1 & 3  
BRING TO CLASS: Short (i.e., ½-1 page) statement that lists your research problem, identifies your proposed research as either Humanities or Social Sciences, and provides a rationale for this classification. |
| 5 Feb 8 | **Fundamentals of a Research Proposal: Part I**  
ASSIGNED READING: Locke et al. 2007: Chap 6  
BRING TO CLASS: ‘Conceptualizing Your Research’ worksheets 1-5. |
| 6 Feb 15 | **Fundamentals of a Research Proposal: Part I**  
BRING TO CLASS: “Conceptualizing Your Research” worksheets 6-10. |
| 7 Feb 22 | **Literature Search and Literature Review**  
ASSIGNED READING: Creswell 2009: Chap 2; Locke et al. 2007: Chap 4  
BRING TO CLASS: Your literature map (following Creswell and hand-out) |
| 8 Feb 29 | **Research Procedures: Deductive vs. Inductive Methodologies**  
ASSIGNED READING: Creswell 2009: Chaps 8 & 9; Locke et al. 2007: Chap 5  
BRING TO CLASS: Short (i.e., 1-2 pages) description of your primary research methods and brief characterization of your research as either basically deductive or inductive. |
| 9 Mar 7 | **Research Process & Significance**  
ASSIGNED READING: Creswell 2009: Chap 6; Przeworski & Salomon 1995  
BRING TO CLASS: Short (i.e., ¾ - 1 page) Project Summary of your research project and its significance. |
## Class Schedule (cont.)

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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>10 Mar 14</td>
<td>Research and Ethics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11 Mar 21</td>
<td>Identifying Funding Sources</td>
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|      | 12 April 4| Case Studies in Anthropological Research Design: 
|      |          | *Guest lecturer: Dr. Lisa Uperesa (UHM Ethnic Studies)* |
|      | 14 April 11| Group Process: Reviewing Proposals     |
|      | 15 April 18| Group 1 Proposal Discussions and Feedback |
|      | 16 April 25| Group 2 Proposal Discussions and Feedback |
|      | 17 May 2 | Discussion and Wrap-up                    |

### Week 10 (Mar 14)

**Research and Ethics**

**ASSIGNED READING:**
- Creswell 2009: Chap 4 (pp. 87-93)
- Locke et al. 2007: Chap 2

**IN CLASS ASSIGNMENT:**
- circulate a digital copy of your 1-2 page double-spaced **Ethics Statement** that outlines anticipated ethical issues you will face during your research, and how you intend to deal with them. Include a statement on how you plan to compensate informants (where appropriate).

### Week 11 (Mar 21)

**Identifying Funding Sources**

**Group Process: Reviewing Proposals**

**ASSIGNED READING:**
- Locke et al. 2007: Chap 8
- Silverman 1991

**BRING TO CLASS:**
- Proposal review #1 to discuss proposal with classmates.

~~~~~~~~~~NO CLASS March 28th: SPRING BREAK~~~~~~~~~~

### Week 12 (April 4)

**Case Studies in Anthropological Research Design:**
- *Guest lecturer: Dr. Lisa Uperesa (UHM Ethnic Studies)*

**Discussion of Progress on Student Proposals**

**ASSIGNED READING:**
- Berkeley Nuts&Bolts manual (pdf format)

### Week 14 (April 11)

**Group Process: Reviewing Proposals**

**More Discussion of Progress on Student Proposals**

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- work on your proposal and **GROUP 1 proposals due by email to all class members at 1:30 pm on 4/11/12**

**BRING TO CLASS:**
- Proposal review #2 to discuss proposal with classmates.

### Week 15 (April 18)

**Group 1 Proposal Discussions and Feedback**
- *Guest lecturer: Dr. Jonathan Padwe (UHM Anthropology)*

**ASSIGNED READING:**
- classmates’ proposals and **GROUP 1 proposals due by email to all class members at 1:30 pm on 4/18/12**

### Week 16 (April 25)

**Group 2 Proposal Discussions and Feedback**
- *Guest lecturer: Dr. Jan Brunson (UHM Anthropology)*

**ASSIGNMENT:**
- Group 1 should revise proposal; be sure to respond to classmates’ and instructor’s comments.

### Week 17 (May 2)

**Discussion and Wrap-up**

**FINAL REVISED PROPOSAL DUE IN CLASS**

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**Please note:** we have **NO FLEXIBILITY BUILT INTO THE DUE DATES** for each assignment.
Class Presentation Topics

Please note: students will divide into teams of 2-3 individuals each to develop a series of 30-minute presentations and discussion sections concerning the following subjects for weeks 3, 4, 7, 8, and 10. For each of those class sessions, the designated team directs half of seminar. Teams may recommend alternative (related) topics to those listed for instructor’s approval. Team members are urged to work collectively to maximize performance as each member of the team will be given the same grade.

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| 3    | Jan 25 | Basic Research: Humanities vs. Social Sciences  
- key contrasts b/t humanities and social sciences approaches to research (vis-à-vis research designs)  
- key usages of quantitative methods in anthropological research  
- anthropological example of deductive research design  
- anthropological case study of text-based research design  
- anthropological case study of arts-based research design  
- anthropological case study of social science research design |
| 4    | Feb 1  | Basic Research: Social Sciences as Empirical Science  
- examples of hypotheses-driven anthropological research designs  
- case study of HRAF-based research  
- case study of ecological anthropological research design  
- evaluation of whether, and under what conditions, anthropological research should adopt a an empirical science-based approach to research |
| 7    | Feb 22 | Literature Search and Literature Review  
- literature map as hierarchical diagram  
- literature map as concentric circles |
| 8    | Feb 29 | Research Procedures: Deductive vs. Inductive Methodologies  
- general presentation on deductive research design  
- general presentation on inductive research design  
- anthropological case study of a deductive research design  
- anthropological case study of an inductive research design  
- anthropological case study of combined deductive/inductive research design |
| 10   | Mar 14 | Research and Ethics  
- scenarios from fieldwork? Students’ choice |
ANTH 711 Grant Proposal Review Guidelines
Your proposal reviews this semester will use National Science Foundation criteria. Each review must contain two components: (1) the text-based review; and (2) a rating using the NSF rating scale. Your text-based review should:

- Comment in detail on the quality of the proposal
- Identify the proposal’s strengths and weaknesses for each NSF Merit Review Criterion:
  - What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?
  - To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore original or potentially transformative concepts?\(^1\)
  - What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?

Include a summary statement that discusses the relative importance of the two criteria in assigning your rating. (You do not have to weigh the criteria equally.)

HOW TO ADDRESS INTELLECTUAL MERIT AND BROADER IMPACTS

What is the intellectual merit of the proposed activity?
- How important is the proposed activity to advancing knowledge and understanding within its own field or across different fields?
- How well-qualified is the proposer (individual or team) to conduct the project? (If appropriate, comment on the quality of prior work.)
- How well-conceived and organized is the proposed activity?
- Is there sufficient access to the necessary resources?

To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative, original or potentially transformative concepts?
- To what extent does the proposed activity suggest and explore creative and original concepts?

What are the broader impacts of the proposed activity?
- How well does the activity advance discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning?
- How well does the proposed activity broaden the participation of underrepresented groups (such as gender, ethnicity, disability, geography)?
- Will the results be disseminated broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding?
- What may be the benefits of the proposed activity to society?

NSF RATING SCALE
- **Excellent**: Outstanding proposal in all respects; deserves highest priority for support
- **Very Good**: High quality proposal in nearly all respects; should be supported if at all possible
- **Good**: A quality proposal, worthy of support
- **Fair**: Proposal lacking in one or more critical aspects; key issues need to be addressed
- **Poor**: Proposal has serious deficiencies

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\(^1\) Transformational research or the potential for transformative research has been added to the grant merit review criteria and refers to a range of endeavors which promise extraordinary outcomes, or which have the potential to change the way we address challenges in science, engineering and innovation.