Anthropology 711 (Spring 2014)
Seminar in Research Design and Proposal Writing in Anthropology
Wednesdays 1:30-4 p.m. Saunders 345

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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), Creswell (2009), Przeworski & Salamon (1995), and Silverman (1991) readings are available in pdf format. Locke et al (2014) is a new edition, and worth purchasing. Other readings for this seminar are on individual research proposals and will be included the relevant Laulima weeks.
Class Schedule

1 Jan 15  **Course Overview (on your own)**
**ASSIGNED READING**: Lipowski 2008; Locke et al. 2014: Chap 1 (online: <http://www.amazon.com/Proposals-That-Work-Planning-Dissertations/dp/1452216851>)
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: 1-paragraph description of your research project (topic, subfield, relevance)

2 Jan 22  **Choosing a Research Topic (in class)**
**ASSIGNED READING**: Creswell 2009: Chapter 7; watch the movie clip in Laulima; Watch online ppt called “What makes a good research question?” <http://prezi.com/rkoc0fsusxoi/writing-good-research-questions/>
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: completed “What is a good research question” worksheet
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: First draft of three (3) possible research topics & three (3) research questions for each topic.

3 Jan 29  **Basic Research: Epistemology, Ontology, and WHAT?**
**ASSIGNED READING**: Creswell 2009: Chap 1
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: Revised draft of three (3) refined research questions or hypotheses that you plan to examine in your work.

4 Feb 5  **Basic Research: Social Sciences as Empirical Science**
**ASSIGNED READING**: Bernard 2010: Chaps 1 & 3
**BRING (COMPLETED) 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 12  **Fundamentals of a Research Proposal: Part I**
**ASSIGNED READING**: Locke et al. 2014: Chap 6
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: ‘Conceptualizing Your Research’ worksheets 1-5.

6 Feb 19  **Fundamentals of a Research Proposal: Part II**
**ASSIGNED READING**: U Michigan Proposal Writer’s Guide
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: “Conceptualizing Your Research” worksheets 6-10.

7 Feb 26  **Literature Search and Literature Review**
**ASSIGNED READING**: Creswell 2009: Chap 2; Locke et al. 2014: Chap 4
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: Your literature map (following Creswell and hand-out)

8 Mar 5  **Research Procedures and Data Collection Methods**
**ASSIGNED READING**: Creswell 2009: Chaps 8 & 9; Locke et al. 2014: Chap 5
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS**: Short (i.e., 1-2 pages) description of your primary research methods and brief characterization of your research as either basically quantitative or qualitative. Be prepared to give suggestions/feedback to your ANTH 711 colleagues.
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<th>Week</th>
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<td><strong>9 Mar 12</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Research Process &amp; Significance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> Creswell 2009: Chap 6; Przeworski &amp; Salomon 1995</td>
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<td><strong>BRING TO CLASS:</strong> Short (i.e., ¾ - 1 page) Project Summary due.</td>
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<td><strong>10 Mar 19</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ethics and Research</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> American Anthropological Association Statement on Ethics; Bendremer and Richman 2006; Creswell 2009: Chap 4 (pp. 87-93); Locke et al. 2014: Chap. 2</td>
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<td><strong>IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT:</strong> circulate a digital copy of your 1-2 page double-spaced Ethics Statement that outlines anticipated ethical issues you will face, and how you intend to deal with them.</td>
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<td><strong>~~~~~~~~~~NO CLASS March 26th: SPRING BREAK~~~~~~~~~~</strong></td>
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<td><strong>12 April 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Identifying Funding Sources</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Group Process: Reviewing Proposals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> Locke et al. 2014: Chap 8; Silverman 1991</td>
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<td><strong>BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS:</strong> Proposal review #1 to discuss.</td>
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<td><strong>13 April 9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Case Studies in Social Science Research Design</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guest lecturer: Dr. Karen Umemoto (UHM Department of Urban and Regional Planning)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Discussion of Progress on Student Proposals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> Berkeley Nuts &amp; Bolts manual (pdf format)</td>
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<td><strong>14 April 16</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Group Process: Reviewing Proposals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guest lecturer: Dr. Jonathan Padwe (UHM Anthropology)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong> work on your proposal and <strong>GROUP 1 proposals due by email to all class members at 1:30 pm on 4/15/14</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS:</strong> Proposal review #2 to discuss.</td>
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<td><strong>15 April 23</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NO CLASS: Work on Proposals and Proposal Reviews</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> read your colleague’s proposals and <strong>GROUP 2 proposals due by email to all class members at 1:30 pm on 4/22/14</strong></td>
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<td><strong>16 April 30</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Case Studies in Social Science Research Design</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Guest lecturer: Dr. Reese Jones (UHM Geography)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Proposal Discussions and Feedback</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong> revise proposals in response to feedback</td>
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<td><strong>Discussion and Wrap-up</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FINAL REVISED PROPOSAL DUE IN CLASS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Please note:</strong> we have <strong>NO FLEXIBILITY BUILT INTO THE DUE DATES</strong> for each assignment.</td>
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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, 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: Epistemology, Ontology, and WHAT?**  
- 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 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 |
| 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.