Anthropology 711 Seminar in Research Design and Proposal Writing in Anthropology
Spring 2016 Tuesdays 1:30-4 p.m. George 213

Dr. Miriam Stark
Office: Dean Hall 203C
Tel: 956-7552

Office hours: Thursdays 1:00-3:00 p.m. or by appt
Email: <miriams@hawaii.edu>

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.

Assignment and Evaluation

1. Participation (20%)
Participation in class discussion is a critical component of the course. Please be present, be involved, and engage. Doing the reading, and discussing the reading, is a key piece of the participation puzzle. For each day in class when there are readings assigned, please come to class with notes and an outline of a critical response to the day’s readings. Each day, I will randomly call on two or three of you to present your response orally. Because I realize that sometimes things are just two crazy, two times
during the semester you may write to me the night before and request an exemption. Absences count towards your two exemptions.

In your response, you should provide a very brief (one or two sentence) summary of each author's article or chapter, in which you lay out the author's project or argument. The bulk of your response should be an analysis of the articles, in which you identify key points that help to connect the articles to each other or with other readings we've done in class. This is a place to unleash your powers of analysis: be daring. Of course, this is a course on research design and methods, so much of what we are reading is of the "how to" variety, and I understand that. As it turns out, though, writing about research design is often more interesting than you think. Give some thought to how the pieces you are analyzing have caused you to see the process of research in a new light. In your response, please be sure to identify questions or key concerns that will help get our in-class discussion rolling. Please do not read a pre-written response. Rather, you should prepare your comments in the form of an outline or notes, and present your thoughts in your own words, on the fly. Please be sure to limit your comments to somewhere around 7 or 8 minutes total.

2. Reviewing (35%)
You will learn a lot about writing proposals, and about what makes them successful, by reviewing proposals. One of the most important things you will learn is that people who review proposals often have to do it very quickly, so proposals must be written with the review process in mind. So, in this course we will have two proposal workshops. You will be assigned to read the work of several of your fellow classmates, and will be asked to score the proposals on the basis of several categories, and to provide comments. You will then meet in groups and provide feedback to the authors. I will be evaluating you on your role as a reviewer, on your scores, comments, and the feedback you provide.

Just like in a real fellowship or grant competition, we will collectively have a limited number of awards to distribute, and this will mean making tough choices. In order to insure that we are, in fact, being both tough and fair in our award process, the awarding of points will be blinded (you will not know who has given you what score). As a reviewer, you will be limited in the total number of points that you are able to distribute for each category, across all of the proposals you review. This means you will need to make tough choices, and will need to carefully assess the merit of each proposal.

3. Research Proposal (45%)
Your main product for this course is a research proposal. Several assignments due throughout the semester are part of the process of writing the proposal (i.e., turning in your research question, your bibliography, etc.). One of the ways I will be evaluating your proposal is through the peer review process. Your classmates' reviews or your work will actually count towards your grade on the research proposal! So please do a good job, and have faith in the peer review process. Your fate is not entirely in your fellow students' hands, however. I will take into consideration your efforts to address criticisms of your proposal in your revisions, and will also make note of your improvement and your efforts to do work that is the best you can do when assigning you a grade.
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.

Partial Bibliography


Readings for this seminar will be included in Lauilma for the relevant weeks.
Class Schedule

1 Jan 11  
Course Introduction & Personal Introductions  
Review of the course syllabus  
Personal introductions and getting to know you

2 Jan 18  
Choosing a Research Topic  
**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)

3 Jan 25  
The Research Proposal  
**ASSIGNED READING:** Bernard 2010: Chaps 1 & 3  
**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.

4 Feb 1  
Research: Paradigms and Perspectives  
**ASSIGNED READING:** Babbie 2013; Creswell 2009: Chaps 5 and 7  
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS:** ‘Conceptualizing Your Research’ worksheets 1-5.

5 Feb 8  
The Research Proposal I: What it Is and How it Helps You  
**ASSIGNED READING:** Locke et al. 2014: Chap 6; Przeworski & Salomon 1995  
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS:** ‘Conceptualizing Your Research’ worksheets 6-10.

6 Feb 15  
Case Study: Reverse Proposal  
**ASSIGNED READING:** Mathews 2011: Chapters 1 & 6  
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS:** 3-page (single-spaced) hypothetical research proposal for this project, including all major components of the research proposal. (we will review his NSF proposal in class)

7 Feb 22  
Research Day (no class)  
**ASSIGNED READING:** Creswell 2009: Chap 2; Locke et al. 2014: Chap 4  
**BRING (COMPLETED) FOR NEXT WEEK:** Your literature map (following Creswell and hand-out)

8 Feb 29  
Literature Review  
**ASSIGNED READING:** Creswell 2009: Chaps 8 & 9  
**BRING (COMPLETED) TO CLASS:** Literature Map + Statement of your objectives, methods and research plan

9 Mar 7  
Research Process & Significance  
**ASSIGNED READING:** Creswell 2009: Chap 6  
**BRING TO CLASS:** Short (i.e., ¾ - 1 page) Project Summary due.
### Class Schedule (cont.)

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>Ethical and Practical Issues in Research</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 <em>Ethics Statement</em> that outlines anticipated ethical issues you will face, and how you intend to deal with them.</td>
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<td><em>NO CLASS March 22\textsuperscript{nd}: SPRING BREAK</em></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Do's and Don'ts of Proposal Reviewing</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> Silverman 1991 &amp; 2 proposals in folder</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong> Proposal reviews #1 &amp; #2 to discuss.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>Research Day (no class)</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong> Spend this week finalizing your proposal</td>
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<td><em>All proposals must be loaded onto Laulima by 1:30 pm on 4/11/16</em></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>Identifying Funding Sources</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> Hazelrigg; Moffat 1993</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong> identify and research three (3) potential funding agencies for your work; bring to class a summary data table that lists each agency, what it funds, its annual submission deadlines, proposal parameters &amp; maximum budget</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Group Process: Reviewing Proposals</td>
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<td>In-class small-group feedback on proposals</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNED READING:</strong> ANTH 711 student proposals</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong> Constructive critiques for three class member proposals and reflect on your own proposal.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>Student Presentations &amp; Class Feedback</td>
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<td><strong>ASSIGNMENT:</strong> prepare 10-12 minute ppt presentation that summarizes your proposal</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Discussion and Wrap-up</td>
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<td><em>Final proposal must be loaded onto Laulima by Tuesday May 10\textsuperscript{th} at 1:30 pm to receive credit for this class</em></td>
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*Please note: we have **NO FLEXIBILITY BUILT INTO THE DUE DATES** for each assignment.*