SOCG 252  
Research Practicum I: Introduction to Research Design

Fall 2008  
SSB 101  
Th 9:30am-12:20pm  
Instructor: Kwai Hang Ng  
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SSB 491  
Office Hrs: Tu 10-11am/ Wed 4:30-5:30pm

Course Description
This seminar is the first part of a two-course sequence (the second part to be taken one year later). The main goal of the sequence is for each of you to begin work on a research project that will eventually lead to a paper that will be submitted for academic journal publication. In the first few weeks, we will focus on some readings in identifying sociological problems and research design. But the main purpose of the practicum is to provide a forum for all participants to share and comment constructively – in writing and in person – one each other’s project.

Readings
The following books are available for purchase at Groundwork Bookstore in the old Student Center:

Andrew Abbott, Methods of Discovery. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Other shorter additional readings are available on electronic reserve at Giesel Library (http://reserves.ucsd.edu/).

Course Requirements

Writing Assignments
(1) The research proposal.
This will be presented and workshopped twice, on dates that we will sort out in the first meeting. The draft is due to everyone in class at least 3 days before the course meeting at which it is to be discussed.

(2) Short assignments
In addition, we will workshop pieces of our incomplete drafts or field notes (if applicable) continually throughout the quarter. These near-weekly assignments represent the working parts of your research proposal. This means that you will bring an excerpt from your work in progress to be discussed in the seminar almost every week, on top of the weeks that you present your proposal. The excerpts in question will range from a short paragraph of ideas to sections that may be a few pages long. They are due at course meetings as indicated below.

(3) Written comments
Every week you are to write constructive comments to the authors of the two drafts that are circulating that week. These comments are due by 5pm on the evening before our meeting.

**Evaluations**
Your grade for the quarter will be based on the following formula:
- Attendance and participation, including regular assignments 30%
- Written comments on papers 20%
- Research proposal 50%

**Schedule of Readings**

Wk 1 September 25: Introduction

Wk 2 October 2: Finding your research problem
Abbott (whole book)

Assignment: Bring at least one research questions to discuss

Wk 3 October 9: The mechanics of a research project
King (ch. 1-2, section 3.5, ch. 4, 6)
Ken Plummer, Documents of Life 2d ed. (ch. 1, ch.5)

Wk 4 October 16: What to observe
Becker, ch. 3-4.

Assignment: Bring your introduction

Wk 5 October 23: What is your case?/ What is it a case of?

Assignment: Bring part of your methods section that discusses your choice of cases to study/what your data are

Wk 6 October 30: Measurement: What is the best data for your question?/What is the best question for your data?
TBA

Assignment: Bring part of your methods section that discusses how your data were gathered, or how you plan to gather data

Wk 7 November 6: Analyzing Data

Assignment: Bring part of your proposal that discusses what you expect from your data
Wk 8 November 13: Describing what you found

Assignment: Bring your preliminary/expected results section

Wk 9 November 20: Literature Review: Should you arguing or agreeing with someone?

Assignment: Bring your literature review

Wk 10 December 4: Conclusion: Why is your project interesting?
Becker: ch. 2.

Assignment: Bring your conclusion