

SOCG 252
Research Practicum I: Introduction to Research Design

Fall 2008
SSB 101
Th 9:30am-12:20pm

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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.
Gary King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
Howard Becker, *Tricks of the Trade*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press.

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?

Jennifer Platt 1992 "Cases of cases... of cases" in *What is a case*, edited by Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker. Pp. 21-52.

John Walton 1992 "Making the theoretical case" in *What is a case*, edited by Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker. Pp. 121-138.

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

Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias vom Hau 2006 "Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies" *AJS* 111(5): 1412-1462.

Assignment: Bring part of your proposal that discusses what you expect from your data

Wk 8 November 13: Describing what you found

Amy Hanser 2007 "Is the customer always right? Class, service and the production of distinction in Chinese department stores." *Theory and Society* 36(5): 415-35.

Assignment: Bring your preliminary/expected results section

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

Hochschild, Arlie. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3): 521-575.

Assignment: Bring your literature review

Wk 10 December 4: Conclusion: Why is your project interesting?

Becker: ch. 2.

Assignment: Bring your conclusion