

Geographic Research Design
GEOG 701.54, Fall 2009

Instructor: William D. Solecki
Office: 1003 North Building/1217 East Building
Telephone: 212 772 5450 (office); 917 301 4985 (mobile)
Email: wsolecki@hunter.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00-4:00pm (North Building Office); Friday 10:00-11:00am (East Building Office), or by appointment

Course Description:

The course is designed to be a graduate-level exposure to the process of doing geographic research. Basic epistemological and ontological approaches will be reviewed through the use of readings on research methodologies and selected readings from the geography literature. Class discussion will focus on the identification of research problems, construction of hypotheses, and development of research design. The course is designed to have the students learn from the instructor, other faculty, the reading material, and from each other. The course is divided into three major sections.

- Section 1: Introduction to the process of scientific research - questions of epistemology and ontology, research methods in Geography, conceptualization of the research problem.
- Section 2: Research operationalization - introduction to basic methods, choosing a research method, positivist and non-positivist approaches, qualitative and quantitative approaches
- Section 3: Critique and evaluation of research methods - review of current research within Geography, and student presentation of research proposals.

Grading: Your grade will be based on following set of assignments and responsibilities.

	<u>% of Grade</u>	
Assignment 1	5	- census and archival data search
Assignment 2	10	- questionnaire and survey
Assignment 3	10	- index and scales
Assignment 4	10	- field work
Research Proposal	30	- final draft of your proposal
Proposal Presentation	5	- public presentation of your proposal
Participation	30	- development of weekly 1-2 page comment papers and involvement in class discussion and debates

There will be no exams in the class. Instead, there will be four assignments to be given out during the course of the semester. Each assignment will focus on a different topic and have associated supplemental readings.

The research proposal will include the submission of a single page introductory outline sheet, an annotated bibliography, a rough draft, and a final draft. Research topics and paper drafts will be critically reviewed during class discussions. You also will be expected to publicly present your research proposal before your classmates. The final draft of the proposal is expected to be a polished piece of writing - complete and coherent from beginning to end. You will work on this project throughout the semester. Half-digested treatments will receive poor grades. It is expected that each of you will work closely with a faculty member(s) in the department who define themselves as an expert on the topic of your proposal.

Class attendance and class participation are a critical part of the semester grade. This means that you must be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for the day. Other specifics as to the nature of the assignments, term paper and the participation grade will be discussed in class. Late assignments will receive a reduction in grade. **No** grades of "incomplete" will be given except in cases of extreme circumstances and these must be accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Academic Honesty: Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Plagiarism, dishonest, or cheating in any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations.

Required text:

Creswell, John W. 2009. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. The paperback ISBN is 9781412965576 for \$53.95 (or at www.bn.com and www.amazon.com for \$45.86) and the hardcover ISBN is 9781412965569 for \$105 (or at www.bn.com and www.amazon.com for \$84).

The book is available at the Hunter College bookstore. Other readings are available via the Hunter College online library periodical listings. The readings are to be read for the week they are listed. Additional readings might be assigned on a weekly basis.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>
8/31	Introduction to Inquiry and Writing Research.
9/7	Ethics and Politics of Research
9/14	Theory and Research/Epistemology in Geography.
9/21	LIBRARY TOUR – Library and Data Research
9/28	Research Design - Conceptualization and Operationalization.
10/5	Indexes and Sampling
10/12	No Class
10/19	Unobtrusive Research
10//26	Creating New Data: Survey Methods.
11/2	Really Getting Out There – Field Research.
11/9	Qualitative Data Analysis
11/16	Evaluation Research and Quantitative Analysis
11/23	Discussion Session. Readings to be announced
11/30	Discussion Session. Readings to be announced
12/7	Student Presentations
12/14	Student Presentations