

Spring 2017/SYLLABUS
(GEOG 7102, #18808)

Field Methods in Human Geography

Mondays 2:15-5, 1186 Derby Hall 1116; 3 credits

Instructor: Kendra McSweeney, 1164 Derby Hall, mcsweeney.14@osu.edu, 614-247-6400
Office hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:00, or by appointment

Disability Services

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Overview

How do methods fit into our research program? How do we generate data to address our research questions? What methods are best? What are some of the advantages and pitfalls of specific approaches? This course is designed to expose students to these and other questions about how we generate and interpret data from the “field” – that complex social, environmental and political space in which we apprehend the world. The course sets up the history of fieldwork within geography, explores the epistemological challenges of ‘mixed methods,’ reviews ethical practice, and encourages students to think of research methods within a broader research design framework. Interspersed with these concerns are opportunities to critique and apply a variety of techniques, including interviewing, participant observation, questionnaires, archival research, and landscape interpretation. In the process, we will discuss overarching themes such as reflexivity, positionality, representation, and more.

Students are encouraged to explore and practice these methods in the context of their own planned or ongoing thesis or dissertation research, or they may contribute to a group investigation (to be discussed in class). The course fulfills the requirements of an “Advanced Methods” course for graduate students in Geography. Many of the methods we review are inherently cross-disciplinary. The course therefore is designed with students from across campus in mind who may wish to hone and/or expand their methodological “tool-kits.”

Course Format and Readings

The course is an upper-level, readings-based seminar that meets once a week. Students are expected to come to class with the readings read, thought about and in-hand, and with substantive comments already posted to the Discussion forums in Carmen and ready to contribute to class discussion.

Required readings are on Carmen in the “Content” section. Readings on specific methods combine theoretical and ‘how-to’ articles with professionals’ reflections on their use of the method. Some weeks include on-line or interactive materials. Some class meetings will also include a ‘Workshop’ where we will focus on a particular issue, text, or exercise; one class meeting will be devoted to a debate.

Classroom protocol

A constructive, productive seminar experience relies on debate and discussion that is at all times respectful and mutually engaged.

Building your Methodological Repertoire

You will post your reactions to the readings by NOON on Monday. Be sure to include ONE specific question that the reading(s) raised for you. In addition, a student will be assigned, each week, to lead the discussion of a reading of their choosing from the required list. They may also wish to provide additional material for the class to read. This must be provided to the instructor to post on Carmen at least a week prior to the class in which it will be discussed.

PROPOSED Assignments: TO BE DISCUSSED AND FINALIZED WITHIN FIRST 2 WEEKS OF SEMINAR

1. **Journal and reflection piece** (15%). At the end of each class, time will be set aside for you to write an entry into your ‘class journal/log’ (beginning in Week 1), in which you will reflect on what happened in the class, your reactions to it, and lingering or new questions that you have. The idea is to reflect on the learning process and practice ‘field noting.’ At the end of the course, you will summarize and excerpt these entries into an empirically rich reflection piece (5 pages) on your arc of learning over the semester, due .
2. **Interview/oral history exercise** (15%). In Week 3, you will begin a multistage process that you’ll have 4 weeks to complete: 1) You first identify a willing interviewee; 2) You’ll then conduct the interview face-to-face, using a voice recorder. The interview should be at least 45 minutes long; 3) Next, you’ll excerpt a 20 minute section of the interview that you will transcribe verbatim. 4) You’ll then code that textual data using techniques we will discuss in class (manually or in a Qualitative software program such as N*Vivo). You may also wish to try other forms of data exploration, including visualization (see, e.g., www.wordle.net, [FreeMind](#)). 5) Finally, you’ll represent (write up) the interview as a situated encounter, including your reflections about the experience. **Due** , **in-class**. You will receive feedback from the instructor and a peer after Spring Break.
3. **Practice exercise** (15%), due in the form of a presentation to the class on (please be sure to upload PowerPoints to Carmen before class). A peer will be assigned to offer written feedback on your presentation within a week. Depending on your interests, you will ‘test’ one of the following other methods:
 - a. **Archival ‘exhibit.’** You will ‘curate’ an archive. As curator, you will: a) identify and explore an archive; b) identify a particular theme that you would like to explore; c) select a set of items (objects, texts, video, sounds, maps) from that collection that allow you to tell a particular ‘story’ from the archive in terms of its relevance to your research; d) present your ‘exhibit’ of curated items, and your rationale for their selection.
 - b. **Survey.** You will conduct a survey, using one of the survey techniques discussed in class, in order to generate multiple instances of comparable data across a varied population

($n \geq 30$). Alternately, you could conduct an in-depth 'reverse survey' (as demonstrated in class), unpacking claims back to their (survey) source.

- c. **Photo/visual exercise.** In week 9, we'll explore a variety of forms of data generation that involve the use of photographs and other visual data. You will identify one of those forms to explore independently.

4. **Draft 'Methods' section for a Proposal (20%).** The final task is to produce the 'Methods' section for a proposal that you intend to submit in the near future, ideally for, or similar to, that required for an NSF-DDRI grant. We will read several examples of these in class over the course of the semester. **Due** .

Grading

Assignments are weighted at 15% each (x3=45%); the proposal is 20%. Class leadership, feedback on the readings and participation account for the remaining 35%.

Policies and Expectations

Work that is late cannot be peer reviewed.

Attendance at all seminars is required. If there is an issue in your life that makes attendance (or active participation in class) difficult, please draw this to my attention as soon as possible so we can make alternative arrangements. If you miss a seminar, you must complete an essay (minimum 5 pages, double-spaced) that raises substantive issues about the readings. Essays will be due the week following your absence. If you do not turn in an essay, I will automatically take 10% off your final grade.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/edu/csc/](http://studentlife.osu.edu/edu/csc/)

Schedule (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week	Date	Theme	Workshop/Activities
1	01/9	Introduction to course	Begin class journals
2	01/16	No class; MLK day	
3	01/23	Methods, Methodology, Epistemology	
4	01/30	Interviews, Oral histories & Focus Groups	
5	02/6	Cross-cutting concerns	
6	02/13	Coding & Sorting <u>Workshop</u> : Reading a research proposal	
7	02/20	Ethics in fieldwork <u>Workshop</u> : IRB Debate	[Do CITI course]
8	02/27	Participant observation & Field noting	
9	03/6	Visual methods <u>Workshop</u> : Reading a research proposal	Interview due Practice exercise assigned
10	03/13	SPRING BREAK	
11	03/20	Archives <u>Workshop</u> : Archives visit	Interview feedback due
12	03/27	Action research and activism	
13	04/03	Questionnaires and surveys <u>Workshop</u> : 'Reverse' survey exercise	
14	04/10	Interpreting landscape	
15	04/17	[OPEN]	
16	04/24	Presentations & Course Wrap-Up	Present methods exercise
	May 1		Course reflection and 'Methods section' due by 5 pm.

Schedule of Topics and Readings/Explorations

(subject to some change)

PLEASE READ IN THE ORDER LISTED

January 9: Introduction to the Course

No readings required in advance.

January 23: methods, Methodology, and Epistemology

Legacies

1. Jones W.D. and Sauer C.O. 1915. Outline for field work in geography. *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society of New York* 47: 520-5.
2. Sharp, J., and L. Dowler. 2011. Framing the field. Pp. 146-160 in V. J. Del Casino Jr., M.E. Thomas, P. Cloke, and R. Panelli, eds. *A Companion to Social Geography*. UK: Blackwell.

Methods within research design

1. Shaw, I.G.R., D. P. Dixon, and J.P.Jones III. 2010. Theorizing our world. Pp. 9-25 in B. Gomez and J.P. Jones III, *Research Methods in Geography*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell. **Note especially Table 2.4.**
2. Del Casino, V.J., A. J. Grimes, S.P. Hanna, and J.P. Jones. 2000. Methodological frameworks for the geography of organizations. *Geoforum* 31(4): 523-538. **Note especially Table 1.**

January 30: Interviews & Focus Groups

1. Valentine, G. 1997. 'Tell me about...: using interviews as a research methodology.' Ch. 7 in R. Flowerdew and D. Martin, eds, *Methods in Human Geography*, 2nd ed. Pearson.
2. Bosco, F. J. and T. Herman. 2010. Focus groups as collaborative research performances. Pp. 193-207 in D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M.Crang, and L. McDowell, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
3. Brownlow, A. 2005. A geography of men's fear. *Geoforum* 36: 581-592.
4. Evans, J. and P. Jones. 2011. The walking interview: methodology, mobility and place. *Applied Geography* 31:849-858.

February 6: Cross-cutting concerns

1. Rose, G. 1997. Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography* 21(3):305-320.
2. Nagar, R. et al. 2003. Collaboration across borders: moving beyond positionality. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24(3):356-372.
3. Crossa, V. 2012. Relational positionality: conceptualizing research, power, and the everyday politics of neoliberalization in Mexico City. *ACME* 11(1):110-132.
4. Diprose, G., A. C. Thomas, and R. Rushton. 2013. Desiring more: complicating understandings of sexuality in research processes. *Area* 45(3):292-298.

February 13: Coding & Sorting

1. Cope, M. 2010. Coding transcripts and diaries. Pp. 440-452 in N. Clifford, S. French, and G. Valentine, eds. *Key Methods in Geography*, 2nd ed. London: SAGE.
2. Dixon, D.P. 2010. Analyzing meaning. Pp. 392-407 in B. Gomez and J.P. Jones III, *Research Methods in Geography*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

3. Robbins, P., 2006. The politics of barstool biology: environmental knowledge and power in greater northern Yellowstone. *Geoforum* 37:185-199.

Workshop: DDRI Proposal analysis: Please come to class having read the proposal in Carmen, and be ready to talk about how it integrates methods into the research design.

February 20: Ethics in Fieldwork

1. Valentine, G. 2005. Geography and ethics: moral geographies? Ethical commitment in research and teaching. *Progress in Human Geography* 29(4):483-487.
2. Hay, Iain. 2010. Ethical practice in geographical research. Pp. 35-48 in *Key Methods in Geography* (2nd ed), eds. N. Clifford, S. French, and G. Valentine. London: Sage.
3. Koopman, Sara. 2016. Beware: your research may be weaponized. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 106(3):530-535.

Resources for debate preparation:

4. Register for and take the CITI program course: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>
5. Read statement on professional ethics in your field (Geography's is at: http://www.aag.org/cs/about_aag/governance/statement_of_professional_ethics)
6. Check out Dyer, S., and D. Demeritt. 2009. Un-ethical review? Why it is wrong to apply the medical model of research governance to human geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 33(1):46-64.
7. Look for articles in your field that pertain to negotiating the IRB
8. Review the articles in the special issues on IRB in Geographic research:
 - a. *Professional Geographer* vol. 64(1), 2012.
 - b. *ACME: an International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* vol. 6(3), 2007.

February 27: Participant Observation & Field-noting

1. Cloke, P., I. Cook, P. Crang, M. Goodwin, J. Painter, and C. Philo. 2004. Ch. 6: "Doing ethnographies." In *Practicing Human Geography*. London: SAGE.
2. Behar, R. 1996. The vulnerable observer. *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1-34.
3. Dowler, L. 2001. Fieldwork in the trenches: participant observation in a conflict area. In *Qualitative Methodologies for Geographers: Issues and Debates*, eds. M. Limb and C. Dwyer. London: Arnold, 153-164.
4. Auyero, J. 2011. Patients of the state: an ethnographic account of poor people's waiting. *Latin American Research Review* 46(1):5-29.

Field-noting

1. Emerson, R. M., R. I. Fretz, and L. L. Shaw. 1995. Preface, Chapters 1-3 + Chapter 6. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.

March 6: Visual methodologies

1. Crang, M. 2010. Visual methods and methodologies. Pp.209-224 in D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. McDowell, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
2. Hall, T. 2009. "The camera never lies? Photographic research methods in human geography." *J. of Geography in Higher Education* 33(3):453-462.

3. Rose, G. 2008. "Using photographs as illustrations in human geography." *J. of Geography in Higher Education* 32(1):151-160.
4. Lutz, C. A., and J. L. Collins. 1993. Ch. 5, "Fashions in the ethnic other." *Reading National Geographic*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
5. McSweeney, K. Forthcoming. Portrait, Landscape, Mirror: Reflections on Return Fieldwork. Chapter in *Giving Back: Research & Reciprocity in Indigenous Contexts*.

Workshop: DDRI Proposal analysis: Please come to class having read the proposal in Carmen, and be ready to talk about how it integrates methods into the research design.

March 13: SPRING BREAK (no class)

March 20: Archives

1. Harris, C. 2001. Archival fieldwork. *Geographical Review* 91(1):328-334.
2. Lorimer, H. 2010. Caught in the nick of time: archives and fieldwork. Pp. 248-273 in D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. McDowell, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
3. Creswell, T. 2012. Value, gleaning and the archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37(1):164-176.

Workshop: Prior to class, please explore the on-line archives linked to Carmen.

March 27: Participatory/Action/Policy/Activist Research

1. Breitbart, M.M. 2010. Participatory research methods. Pp. 141-156 in *Key Methods in Geography* (2nd ed), eds. N. Clifford, S. French, and G. Valentine. London: Sage.
2. Hale, C. R. 2001. What is activist research? *SSRC* 2(1-2): 13-15.
3. Jensen, K.B., and A.K. Glasmeier. 2010. Policy, research design, and the socially situated researcher. Pp. 82-92 in D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. McDowell, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
4. Greenwood, D. J. 2008. Theoretical research, applied research, and action research: the deinstitutionalization of activist research. Pp. 319-340 in C. R. Hale, ed. *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*. Berkeley: UC Press.
5. Pickerill, J. 2008. A surprising sense of hope. *Antipode* 40(3):482-487.

April 3: Questionnaires & Surveys

1. McLafferty, S.L. 2003. Conducting questionnaire surveys. In *Key Methods in Geography*, eds. N. Clifford and G. Valentine. London: Sage, 87-100.
2. Winchester, H. P. M. 1999. "Interviews and questionnaires as mixed methods in population geography: the case of lone fathers in Newcastle, Australia." *Professional Geographer* 5(1), 60-67.
3. Robbins, P., K. McSweeney, A.K. Chhangani, and J.L. Rice. 2009. Conservation as it is: illicit resource use in a wildlife reserve in India. *Human Ecology* 37(5):559-575.
4. Glass, M. 2015. Enhancing field research methods with mobile survey technology. *J. of Geography in Higher Education* 39(2):288-298.

Workshop: 'Reverse survey' exercise

April 10: Interpreting Landscape

1. Duncan, N., and J. Duncan. 2010. Doing landscape interpretation. Pp. 225-247 in D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. McDowell, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
2. Dwyer, O., and D.H. Alderman. 2008. Conclusion. Pp. 95-107 in *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*. Chicago: Center for American Places at Columbia College.
3. Battista, K., B. LaBelle, B. Penner, S. Pile, and J. Rendell. 2005. Exploring 'an area of outstanding unnatural beauty': a treasure hunt around King's Cross, London. *cultural geographies* 12:429-462.
4. Mott, C. and S. M. Roberts. 2013. "Not everyone has (the) balls: urban exploration and the persistence of masculinist geography." *Antipode* (online).

April 17: OPEN

April 24: Course Wrap-Up and Presentations

NO READINGS

Monday, May 1: Proposal and Reflection piece due by 5 pm