

Spring 2020/SYLLABUS
(GEOG 7102, #18873)

Field Methods in Human Geography

Mondays 5-8 pm, 1186 Derby Hall 1116; 3 credits

Instructor: Kendra McSweeney, 1164 Derby Hall, mcsweeney.14@osu.edu, 614-247-6400
Office hours: **Tuesdays 10 am-12 pm**, 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 the discipline of 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.

This course focuses on *doing* fieldwork, with opportunities for students to practice most of the methods discussed. The course fulfills the requirements of an “Advanced Methods” course for graduate students in Geography. All of the methods we review are inherently cross-disciplinary. The course is therefore designed for any student who may wish to hone and/or expand their methodological “tool-kit.”

Course Format and Readings

The course is an upper-level seminar that meets once a week, and is grounded in readings and hands-on ‘workshopping’ of fieldwork methods. You are expected to come to class with the readings read, thought about and in-hand, and with substantive comments to contribute to class discussion (ideally by noon on the afternoon of each class, be sure to have posted at least one discussion question to the appropriate

Discussion section on Carmen. Doing so in advance allows everyone to read and think about them in advance). In-class, be ready to participate and engage in friendly, constructive review and criticism of the readings, the methods, and others' work.

Required readings are listed in Carmen; chapters and hard-to-find readings are posted; articles can be found via OSU libraries. Readings combine theoretical and 'how-to' articles with professionals' reflections on their use of the method. Some weeks include on-line or interactive materials.

The first part of the semester will be focused on fieldwork practice, with class time largely spent discussing and analyzing data and experiences generated by students' methodological explorations. The latter part of the semester will be more readings-based, including closer exploration of the questions that fieldwork—especially in a mixed-method, hybrid register—raises for us.

Classroom protocol

A constructive, productive seminar experience relies on debate and discussion that is at all times respectful and mutually engaged. Please keep screen use to a minimum and consider taking hand-written notes rather than maintaining an open laptop.

Building your Methodological Repertoire

1. **Practicing methods.** Over the course of the semester, you will practice four methods via practical on: a) interviewing; b) landscape interpretation; c) surveying; d) archival analysis. We'll discuss and analyze the resulting data in class. Please think of these opportunities as a time to test methods and work through problems associated with the sorts of evidence you might use in your own graduate project, rather than as a time for theoretical debate or presentation of finished work.
2. Every week, you (with or without a partner; up to you) will **lead the discussion** of the day's readings. In this role, you may also wish to supply an additional reading, or substitute one of the given readings with one of your choosing; you can also plan an activity (please check with me if you plan to do so). Be prepared to take 1 hour of the class time.
3. **Journal and reflection piece.** At the end of each class, time will be set aside for you to write an entry into your 'fieldnotes/class journal/log, in which you will reflect on what happened in the class, what you learned, 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 **April 30**.

Grading

Success in the course (= A) depends on sustained and constructive contributions to class discussion and thoughtful engagement with the tasks outlined above.

Policies and Expectations

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, please meet with me to discuss with me how you might best make it up.

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](#).

Schedule (SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION)

Date	Topic	In-class activity
6-Jan	No class; readings	None
13 Jan	Intro to course	
20-Jan	MLK Day; no class	
27-Jan	Interviewing	Code and analyze interview transcripts
3-Feb	Participant observation, autoethnography, & field noting	Discuss readings; prep for landscape practicum
10-Feb	Interpreting landscape	Review and discuss landscape observations Guest: Dr. Max Woodworth (OSU)
17-Feb	Surveys and mapping	Design ‘quantitative’ field instrument Guest: TBA
24-Feb	Emerging insights: forms of evidence, research process	Analyze data Prepping an IRB
2-Mar	Archives	Identify archival collections; plan research approach
9-Mar	SPRING BREAK	
16-Mar	Archival presentations	In-class presentations (15 min/each)
23-Mar	Hybridizing or mixing? Methodological pluralism	Guest: Dr. John Connor (TAMU)
30-Mar	Cross-cutting concerns; body mapping	Discuss readings Guest: Dr. Risa Whitson (OU)
6-Apr	NO CLASS: National MEETING	
13-Apr	Participatory research and activism	Discuss readings Guest: Dr. Madhumita Dutta (OSU)
20-Apr	Ethics in fieldwork	Discuss readings Guest: Deondre Smiles (OSU)
	<i>Reflection Piece Due April 30</i>	

Readings (subject to change)

Course intro

- NRC, 1994. "[Geography's perspectives.](#)" Chapter in *Rediscovering Geography*. Washington, DC: National Research Council.

Interviewing (27 January)

- 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 Pearson. (This is a basic "how-to"; if too basic, see McDowell, below)
- Brown, L., and K. Durrheim. 2009. [Different kinds of knowing: generating qualitative data through mobile interviewing](#). *Qualitative Inquiry* 15(5):911-930. (This offers a new approach, and gives **good examples of transcribed interview text**).

OPTIONAL READING:






- McDowell, L. 2010. [Interviewing: fear and liking in the field.](#) Pp. 156-171 in D. DeLyser, S. Herbert, S. Aitken, M. Crang, and L. McDowell, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Bedford, T., and J. Burgess. [The focus group experience](#).
- 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.
- Brownlow, A. 2005. [A geography of men's fear.](#) *Geoforum* 36: 581-592.
- Evans, J. and P. Jones. 2011. [The walking interview: methodology, mobility and place.](#) *Applied Geography* 31:849-858.
- Dixon, D.P. 2010. [Analyzing meaning](#). Pp. 392-407 in Gomez and J.P. Jones III, *Research Methods in Geography*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Robbins, P., 2006. [The politics of barstool biology: environmental knowledge and power in greater northern Yellowstone](#). *Geoforum* 37:185-199. (good example of "Q-method" approach to qualitative data analysis)

Participant observation, fieldnoting & autoethnography (3 Feb)



- Cloke, P., I. Cook, P. Crang, M. Goodwin, J. Painter, and C. Philo. 2004. Ch. 6: "[Doing ethnographies.](#)" In *Practicing Human Geography*. London: SAGE.
- Emerson, R. M., R. I. Fretz, and L. L. Shaw. 1995. [Preface, Chapters 1, 2, 3.](#) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.
- Bird, S.R., & L.K. Sokolofski. 2005. [Gendered socio-spatial practices in public eating and drinking establishments in the Midwest United States.](#) *Gender, Place, and Culture* 12(2):213-230.
- Mansfield, B. 2007. [Commentary: Health as a nature-society question.](#) *Environment and Planning A* 40:1015-1019.

OPTIONAL—depending on your interests




On autoethnography

- Purcell, Mark. 2007. [“Skilled, cheap, and desperate”: Non-tenure-track faculty and the delusion of meritocracy.”](#)  *Antipode* 39(1):121-143.
- Mercer, D. (2007). [The dangers of autobiographical research: a response to Purcell.](#)  *Antipode*, 39(4), 571-578.
- Saltmarsh, R. 2001. [“A journey into autobiography: a coal miner's daughter.”](#)  In *Placing Autobiography in Geography*, ed. P. Moss. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 138-148
- Butz, D., and K. Besio. 2004. [“The value of autoethnography for field research in transcultural settings.”](#)  *Professional Geographer* 56(3), 350-360.
- Besio, K. 2004. [Autoethnography: a limited endorsement.](#)  *Professional Geographer* 56(3): 434-438.




Other examples of ethnography

- 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.
- Auyero, J. 2011. [Patients of the state: an ethnographic account of poor people’s waiting.](#)  *Latin American Research Review* 46(1):5-29. (example of participant observation in practice)


Interpreting landscape (10 Feb)





- Meinig, D. W. 1979. [“The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene.”](#)  In *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, edited by D. W. Meinig and John Brinckerhoff Jackson. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Woodworth, M. 2018. Landscape and the cultural politics of China’s anticipatory urbanism. *Landscape Research* 43(7):891-905.
- Strange, C. C. and J. H. Banning. [Ch. 1 Physical Environments: the role of design and space](#)  *Educating by Design: creating campus environments that work.*
- Lemon, R. 2019. ‘Cooking up multiculturalism.’ Ch. 6 in *The Taco Truck: How Mexican Street Food is Transforming the American City*. Urbana, IL: U. Illinois P.
- 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.

OPTIONAL: "How-to": Doing Landscape Interpretation




- Davis, J.S. 2005. [Representing place: "Deserted Isles" and the reproduction of Bikini Atoll.](#)  *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95(3):607-625.
- 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.
- Birdsall, S. S. 2003. [Learning to see landscape through a flexible lens.](#)  *Journal of Geography* 102 (1):29-34.

OPTIONAL: Pushing the boundaries: Intervening in landscape



- 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.

- Mott, C. and S. M. Roberts. 2013. [“Not everyone has \(the\) balls: urban exploration and the persistence of masculinist geography.”](#)  Antipode (online).
- Pinder, D. 2005. [Arts of urban exploration](#) . *cultural geographies*.
- Butler, T. 2007. [Memoryscape: how audio walks can deepen our sense of place by integrating art, oral history and cultural geography.](#)  *Geography Compass* 1/3: 360-372.
- Jones, P. 2005. [Performing the city: a body and a bicycle take on Birmingham, UK.](#)  *Social and Cultural Geography* 6(6):813-830.

Surveys & Mapping (17 Feb)

- McLafferty, S.L. 2010. [Conducting questionnaire surveys.](#)  In *Key Methods in Geography*, eds. N. Clifford and G. Valentine. London: Sage.
- Kruse, N. et al. 2015. Participatory mapping of sex trade and enumeration of sex workers using capture-recapture methodology in Diego-Suarez, Madagascar. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases* 30(8):664-670.
- Bunge, W. 1971. Chapter VII ["Slums Move Closer,"](#)  and Chapter VIII, ["Fitzgerald Plans"](#)  in *Fitzgerald*.
- OTHER READING TBA




Optional:

- Glass, M. 2015. [Enhancing field research methods with mobile survey technology.](#)  *J. of Geography in Higher Education* 39(2): 288-298.
- Carr-Hill, Roy A. 1984. [Radicalising survey methodology](#) . *Quality and Quantity* 18:275-292.
- Fagerholm, N. Whose knowledge, whose benefit? Ethical challenges of participatory mapping/Experiences from fieldwork on mapping community values on land in Zanzibar. Ch. 14 in J Lunn, ed., *Fieldwork in the Global South: Ethical Challenges and Dilemmas*. Routledge.






Emerging insights: forms of evidence and fieldwork process (24 Feb)

- [Readings TBA]
- Please register for, and take, the CITI program course if you have not already done so: <https://www.citiprogram.org/>

Archives (2 March)

- Harris, C. 2001. [Archival fieldwork](#).  *Geographical Review* 91(1):328-334.
- O'Toole, James M. 2002. [Cortes' Notary: the symbolic power of records](#).  *Archival Science* 2:45-61.
- 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.
- Cresswell, T. 2012. [Value, gleaning and the archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago](#).  *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37(1):164-176.
- Please explore this website: [Goin' North \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Options to explore should you be interested

- DeLyser, Dydia. 2014. [Towards a participatory historical geography: archival interventions, volunteer service, and public outreach in research on early women pilots](#).  *Journal of Historical Geography* 46:93-98.
- Ashmore, Paul, Ruth Craggs, and Hannah Neate. 2012. [Working-with: talking and sorting in personal archives](#).  *Journal of Historical Geography* 38:81-89.
- DeLyser, Dydia, Rebecca Sheehan, and Andrew Curtis. 2004. [eBay and research in historical geography](#).  *Journal of Historical Geography* 30:764-782.
- 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.
- Harris, Verne. 2002. The archival sliver: power, memory, and archives in South Africa. *Archival Science* 2:63-86.
- Lovell, George. 2013. [The archive that never was: state terror and historical memory in Guatemala](#).  *The Geographical Review* 103(2):199-209.




Archival Presentations (16 March)

- No readings

Mixing/hybridizing methods (23 March)

- Jones, W.D. and Sauer, C.O. 1915. [Outline for fieldwork in geography](#). *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society of New York* 47:520-525.
- Other readings TBA

Cross-cutting concerns (positionality, subjectivity); body mapping (30 March)

- Rose, G. 1997. [Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics](#) . *Progress in Human Geography* 21(3):305-320.
- Nagar, R. et al. 2003. [Collaboration across borders: moving beyond positionality](#) . *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24(3):356-372.
- Diprose, G., A. C. Thomas, and R. Rushton. 2013. [Desiring more: complicating understandings of sexuality in research processes](#) . *Area* 45(3):292-298.
- Whitson, R. 2017. Painting pictures of ourselves: researcher subjectivity in the practice of feminist reflexivity. *The Professional Geographer* 69(2):299-306.
- [Reading on body mapping TBA]

No class; AAG (6 April)

Participatory research and activism (13 April)

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

Ethics in fieldwork (20 April)

- Valentine, G. 2005. [Geography and ethics: moral geographies? Ethical commitment in research and teaching](#). *Progress in Human Geography* 29(4):483-487.
- Metcalf, J. and K. Crawford. 2016. [Where are human subjects in Big Data research? The emerging ethics divide](#). *Big Data & Society* January-June:1-14.
- Koopman, Sara. 2016. [Beware: your research may be weaponized](#). *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 106(3):520-535.
- Martin, D.G., and J. Inwood. 2012. [Subjectivity, power, and the IRB](#). *The Professional Geographer* 64(10):7-15.