

Research Methods for Urban and Environmental Policy UEP 304

Spring 2017: Wednesdays, 3:00-5:55p

Location: UEP Conference Room

Professor Bhavna Shamasunder

Email: bhavna@oxy.edu

Phone 323.341.4695

Office Hours: Tu, Th 1-2 or by appointment

Office Location: UEP Department, #203

Course Description Prerequisite: UEP 101

This is a research design and qualitative methods course. This course provides an overview of research methods used in the social sciences with an emphasis on community-based, environmental justice, and urban planning research. We will approach each method from a variety of perspectives: learn about the method itself, consider examples of how it has been applied by other researchers, and engage in discussion and group work with our student colleagues about the benefits and challenges of particular methods. Assignments will entail understanding, critiquing, and applying each method. This course will help you think critically about the research you read in your classes or in the media as well as the research process itself. You will apply concepts and readings to critically design, conduct, and write original research. You will also understand your role, power, privilege, and positionality as a researcher in community-based and participatory research. Your experience with developing and implementing research studies is an important skill that you will apply in a variety of contexts during and after college regardless of whether you work in academia, the non-profit sector, government, or the private sector. It will, at the very least, help you become a more fully engaged citizen or community member on a variety of issues and in practical terms, will prepare you to conduct your senior comprehensive research. Note: You should also plan to take UEP 305 (Urban Data Analysis) as a complement to this course.

Learning Outcomes

This course is an introduction to research design and qualitative research methods used in urban and environmental policy research. Through this course, students will learn:

Students will:

- Describe the most common social science research methods and recognize what sorts of questions are best suited for which methodology;
- Learn about the nature and application of qualitative research in social and organizational research;
- Apply methods and concepts throughout each stage of the research process
- Critically think about the research process—how we use and combine research methods, how we design and conduct our information/data collection, what we assume explicitly and implicitly, and the ethical underpinnings of research

- Employ a community-driven lens;
- Learn how to design a qualitative research study
- Apply research design and data collection skills by undertaking a pilot research study

Required Textbook

Berg, B.L. & Lune H. Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, 8th Edition, Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon. 2012.

The book can be purchased at the Oxy book store. It will require a binder since it is sold in loose pages with a 3-hole punch.

Additional readings for each week will be posted on the course moodle. This is a reading intensive and activity intensive course. Since we only meet once per week, you *must* do the work in between class periods in order to move forward in each in-person session. You are expected to be self-motivated and engaged in this 300-level seminar.

Required Software

Microsoft Word or Google Docs

Qualtrics: You have access to this online survey design tool and must create an account; Dedoose:

Online open access qualitative data analysis software

Zotero: An open source software

Grading

Attendance and Participation: There are only 14 classes total. You must attend or you will miss a lot! While I won't take presence as a participation grade, each class will include work in class.

Class Assignments: These will be listed on moodle and will total 55%

Midterm: 15%

Final Project: 30%

Wednesdays

Date	Topic	Readings
Research Designs in Qualitative Research		
January 25 th	Overview. Course Intro. Purpose, objectives, and requirements. What is qualitative research and how has it been used in the field? How do qualitative and quantitative research designs differ?; Subjectivity of the	Berg & Lune, Chapter 1

	Researcher; Zotero Training	
February 1 st	Research Design. Types of Research Design. Intro to Community Based Research; Research Questions; Literature Reviews	Berg & Lune, Chapter 2 & 7
February 8 th	Research Design; Use of Theory and Research Ethics	Berg & Lune, Chapter 3
February 15 th	Research Design Continued	
Data Collection Methods/Procedures		
February 22 nd	Interviews and Focus Groups	Berg & Lune, Chapters 4 and 5
March 1 st	Participant Observation, Ethnography, Ground Truthing	Berg & Lune, Chapter 6 and 9
March 8th—Spring Break, No Class		
March 15 th	Primary Document Analysis	Berg & Lune, Chapter 8
March 22 nd	Case Studies	Berg & Lune, Chapter 10
March 29 th	Analyzing Qualitative Data; Integrating and Synthesizing Data	Berg & Lune, Chapter 11
April 5 th	Data Reporting; Discussion of your pilot study experiences and results	Berg & Lune, Chapter 12
April 12 th	Data to Findings/Conclusions and Writing Up Results; Class Presentations	
April 19 th	Advanced Issues/Class Presentations	
April 26 th —Last Day of Class	Final Summary/Class Presentations	
May 5 th	Final Written Projects Due	

Course Policies

You are expected to be a respectful colleague in the classroom- meaning that you are curious and respectful of your classmates and open to their ideas. You, yourself, should be prepared to actively engage in class discussion by reading material in advance of class and being an active and engaged listener and participant. Cheating and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Course assignments are demanding and require critical and creative thinking. Please familiarize yourself with the nuances of academic dishonesty and Oxy's policies regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty (<http://www.oxy.edu/center-academic-excellence/writing-center/citing-sources>)