

Simon Fraser University
LAS 800 – Approaches to Research: Design and Methods in Latin
American Studies

Fall 2009

Thursdays, 8:30-12:20
RCB6136

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Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to research design and fieldwork methods in preparation for conducting the M.A. thesis research project. After reviewing the epistemological foundations underlying choices in research methodologies and related fieldwork methods, students will gain practical experience in a range of tools for producing and evaluating research in Latin American Studies. Throughout the course, we will engage in discussion of research motivations, ethics, methodological choices, and fieldwork-related experiences in academic and applied research settings. Careful examination of the issues of representation, voice, reflexivity and researcher positioning will form an important part of the course.

We will cover epistemologies of the human sciences, methodological frameworks, social-research design and briefly introduce students to a range of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed fieldwork and analytical methods. The class is organized via seminar discussion, practical exercises, and a critical examination of ongoing research in the field of Latin American Studies. The latter will be accomplished in part through readings, but also in discussion with LAS faculty members who will visit the class to discuss the methodological aspects of their research. The course will result in the preparation of a defensible research prospectus for MA thesis research.

Required Texts:

Perecman, Ellen, and Sara R. Curran. 2006. *A Handbook for Social Science Field Research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

Additional readings are entered below for each week. Other readings will be selected by students according to their own topics of interest and criteria outlined below under various assignments.

Recommended Reading (General)

Becker, Howard. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About your Research While You're Doing it*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Useful Websites

SFU Latin American Studies Research Guide

<http://www.lib.sfu.ca/researchhelp/subjectguides/las/las.htm>

Latin American Network Information Center (UTexas) <http://lanic.utexas.edu/las.html>

Canadian Assoc for Latin American and Caribbean Studies <http://www.can-latam.org/>

Latin American Studies Association (LASA) <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/>

Handbook of Latin American Studies (Library of Congress) <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/hlas/>

Summit of the Americas Center <http://www.americasnet.net/>

Internet Resources for Latin America <http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/laguia/>

Bibliographic Instruction in LAS <http://spot.colorado.edu/~knowlton/SALALM/>

Panorama social de América Latina 2004 [http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-](http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/6/20386/P20386.xml&xsl=/dds/tpl/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl/top-bottom.xslt)

[bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/6/20386/P20386.xml&xsl=/dds/tpl/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl/top-bottom.xslt](http://www.eclac.cl/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/6/20386/P20386.xml&xsl=/dds/tpl/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl/top-bottom.xslt)

LAS Journals indexed in JSTOR

Americas 1944-2003

Bulletin of Latin American Research 1981-1996

Desarrollo Económico 1961-2005

Hispania 1917-2001

Hispanic American Historical Review 1918-1999 (plus links to recent content 2000-2004)

Hispanic Review 1933-2003

Journal of Latin American Studies 1969-2001

Latin American Antiquity 1990-2003

Latin American Perspectives 1974-2003

Latin American Politics and Society 2001-2003

Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs 1970-2000

Journal of Inter-American Studies 1959-1969

Latin American Research Review 1965-2003 (plus links to recent content 2004-2006)

Luso-Brazilian Review 1964-2004

Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos 1985-2003

Revista Mexicana de Sociología 1939-2003

Course Activities

Discussion Leader (10%)

Each student is responsible for organizing a brief (e.g. 8-10 min) presentation and set of discussion questions or an activity related to one week's readings. Please DO NOT summarize the readings. We assume that all members of the class have read the material. Your task is rather to **critically examine several key questions** that emerge from the material, identify central themes, and offer the class a roadmap for discussion during the rest of the period. Feel free to bring in additional resources and materials that would foster strengthened understanding and critical analysis of the topic at hand.

Journal Article Reports (20%)

Choose an article from one of the LAS journals listed above. Prepare a one-page (single spaced) written analysis of the article that includes: summary of main findings, discussion of theoretical and methodological framework, research methods employed and mode of analysis. Discuss article in terms of credibility, clarity, and how the analytical approach taken by the researcher related to the aims and scope of the research conducted. Complete 4 summaries, and present 2 of them in class throughout the semester. Although this is not required, you'll get extra credit if your chosen article used a method that we are discussing in class the day of your presentation!

Ethics Tutorial (2.5%)

Read SFU Ethics Policy and Application Procedures

<http://www.sfu.ca/vpresearch/ethics/applications/index.html>

Complete Ethics Tutorial Online – print certificate

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial/index.cfm>

Academic Honesty Tutorial (2.5%)

Complete the Academic Honesty Tutorial on the LAS 800 WebCT site:

Review Essay – Topic/Booklist due October 1 Review Essay Due November 5. (25%)

Choose a minimum of 5 recent books, published in the last 5 years, related to your research interests. Prepare a 15-20 page (double spaced) critical review essay using the format described in the *Latin American Research Review*. You should think of two or three analytical questions that may allow you to fruitfully discuss each and all of the books under review. These questions should be drawn from the core research interests that you want to explore in your MA thesis. Each of these questions can then become a separate theme section of your review essay. Make sure to formulate broad enough questions so that they can properly encompass all of your books. Yet, the questions should also be focused enough so that the discussion will be directly useful for the literature review section of your final thesis prospectus.

Research Prospectus – Due November 26 (40%)

This assignment should be conducted in conversation with your supervisor and will comprise the major portion of your course credit for LAS 800. The research prospectus is a working document that will serve as a guide for the conduct of your library and field research undertaken over the course of your MA. It should include at least the following components.

1. Title (indicates general area of study and specific focus/question)
2. Research Objectives and Intended Outcomes (summary/abstract)
3. Justification of Area of Study (knowledge gaps, conceptual framework, aims and scope, etc).
4. Literature Review
5. Detailed Research Questions
6. Methodological Framework (should indicate relation with conceptual framework)

7. Methods
8. Research Timeline
9. Resource Requirements
10. Expected Outcomes
11. Bibliography

SSHRC MA Fellowship Application

Although this is not a required activity for the course, all students who qualify and without secure funding are strongly encouraged to apply for a SSHRC MA Fellowship. This funding could cover the second year of your program. Find out what are the deadlines both at SSRHC and the internal deadline for LAS at SFU. Each student should contact her or his senior supervisor for help and I will be happy to comment on draft proposals.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Week 1, Sept 10	Course Introduction
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Course Introduction and Library Orientation

Week 2, Sept 17	Approaches to Interdisciplinary Research in LAS
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Guest Speaker *Alec Dawson*

Abend, Gabriel, 2006. “Styles of Sociological Thought: Sociologies, Epistemologies, and the Mexican and U.S. Quests for Truth”, *Sociological Theory* 24:1 (available online)

Drake and Hilbink, 2003. “Latin American Studies: Theory and Practice”. UCIAS Edited Volume 3, *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*. Year 2003, Article 2. (available online)

Bates, Robert H. 1997. “Area Studies and the Discipline: A Useful Controversy?” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Jun., 1997), pp. 166-169 (online)

Selbin, Eric, 2007, “Making the World New: Latin American Studies After the Washington Consensus” pp 33-35 in *LASAForum*, Fall, 28:4

Milian, Claudia, 2007, “Locating the Ephemeral South in the Latin Americanization of LASA” pp 23-24 in *LASAForum*, Fall, 28:4

Recommended:

Ragin, Charles, 1994. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method* SAGE, 1994

Week 3, Sept 24	Logistics: Proposals, Literature Review, Ethics, Funding
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Guest Speaker Andy Hira

Handbook, Chap 10, Essentials for Research Design

Handbook, Chap 11, Research Ethics

Janice Penrod, 2003, "Getting Funded: Writing a Successful Qualitative Small-Project Proposal" *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 13 No. 6, July 2003. (online)

Recommended Reading:

Hart, 1998. *Doing a literature review: releasing the social science research imagination*. London: Sage Publications.

Cooper, Harris. 1998. *Synthesizing Research: A Guide for Literature Reviews*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE

Locke et al, 2007. *Proposals That Work: A Guide For Planning Dissertations And Grant Proposals* Lawrence

Seiber, Joan. *Planning Ethically Responsible Research: A Guide for Students and Internal Review Boards*. SAGE

Kimmel, Allan. *Ethics and Values in Applied Social Research*. SAGE

Week 4, Oct 1	Comparative Inquiry
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Handbook, Chap 1, Archives

Paige, Jeffrey, 1999. "Conjuncture, Comparison, and Conditional Theory in Macrosocial Inquiry" *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 105, No. 3, pp. 781-800 (online)

Ragin, Charles, 1987, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, University of California Press Chap 1 pp1-18

Berg-Schlosser et al, 2008 Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) as an Approach" in RIHOUX, Benoît and RAGIN, Charles (eds) *Configurational Comparative Methods. Qualitative Comparative Analysis, Multi-Value QCA and Fuzzy Sets*, Applied Social Research Methods, Thousand Oaks and London , Sage.

Recommended:

Davis, Diane E. (2004) *Discipline and Development: Middle Classes and Prosperity in East Asia and Latin America*, Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Skocpol, Theda, and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22: 2 (1980), pp. 174-197.

Dibble, Vernon K, "Four Types of Inference From Documents to Events," *History and Theory* 3 (1963), pp. 203-221.

Milligan, John D., "The Treatment of an Historical Source," *History and Theory* 18: 2 (1979), pp. 177-196.

Walton, 1984, *Reluctant Rebels: Comparative Studies of Revolution and Underdevelopment* New York: Columbia University Press (Excerpt).

REVIEW ESSAY BOOKLIST DUE TODAY

- Tedlock, Barbara. 2008. "The Observation of Participation and the Emergence of Public Ethnography." Pp. 151-171 in Denzin, Norman K. and yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Charmaz, Kathy, 2008. "Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies." Pp. 203-242 in Denzin and Lincoln, eds *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications
- Morgan, David L. 1997. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Recommended:

Charmaz, Kathy (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*

Guest Speaker *Stacy Pigg, Sociology and Anthropology*

Handbook, Chap 2, Case Studies

Handbook, Chap 9, Essentials for the Case Study Method

Hannerz, Ulf, 2003. "Being there . . . and there . . . and there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography" *Ethnography* 4(2) 201-215 (available on WebCT)

Marcus, George E. (2000) *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (two Chapters on WebCT)

Recommended:

Gerrig, John, 2003, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge University Press. Chap 1-3

Lieberson, Stanley, "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases," *Social Forces* 70: 2 (December 1991), pp. 307-320 (available on WebCT)

Stake, Robert. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Sage, 1995

Guest Speaker *Hannah Wittman*

Handbook, Chap 3 Ethnographic Methods

Handbook, Chap 8, Essentials for Ethnography

DeVault and McCoy, 2004 "Institutional Ethnography: Using Interviews to Investigate Ruling Relations" in *Critical Strategies for Social Research*. Toronto: CSPI (available on WebCT)

Emerson et al, 1995. Writing up Fieldnotes II: Creating Scenes on the Page. Pp. 66-105 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (available on WebCT)

Observation Exercise (in class)

Recommended Reading:

Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (entire book)

Week 8 October 29	In the Field II: Interviewing
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Guest Speaker Marilyn Gates

Handbook, Chap 4 Oral Histories

Handbook, Chap 5, Focus Groups

Miller and Crabtree, “Depth Interviewing”. in Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004) *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A reader on theory and practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Seidman, 1998, “Technique isn’t everything, but it is a lot” in *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*. New York: Teacher’s College

Beverly, John, 2003 “Testimonio, Subalternity, and Narrative Authority.” in Denzin and Lincoln, eds *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Interview exercise (in class)

Recommended Reading

Rubin and Rubin, 2005. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Frickel and Schonlau, 2002, “Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet Research Surveys: Evidence from the Literature” *Field Methods* 14 (4)

Guest et al, 2006, How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability *Field Methods* vol. 18: pp. 59 - 82.

McLellen et al 2003, Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription Field Methods *Field Methods* Vol. 15, No. 1, February 2003 63–84

Week 9, November 5	Quantitative/ Secondary data analysis
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REVIEW ESSAY DUE TODAY

Handbook, Chap 6, Surveys and Secondary Data sources

Handbook, Chap 7, Combining Qual/Quant Tools

De Maio, Fernando. 2007 “Health Inequalities in Argentina: Patterns, Contradictions & Implications. *Health Sociology Review* 2007 16(3) (via email attachment)

Week 10, November 12 Theme TBA
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Guest Speaker *Duncan Knowler*

Young, E. 1999. "Balancing Conservation with Development in Small-scale fisheries: Is ecotourism an empty promise?" *Human Ecology*, 27(4), 581-620.

Woolcock, M., and D. Narayan. 2000. "Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research, and Policy." *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15(2), 225-249.

Mitchell, A. and Bossert, T. 2007. "Measuring dimensions of social capital: Evidence from surveys in poor communities in Nicaragua." *Social Science & Medicine*, 64, 50-63.

Week 11 November 19 Linguistics and Cultural Studies
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Guest Lecturer: Juan Sosa, Linguistics

Hodder (1998) "The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture" in Denzin and Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, p703-715

Harper, (2003), "Framing Photographic Ethnography: A Case Study" *Ethnography* 4(2), 241-266 (available online)

Massey and Sanchez R, 2007. "Latino and American Identities as Perceived by Immigrants" *Qualitative Sociology* 30(1) 80-107. (available online)

Bauer, (2001) "Introduction" *Goods, Power, History: Latin America's Material Culture*. Cambridge UP p 1-15

FILM: The Making of Bus 174 (Brazil, 2004).

Week 12 November 26 Writing Research
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Handbook, Chap 12, Maintaining Perspective

Leary, 2005 "Producing Research Deliverables" in *Researching Real World Problems*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE

Maxwell, 2004 Using Qualitative Methods for Causal Explanation, *Field Methods* 16 (3) 243-264. (available online)

Recommended:

Wolcott, Harry (2001). *Writing Up Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE

Week 13, December 3 Project Presentations

PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE TODAY

Sociological Essay Evaluation

Name: _____ . Analytical Paper # ____ . Paper grade: _____ .

Analysis and Criticism:

POOR			EXCELLENT			
1	2	3	4	5		
						Follows the directions of the assignment (e.g., answers questions sufficiently).
						Clearly defined agenda to demonstrate the thesis or hypothesis.
						Coherence of explanation. Clear statements. Succinct.
						Key terms and concepts are defined and explained.
						Assertions and arguments supported with specific <u>cites</u> to the original works.
						Assertions and arguments supported with specific <u>quotes</u> from the original works.
						Creative use of insights from lecture and class discussion.
						Various parts and paragraphs of paper well structured and interconnected.
						Depth of coverage of existing literature and original works.
						Analyzes literature beyond summarizing.

Technical presentation:

X denotes that attention should be paid to this problem.

XX denotes that extra attention is warranted.

- _____ Late paper (one letter grade is deducted for each day the paper is late).
- _____ Paper format: pages numbered in top right hand corner, one-inch margins, double-spaced.
- _____ Appropriate citation format not followed.
- _____ Text is too long.
- _____ Text is too short.
- _____ Redundancy (wordy; can be trimmed without loss of meaning).
- _____ Some statements are unsupported (e.g., undeveloped and/or vague statements).
- _____ Insufficient coverage of existing literature.
- _____ Insufficient depth of coverage.
- _____ Typographic errors, misspelled words, punctuation errors.
- _____ Incomplete sentences, awkward sentence structure.
- _____ Some paragraphs are too long.
- _____ Some paragraphs are too short.

LAS 800

STUDENT SURVEY

FALL 2009

Name: _____

Phone(s): _____

Undergraduate Major? _____ Year/Class _____

E-mail: _____

Other courses taken this semester (names, not numbers):

Home town and/or country? _____

At what university did you complete your undergraduate studies? _____

Why are you interested in this course? (check one:)

It is required

Interested in subject

Fit my timetable

Looked easy

Other Specify _____.

Please name two to three courses taken at Simon Fraser University or other universities or colleges that have influenced your thinking the most. Write course names, not numbers.

What is your current definition of research methods? (2-3 sentences)

State the main theme, question and relevance of your expected MA thesis (one sentence each).

Discussion Leader/Journal Reports Sign Up Sheet

Week 2, Sept 17	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 3, Sept 24	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 4, Oct 1	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 5, Oct 8	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 6, Oct 15	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 7, Oct 22	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 8, Oct 29	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 9, Nov 5	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 10, Nov 12	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 11, Nov 19	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.
Week 12, Nov 26	1. (discussion leader) 2. 3.