ANG 5485 Research Design

Wednesday, 5:10 p.m. – 8:10 p.m.
TUR B310

Dr. Clarence C. Gravlee

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Course Description and Objectives
This seminar is an introduction to research design and proposal writing in anthropology. It is organized around elements of research design that cut across subdisciplines: the logic of scientific inquiry; ethics; conceptualization and measurement; sampling and the selection of cases; and the relation between methods, data, and theory. The seminar takes up the basic question of how we know what we claim to know and introduces multiple approaches to doing social science.

Much of what we learn is the result of discussing participants’ emerging research proposals. The focus on proposals is useful not only because grant writing is an important skill in its own right, but also because an effective proposal involves all elements of research design—from statement of the problem to data analysis.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

• Formulate a feasible research question, and design research to answer it.
• Discuss the ethical implications of research.
• Select appropriate methods of data collection and analysis for given problems.
• Critically evaluate your own research and that of other social scientists.
• Submit a grant proposal for extramural funding of your dissertation research.

Approach
As you know, the aims of graduate school are fundamentally different from those of undergraduate education. Undergraduate education is concerned primarily with instilling the essential knowledge in a field and—at its best—with preparing students for a lifetime of learning. Graduate education is about turning students into professional researchers and teachers. These different aims correspond to distinct responsibilities for both teachers and learners at the graduate and undergraduate levels. As aspiring professionals, you are responsible for taking initiative to master the key ideas and literature in the field and for seeking out the resources you need. My role is to facilitate your learning and professional development as independent scholars by introducing you to pertinent literature, by challenging you to evaluate and synthesize the material, by rewarding individual initiative, and by offering constructive feedback on your emerging research projects. The course format, assignments, and evaluation of your performance are designed to meet these aims.

Course Format
In practice, my approach to graduate education means that you will be actively engaged in mastering the course material. Our class time will be divided between discussion of assigned
readings and presentation and critical evaluation of your emerging research proposals. The readings provide the foundation of knowledge in research design; the proposal provides an opportunity to apply that knowledge to your own development as a researcher.

The course will be conducted as a seminar. You will be required to complete assigned readings before class and come prepared to discuss and analyze the issues and concepts that the readings address. Each of you will lead discussion of assigned readings at least once during the semester. I expect you to have studied the required readings prior to class. Take time to digest the new methods and ideas before you come to class, and be prepared to apply them or to ask about points that remain unclear. Each week, at least two of you will update us on the development of your research plans and solicit feedback from the group. Everyone must come to class prepared to offer constructive criticism and suggestions.

Course Materials

📚 Required Readings

There are four required books, available locally at the UF Bookstore. (Note that the full-text of the Johnson text is freely available at the author’s website.) Additional required readings will be made available electronically on the course website.


✍️ Recommended Readings

The following texts are recommended as reference materials, if you wish to deepen your skills in research methods and design.


**Course Outline**
1. Introduction
2. Epistemology and research traditions
3. Foundations of social research
4. Developing research questions
5. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods
6. Validity, reliability, and standards of quality
7. Experimental thinking and research design
8. Mixed methods designs
9. Probability, sampling, and generalizability
10. Ethnographic sampling and selection of cases
11. Case studies and theory
12. Introduction to data analysis
13. QCA and fuzzy-set social science
14. Network thinking and structural analysis
15. Ethical conduct of research

**Course Requirements and Grading**
Your final grade has four components: class participation (20 percent), final research proposal (40 percent), proposal sections and assignments (30 percent), and peer review (10 percent). Final grades will be A (90-100), A- (87-89), B+ (84-86), B (80-83), B- (77-79), C+ (74-76), C (70-73), C- (67-69), D+ (64-66), D (60-63), D- (57-59), E (<57)

1. **Class participation** (10%). I expect you to attend each meeting and to participate actively in class discussions. Active participation requires that you read all assigned readings and prepare thoughtful questions and critical discussion points. You will also be expected to provide constructive feedback on your peers’ presentations of proposals. I will evaluate your participation on the quality, not just quantity, of your contributions.

2. **Seminar moderator** (10%). Each week one or two students will be assigned to lead the seminar. Your job is to stimulate and guide thoughtful discussion about the concepts and arguments relevant to the week’s reading. If you and another student are assigned to the same week, you are expected to meet ahead of the class time to coordinate your presentation of the material. The purpose of serving as seminar moderator is to enhance your skills in critical reading and interpretation, oral presentation, active listening, and synthesis and evaluation of arguments and ideas.

3. **Final research proposal** (40%). The final product of the course is a research proposal written in the format of a NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant. The proposal, including a completed IRB application, is due to me by email on December 4.

4. **Proposal sections and assignments** (20%). To help you make steady progress on your proposal, you will be required to submit sections of the proposal throughout the semester. The page lengths for each proposal section should conform to the advice from NSF reviewers available on the NSF website. See the summary of assignments due (below) for the required sections and their due dates.
5. **Peer review (10%).** You will provide written feedback on the submitted drafts of two classmates’ proposals, using guidelines that will be distributed in class. You will be expected to read the proposals carefully and to provide comments that are thoughtful, respectful, and constructive. In addition to the direct benefit of getting feedback on your paper, you will also find that the process of reading and thinking critically about others’ proposals will help you analyze and refine your own.

6. **Research journal (10%).** The author of one of your required texts, Luker, encourages you to keep a research journal and provides writing exercises to help you get started (p. 20-21). It’s a good practice, and to encourage you in this direction, I expect you to keep a running research journal as part of your work in this seminar. The specific format of the journal is up to you. You could keep a three-ring binder, as Luker suggests; a bound notebook or journal, as lab scientists insist (e.g., [http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/labnotebooks](http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/labnotebooks)); a word processor or writing software like Scrivener ([http://www.literatureandlatte.com](http://www.literatureandlatte.com)); a journaling app like Day One ([http://dayoneapp.com](http://dayoneapp.com)); general note-taking software like Evernote ([www.evernote.com](http://www.evernote.com)); or a private blog. The important part is what you write, not how you write it. Do the exercises at the end of each chapter in the Luker book. Write summaries and reactions to other assigned readings. Capture ideas about your own research proposal. Practice free-writing to stimulate your thought about research problems and potential research directions. I will evaluate your research journal for evidence that you made consistent use of it to capture your thoughts and track your progress.

7. **Course web site.** You are responsible for all materials posted on the course web site ([http://gravlee.org/researchdesign](http://gravlee.org/researchdesign)), including required readings, announcements, details on assignments, and other supplementary material.

### Summary of Assignments and Due Dates

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Approximate Page Length</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Filename (submit via email)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research interests paragraph</td>
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<td>Research question exercise</td>
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<td>September 11</td>
<td><code>&lt;lastname&gt;_questions</code></td>
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<td>Research setting</td>
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<td><code>&lt;lastname&gt;_setting</code></td>
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<td>Research plan and methods</td>
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<td>October 23</td>
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<td>Complete draft of proposal</td>
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<td>November 6</td>
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<td>Peer review</td>
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<td>Final proposal</td>
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<td><code>&lt;lastname&gt;_proposal</code></td>
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</tbody>
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### Policy on Late Assignments

You are required to complete all assignments by the stated due dates. Late assignments will lose one half-letter grade for each day past the deadline. There are no make-up opportunities for any assignment, as you will have ample time to complete each requirement. I will not assign grades of “incomplete” except in the most unusual, extreme circumstances of incapacitating illness, death of family members, or other university-approved excuses. You must provide
documentation of such circumstances from a medical doctor, funeral home, or other appropriate authority.

**Academic Honor Code**

Unless it is specifically connected to assigned collaborative work, all work should be individual. Evidence of collusion (working with someone not connected to the class or assignment), plagiarism (use of someone else’s published or unpublished words or design without acknowledgment) or multiple submissions (submitting the same paper in different courses) will lead to the Department’s and the University’s procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the university’s Honor Code (available online at [http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html)).

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. *Please make any requests by the second week of class.*

**UF Counseling Services**

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals that interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

**Syllabus Change Policy**

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.
Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (Aug. 21)  Introduction and Overview

- Overview of the course
- Proposals and pedagogy
- Funding sources

Recommended reading


Week 2 (Aug. 28)  Epistemology and research traditions

- Anthropology and the social sciences
- Positivism, interpretivism, and other approaches
- Goals and norms of anthropological research

Due – Research interests paragraph

Required reading

Bernard, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-22)

Luker, Ch. 1–2 (pp. 1-39)


☞ **Further reading**


**Week 3 (Sept. 4)**  **Foundations of social research**

- Language and logic of social science
- Concepts, variables, and measurement
- Causal inference

📖 **Required reading**

Bernard, Ch. 2 (pp. 23-53)

Luker, Ch. 3 (pp. 40-50)


☞ **Further reading**


**Week 4 (Sept. 11)**  **Developing research questions**

- The research cycle
- Types of research questions
- Matching questions and methods
- Literature search strategies

⚠️ **Due – Research question exercise**

📖 **Required reading**

Bernard, Ch. 3 (pp. 54-81)

Luker, Ch. 4-5 (pp. 51-98)


Further reading


Week 5 (Sept. 18)  Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods

- Matching methods to questions
- Limits of the qualitative-quantitative divide
- History and development of “mixed methods”

Due – Problem statement

Required reading

Creswell and Plano, Ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-52)


Further reading


Week 6 (Sept. 25)  Validity, reliability, and standards of quality

- Evidence and theory
- Replication, repeatability, and ethnography
- Validity, reliability, and alternative frameworks
- Triangulation

Due – Literature review

Required reading


Further reading


Week 7 (Oct. 2)  Experimental thinking and research design

- Experimental and nonexperimental research
- Internal validity and causation
- Threats to validity and ways to manage them

Due – Research setting

Required reading

Bernard, Ch. 4 (pp. 82-112)


Further reading


**Week 8 (Oct. 9)  Mixed methods designs**

- Principles for designing mixed methods research
- Selecting an appropriate design

📖 **Required reading**

Creswell and Plano Clark, Ch. 3-4 (pp. 53-142)


☞ **Further reading**


**Week 9 (Oct. 16)  Probability, sampling, and generalizability**

- The central limit theorem
- Representativeness and generalizability
- Probability sampling designs

📖 **Required reading**

Bernard, Ch. 5-6 (pp. 113-142)

Luker, Ch. 6 (pp. 99-128)

☞ **Further reading**


**Week 10 (Oct. 23)  Ethnographic sampling and selection of cases**

- Nonprobability sampling designs
- Sample size and selection strategies
Due – Research plan and methods

Required reading

Bernard, Ch. 7 (pp. 143-155)


Further reading


Week 11 (Oct. 30) Case studies

- Case study designs
- Case studies and theory

Due – Significance

Required reading

Luker, Ch. 7-8 (pp. 129-189)


Further reading


Week 12 (Nov. 6) Introduction to data analysis

- Thinking with matrices
- Logic and methods of comparison
- Qualitative, quantitative (again)

Due – Complete draft of proposal
Required reading

Bernard, Ch. 15 (pp. 337-345)


Further reading


Week 13 (Nov. 13) QCA and fuzzy-set social science

- Qualitative comparative analysis
- Fuzzy-set social science

Luker, Ch. 9-10 (pp. 190-216)

Bernard, pp. 453-455


Further reading


**Week 14 (TBD) Network thinking and relational analysis**

*Reschedule class due to AAA meetings*

1. **Due – Peer review (Nov. 20)**
   - Social and semantic network analysis
   - Relational versus attribute analysis

2. **Required reading**


3. **Further reading**


**Week 15 (Nov. 27) No class—Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Week 16 (Dec. 4) Ethical conduct of research**

- Professional ethical codes
- Current controversies
- Working with the IRB

1. **Due – Final proposal**

2. **Required reading**


AAA Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC), Executive Summary (2009).


Further reading

