Community Field Research
Theory and Analysis
CRD 151 & 151L

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Course Description

This course focuses on the conduct of research at the community level. We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of alternative social theories of community change as guides for understanding the processes of social change localized in particular places. We will gain exposure to various methods for conducting research at the community level including: contextual analysis, elite interviewing, ethnographic research, and comparative community research. We will consider the special problem of drawing appropriate boundaries for local community studies in the contemporary context of transnational trends in economy, politics, and culture.

Students will work in teams to conduct field research projects on selected topical issues. Some examples of possible topics include: the emergence of new cultural practices in transnational migrant neighborhoods; how community leaders, organizations, and residents are coping with socio-economic changes like population growth, sprawl, or increasing cultural diversity; the marketing strategies of local officials seeking to distinguish their locality from others competing for new economic development; the emergence of issue-oriented grassroots social movements, e.g., to slow growth, regulate development, or defend perceived neighborhood interests; diversity controversies in public schools; the practices of community organizations seeking to serve underserved population groups; the perceptions of service providers and clients in social welfare agencies; the ties that migrant groups maintain to their villages and countries of origin.

Course Requirements:
1. A four to five page, individually written issue background paper: 20% (See guidelines)
   **Due Date: January 30**
2. A five page research question and research design statement for team projects: 20% (see guidelines)
   **Due Date: February 15**
3. Oral class report of team research findings: 20%
   **Scheduled from February 20 to March 13**
4. A 10-12 page field research narrative report: 40% (see guidelines)
   **Due Date: March 15**

Course Readings
*Course reader.* Additional course readings compiled by the instructor, available at OCB.

COURSE SYLLABUS
January 4  | Review of Course Syllabus
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**Part I:**  | Conducting Community Research: Investigating Local Subjects and Actors in Global Context
January 9  | Designing Community Research: The Case Study
  | Andranovich and Riposa. *Doing Urban Research,* Chapter 4, pp. 46-62.
January 11 | Transnational Migration: Changing Boundaries of Ethnographic Research
  | Guest lecture by Prof. David Kyle, Department of Sociology, UCD, on the field research experiences of historically contextualized ethnographic research followed by discussion
  | Massey, Doreen. "A Global Sense of Place." In *Course Reader.*
January 16 | Locating Transnational Community Research
  | Smith, M.P. "Re-presenting the Local: Beyond Communitarian Metaphors," Chapter 5 in *Transnational Urbanism.* pp. 101-122
January 18 | Conducting Elite Interviews and Gathering Documentary Data
  | Guest lecture on the experience of elite interviewing by Dr. Alvin Sokolow, Chair of the CS&D Unit of the HCD Department, followed by discussion and research planning
January 23 | Researching the Interplay of Transnational and Local Dynamics in California Cities
Smith, M.P., "Reimagining Los Angeles from the Ground Up," Chapter 4 in Transnational Urbanism, pp. 72-98

January 25 Small Group Discussions of Research Projects and Formation of Group Research Teams

No assigned readings.

Individual Issue Background Papers (4-5pp.) Due January 30

January 30 Understanding Human Agency

Smith, M. P., "Urbanism: Medium or Outcome of Human Agency?" In Course Reader.
Smith, M.P., "From Globalization to Transnational Urbanism," Chapter 8 in Transnational Urbanism, pp. 163-183

February 1 Investigating the Representations of Local Elites


February 6 Interpreting Ethnographic and Elite Interview Transcripts

Illustrative lecture discussing the the need to contextualize interview data
Smith, M.P. "Beyond the Postmodern City: Rethinking Ethnography for Transnational Times," Chapter 6 in Transnational Urbanism, pp.123-144

February 8 Reporting Field Research

Andranovich and Riposa. Doing Urban Research, Chapters 6 and 7, pp. 86-98.
February 13  Final in-Class Group Research Planning Session

no assigned readings

February 15  Scheduling of Student Narrative Reports

**Group Research Design Statements (5pp.) Due February 15.**

**Part II:**  Oral Reports and Development of Writing Strategies

February 20  Student Narrative Reports - Oral Presentations

February 22  Student Narrative Reports - Oral Presentations

February 27  Student Narrative Reports - Oral Presentations

March 1  Student Narrative Reports - Oral Presentations

March 6  Student Narrative Reports - Oral Presentations

March 8  Student Narrative Reports - Oral Presentations

March 13  Student Narrative Reports - Oral Presentations/Course Evaluation

March 15  **Group Written Field Research Narrative Reports Due**

**Thursday, March 15 at final class session : (10-12pp.)**