

**Instructor:** Kelly Patterson, Ph.D.  
Department of Urban and Regional Planning  
Office: 201E Hayes Hall  
Phone: 829-2133 x209  
Email: [klp27@ap.buffalo.edu](mailto:klp27@ap.buffalo.edu)  
Office Hours: W 2pm-4pm (or by appointment)

## Methods of Community Analysis and Management

PD 561, Spring 2004

**Qualitative research** is a multi-methods approach to the study of social interactions in natural settings. It involves the collection and analysis of empirical data from multiple sources such as *field observations*, *semi-structured and open-ended interviews*, *oral histories*, *visual records*, and *focus groups*, among others. Through **inductive methods**, the researcher attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. There will be an emphasis on various types of qualitative information, methods of data collection and analysis, presentation of research results, and appropriateness of qualitative design for specific research topics. In addition, this semester's course will also include an emphasis on quantitative data analysis utilizing the **U.S. Census** and other datasets of interest to planners.

### ***Why, and what, do planners need to know about research methods---especially qualitative methods?***

As future policy analysts and agency administrators, MUP graduates will be called on to understand and use research produced by others, and may very well be called on to do research themselves. As planners in varying fields, graduates will likely use the methods that we will explore in this course. The specific aim of this course is to provide an introduction to particular methods from the point of view of the practitioner. This is learned through hands on exercises as well as through reading the research done by others. After initial lectures, this class will largely proceed through in-class and field exercises.

**Required Texts:** *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* by Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, 1995. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ISBN: 0-226-20681-5 & *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* by David L. Morgan, 1997. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, ISBN: 0-7619-0343-7. These books are available at the Medical School Bookstore on the south campus.

*There are additional required readings on the share drive in the folder marked S:\courses\PD561.S04.*

**Recommended Texts:** *Analyzing Social Settings* by John Lofland and Lyn H. Lofland, 1995. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, ISBN: 0-534-24780-6, & *Writing Up Qualitative Research* by Harry F. Wolcott, 1990. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage University Press, ISBN: 0-8039-3793-8.

### Course Requirements:

- This course uses a participatory approach to instruction. That being said I expect students to **complete all assigned readings** and **come to class each week** prepared to **discuss the readings** and **actively participate in class exercises**.
- Completion of four graded assignments (three individual assignments and one class assignment).

- One Individual Formal Presentation based on three of your research assignments
- One Informal Class Presentation of Results from the Focus Group

### Research Assignments

There are **four** required research assignments. Together these assignments make up the core of the course and **70%** of your final grade. It is important to set aside sufficient time to work on assignments and to complete them in a comprehensive and meticulous manner. There will also be allotted class time to work on one or more of the assignments. All assignments are due **at the beginning** of the scheduled class period on the due date specified. **No late** assignments will be accepted. On **April 20<sup>th</sup>** you will present your findings from the three individual assignments. The presentation will be worth **20%** of your participation grade.

**Assignment One:** Census Profile

**Assignment Two:** Neighborhood Scan

**Assignment Three:** Neighborhood Ethnography

**Assignment Four:** Focus Group

### Grading and Evaluation

All requirements are scored on a 100 point scale and then weighted according to the proportion of the grade: Average of four assignments (70%), participation (20% for formal presentation, 10% class participation)

*The conversion of points to grades is as follows:*

| <u>Points</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|---------------|--------------|
| 95-100        | A            |
| 90-94.99      | A-           |
| 87-89.99      | B+           |
| 84-86.99      | B            |
| 80-83.99      | B-           |
| 77-79.99      | C+           |
| 70-76.99      | C            |
| 60-69.99      | D            |
| <60           | F            |

**In regard to Academic Integrity...** I uphold the policies of the university with respect to academic integrity. They read, in part, *“The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect for others’ academic endeavors. By placing their name on academic work, students certify the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments.”* **In other words, don’t cheat and don’t plagiarize.** The university’s statement on academic integrity is available online at <http://www.ub-judiciary.buffalo.edu/art3a.shtml>. Please contact me if you have any questions about the meaning and exercise of academic integrity policies.

**About Disabilities**...If you have a disability (physical, learning, or psychological) that may make it difficult for you to carry out the course work as outlined and/or requires accommodations, such as recruiting note-takers, readers, or extended time on assignments, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 25 Capen Hall, (716) 645-2608. ODS will provide you with information and review appropriate arrangements for reasonable accommodation. *Let me know of any special arrangements within the first two weeks of class.*

## Course Outline

### **January 13.....Introduction and Overview of the Course**

Introductions of Students, SPSS tutorial, Handouts

### **January 20.....The Structure of the U.S. Census**

Topics: Important Census Categories for Planners  
Factfinder vs. SPSS

Read, "The Census and the New Nation: Apportionment Congress and the Progress of the United States" by Margo Anderson (on share drive).

### **January 27.....Demographic Profile/Economic Profile**

Topics: What is a demographic profile?  
State and County Quickfacts

Read, "Using Census Data for Local Portraits" and "Data Available for Local Area Analysis" by Dowell Myers (on share drive).

**Hand Out Assignment One**

### **February 3.....The Use of Other Datasets of Interest to Planners**

Topics: ICPSR and Access to Data  
Data Manipulation, Transformation, and Analysis in SPSS  
Using Datasets Security by Design and Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality

### **February 10.....Introduction to Qualitative Methods**

Topics: Qualitative vs. Quantitative which is Appropriate?  
Starting Where You Are  
Evaluating Research Sites  
Field Observation  
Read, "Qualitative Procedures" by John Creswell (on share drive).

**Hand out Assignment Two**

*Assignment One Due at the beginning of class*

### **February 17.....Getting In and Getting Along**

**Part One** Topics: The Known and Unknown Investigator, the Participant Observer, and the Outsider Researcher Role, Gatekeepers and Informants

Read, "Doing Participant Observation" by James Spradley, and "The Methodology of Participant Observation" by Danny Jorgensen (on share drive).

### **How to Protect Human Subjects**

**Part Two** Topics: Ethics, Writing a Research Protocol, the Necessity of the Informed Consent Form, and the Role and Responsibility of the Institutional Review Board

### **February 24.....Writing Fieldnotes (Guest Speaker)**

Topics: Data Logging, Jottings and Full Fieldnotes, Field Exercises

Read, Chapters 1 through 4 in, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* by Emerson, Fretz & Shaw

**Assignment Two Due at the Beginning of Class**

### **March 2.....In-Depth Interviews**

Topics: In-Depth Interviews and Techniques, Interview Guides, and Transcription

Read, "Preparation for Interviewing" by Robert Weiss (on share drive).

**Hand Out and Discuss Assignment Three**

### **March 9.....Analyzing Data From Other Methods**

**Part One** Topics: Coding, Memoing and Diagramming

Read, Chapters 5 and 6 in, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* by Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw

### **Writing Up Qualitative Research**

**Part Two** Topics: Choosing Labels Carefully, Do Not Seek Perfection, Let the Ego Drain Out

Read, Chapter 7 and 8 in, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* by Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw

### **March 16.....No Class, Spring Break ☺**

### **March 23.....Focus Groups**

Topics: The Use and Design of Focus Groups, Analyzing Findings and Reporting Results

Read, Chapters 1-3 in, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* by David L. Morgan

**Handout and Discuss Assignment Four**

**Assignment Three Due at the Beginning of Class**

### **March 30.....Organizing, Preparing, and Practicing for Focus Group**

Read, Chapters 4-6 in, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* by David L. Morgan

Individual Student Meetings if Needed

**April 6**.....Conduct Focus Group (*Topic to be Announced*)

**April 13**.....Informal Presentation of Focus Group Findings  
*Hand in Focus Group Findings (Assignment Four)*

**April 20**.....Last Day of Class---Student Presentations (*Research Findings*)

*\*\*This syllabus may be modified throughout the semester.*