Field Methods in Geography – GEOG 650
Syllabus – Spring 2015

Dr. Jennifer Brewer
T Th 12:40pm - 2:00pm
Horton 215

-Course Objectives-
This course provides students with opportunities to explore a range of methods in geographic research. It focuses particularly on the collection and analysis of field data to understand human-environment relationships. It encompasses both biophysical and social dimensions, emphasizing the latter. It covers quantitative approaches, but focuses more on qualitative approaches. Covered topics include explanation, rigor, ethics, archives, secondary data, sample design, surveys, participant observation, interviews, focus groups, coding, content analysis, text analysis, discourse analysis, visual analysis, quantitative techniques, and participatory research. The class format includes interactive lectures and seminar-style discussion. Students will complete hands-on field data collection and analysis, activities that require students to demonstrate independent initiative and problem-solving.

-Readings-
I will assign readings on a weekly basis. The required text is:
Other readings will be made available on Blackboard.

-Course Topics-
I anticipate covering the following topics in roughly the order listed, though the content or sequence may change.

- Introductions
- Epistemologies and deductive logic
- Epistemologies and inductive logic
- Research design and research questions
- Literature reviews, archival sources, and secondary data
- Biophysical data
- Sampling frames and case studies
- Surveys, questionnaires
- Ethics and rigor
- Interviews and focus groups
- Participant observation
- Coding and content analysis
- Textual and discourse analysis
- Quantitative analysis
- Participatory methods
- Visual materials and analysis
- Mixed methods
- Writing up and presenting

-Class Policies-

My office hours and contacts:
My office is 102B Huddleston Hall. Enter through the Geography office on the east end of the building. Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-5 or by appointment. If your issue is time-sensitive, don’t hesitate to make an appointment, during office hours or not.

My e-mail is jennifer.brewer@unh.edu. Please begin your message subject line with “GEOG 673,” so it doesn’t get waylaid in my inbox. I often answer within a few hours, but if you don’t hear back within 48 hours, feel free to re-send.

Attendance:
I assume that you will be in class. Any absences should be explained with a legitimate and significant excuse (such as a religious holiday), as far in advance as possible. Unexcused missed classes will harm your participation grade.

Although we have a textbook, much of the essential material for understanding and completing major out-of-class exercises will be discussed only in class. You cannot rely on Blackboard for these purposes. I rarely allow make-ups of missed tests, or missed in-class assignments. Don’t ask unless you have a significant conflict or problem, and have documentation/evidence to support your request. I expect to receive any such requests as far in advance as possible. It is up to YOU to consult with your classmates on all missed material. I strongly recommend that in the first few days of class, you get to know a few people in class and exchange contact information for this purpose. On the other hand, if someone asks you for more than a couple days of notes, you can certainly refuse, unless there seem to be extenuating circumstances.

Courtesy:
If you do not intend to participate fully and actively in your own learning, and help create a supportive learning atmosphere for other students, you do not belong in this class. It is rude and unacceptable to arrive more than a minute or two late without explanation, or to leave class early without prior explanation; such behavior can be distracting to the instructor and students. The following distracting activities are not appropriate during this class and will not be tolerated: sleeping, inappropriate talking/socializing, reading non-class materials, voice or text use of digital devices such as cell phones, music players, laptops, or other distractions.

It is my job to provide you with college level educational content, not to talk aloud to myself while you check messages or surf the internet. Old fashioned pen or pencil and paper are less distracting to yourself, to me, to others, and are therefore better learning tools for our purposes. For these reasons, I do not allow use of laptops or other electronic devices during class, not
even silently for note taking -- unless you ask to sign a release that commits to sitting in the front row and using the machine only for taking notes.

I do not allow audio/video recording or taking pictures of class without my permission. In the rare event that you need to keep your cell on for some emergency purpose (such as a family health matter), let me know and put it in silent mode.

**Grading:**
Unless specified otherwise, assignments must be completed by the beginning of class and must be wordprocessed. Otherwise, late penalties will apply. If you do find yourself late on an assignment, however, it is ALWAYS better to complete it as soon as possible rather than to postpone or skip it.

For ALL academic work, including for this class, ALWAYS keep two digital backup copies, such as one on Box and one on your personal hard drive or external drive.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:
Class participation - 20%
This means active participation, not passive attendance. You should be speaking up in each class. Your comments should demonstrate engagement with the readings, and with comments from other students and the instructor. I reserve the right to schedule unannounced in-class exercises.
Short writings on readings - 35%
Field assignments, including oral presentation - 45%

**Investing in your own learning:**
If you encounter words in readings that you don’t understand, look them up in a dictionary. If you encounter words in lecture that you don’t understand, ask what they mean and/or jot them down and look them up in a dictionary. Vocabulary-building is a lifelong skill that will serve you well as a student, on the job market, and in the workplace. If you use a hard copy dictionary for this purpose, especially a large one, you can also see other words related to the one you are looking up, and other new words. This provides more context for the word you are looking up, and helps grow your vocabulary more quickly, compared to using online sources. Sometimes unfamiliar words are used just to sound smart (which is generally unhelpful), but I more often use them because they carry more precise or nuanced meaning than other possible word options.

**Note taking:**
As most UNH students know, taking notes is a basic skill for life and learning. Research shows that taking notes by hand instead of electronically improves learning outcomes. The following websites have some tips for notetaking, but most people find they have to develop their own individualized approach and style:
[http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/note_taking_skills.htm](http://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/note_taking_skills.htm)
Blackboard:
I use Blackboard to post additional readings, assignments, and grades, and to collect some out-of-class assignments. If you encounter difficulties with Blackboard, it is best to contact the IT Service Desk http://it.unh.edu/index.cfm?ID=AF65A729-D567-BF1C-C7B097B99B4D357A. They answer phones M-F 7:30am to 5:00pm at 603-862-4242. There are also online Blackboard help resources at http://it.unh.edu/index.cfm?ID=BC300798-FF56-F6B6-938B3F5D83A03E89. These folks are more familiar with the intricacies and glitches of Blackboard software than I am, and may be more immediately available.

Academic integrity:
Students in this class are bound to the university policy on academic honesty http://www.unh.edu/vpsas/handbook/academic-honesty. Violation of this policy may result in course failure. The policy applies to all assignments, including any extra credit options. I take these issues seriously and will take action when warranted. Students who have cheated, plagiarized, lied, or misrepresented the truth in my classes later wished they hadn’t.

If you have ANY questions about whether something constitutes an academic integrity violation, ASK. I view such issues through the lens of fairness and respect, considering the considerable effort put forth by most instructors and students. If you violate this policy, you lower the value of all our academic diplomas, of this university as a commons for social learning, and the larger civic merit of higher education. That is a long term social cost, not just an individual character flaw.

Equity and accessibility:
If you have a special need or disability, even a minor one, and if you desire appropriate accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services to provide me with the necessary documentation http://www.unh.edu/disabilityservices/

Students in this class are expected to conform with university policies on discrimination and harassment http://unh.edu/vpsas/handbook/affirmative-action-and-equity-policies

Unforeseen emergencies:
If some unforeseen emergency conflicts with our class meeting or exams, such as a weather event or public health or safety issue, you can expect general information to be provided by the university. In such an event, you may also receive an e-mail from me with follow-up information about any necessary rescheduling, so you’ll want to be attentive for any such e-mail communications.
Field Methods in Geography – GEOG 650
Assignments - Spring 2015

Most reading assignments require you to submit something in class, such as answers to reading questions or your reading notes. Per the syllabus, unless specified otherwise, all must be wordprocessed and ready for discussion and collection when our class meets, or late penalties will apply. Prior to the beginning of class, copies must also be submitted via Blackboard SafeAssign.

Field assignments are scheduled to allow you sufficient time for completion. I will have little patience for late assignments, and note that each is worth a substantial portion of your final class grade. PLAN AHEAD!

As always, I reserve the right to change dates or details, with adequate notice.

-Course Topics/Schedule-

Thurs 1/22
Geographic fieldwork
✓ Read the syllabus – all of it!
✓ Readings due
  o Doolittle on fieldwork
  o Raitz on fieldwork
✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.

Tues 1/27
Snow day – class cancelled

Thurs 1/29
Epistemologies
✓ Readings due
  o Montello Ch 1
  o Flowerdew Ch 2
✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.

Tues 2/3
Research design and research questions
✓ Readings due
  o Clifford Ch 1
  o Glaser Intro and Charmaz chapter on grounded theory (skip other chs)
  o Ingersolls chapter on grounded theory (skip other chs)
✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.

Thurs 2/5
Literature reviews, archival sources, and secondary data
✓ Reading due
  o Clifford Chs 2, 5, 7
✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.
✓ You will want to begin the related library assignment ahead of time, since it requires some
library time, and perhaps an appointment with a reference or archival librarian. See the assignment sheet.

✓ In direct relation to the upcoming library assignment, start thinking about a project topic. See topic assignment sheet. Be prepared to tell us your intended topic in class on 2/10.

Tues 2/10

**Sampling frames and case studies**

✓ Reading due
  - Clifford Ch 17
  - Montello Ch 9
  - Hay Ch 5

✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.
✓ Be prepared to tell us your proposed project topic.
✓ Begin doing the library assignment on lit, archives, secondary data

Thurs 2/12

**Surveys and questionnaires**

✓ Reading due
  - Clifford Ch 6
  - Hay Ch 10

✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.
✓ Be prepared to tell us your proposed project topic.
✓ Continue with the library assignment on lit, archives, secondary data

Tues 2/17

**Ethics and reflexivity**

✓ Reading due
  - Clifford Ch 3
  - Hay Ch 2
  - Montello Ch 14

✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.
✓ Library assignment on literature, archives, secondary data due today as noted above (see assignment sheet).

Thurs 2/19

**Questionnaire development**

✓ Complete assignment on Bbd. This includes reading some of your peer-reviewed sources and developing draft questionnaire items to pilot in class.

Tues 2/24

**Interviews and interpersonal dynamics**

✓ Reading due
  - Clifford Ch 8 & 12
  - Hay Ch 6

✓ Make revisions to your survey questions per your in-class pilot. At the end, add details per this week’s assignment sheet. Submit in class and via Bbd.
✓ Answer reading questions per assignment sheet and submit in class and via Bbd.
Thurs 2/26

**Coding**

- ✔ Reading due
  - ☐ Clifford Ch 27
- ✔ Answer reading questions and submit in class.

Tues 3/3

**Participant observation**

- ✔ Reading due
  - ☐ Clifford Ch 9 & Hay Ch 12
- ✔ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.
- ✔ Bring your remaining questionnaire corrections to class.

Thurs 3/5

**Survey revisions**

- ✔ Revise survey in class

Tues 3/10

**Field day**

- ✔ Get your surveys done!

Tues 3/12

**Reporting on field surveys**

- ✔ Bring hard copies of surveys and field notes to class
- ✔ Post field notes to Bbd

Thurs 3/12

**Institutions and interview planning**

- ✔ See reading & writing assignment due

Tues 3/17

**Spring break**

- ✔ Get your overdue assignments done!
- ✔ Start scheduling key informant interviews!!

Thurs 3/19

**Spring break**

Tues 3/24

**Survey data entry and project progress reports**

- ✔ Bring surveys to class

Thurs 3/26
Short case studies and interview updates
✓ See reading & writing assignment due

Tues 3/31
Field day
✓ Get your first interview done!
✓ Enter all your survey data into our formatted Excel sheet and submit via Bbd

Thurs 4/2
Content, textual and discourse analysis
✓ Reading due
  ✓ Clifford Ch 30
✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.
✓ First key informant interview due, per project assignment!

Tues 4/7
Visual analysis
✓ Readings due
  o Clifford Ch 10
✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.

Thurs 4/9
Quantitative analysis
✓ Reading TBD
✓ Second key informant interview due, or half of participant observation, per project assignment!

Tues 4/14
Visual analysis discussion
✓ Cultural analysis due, per assignment on textual/visual analysis.

Thurs 4/16
Participatory methods
✓ Reading due
  o Clifford Ch 11
✓ Answer reading questions and submit in class and via Bbd.

Tues 4/21
Field day
✓ All interviews due soon!!!

Thurs 4/23
Review final paper/presentation assignment
✓ 2nd good interview due (at least one audio recorded), plus third interview or participant observation
✓ Complete your word-for-word 20-minute transcript.
Tues 4/28
**Biophysical data collection**
- ✓ In-class exercise on net solar radiation
- ✓ Code your data and begin drafting your final paper and/or presentation.

Thurs 4/30
**Presentations**
- ✓ Review results of solar radiation exercise
- ✓ Unexcused absence on this day will count against your own presentation grade

Monday 5/11 (exam period - 1:00-3:00 pm)
**Presentations**
- ✓ Unexcused absence on this day will count against your own presentation grade
- ✓ Submit final written project summary in hard copy