

FIELD RESEARCH METHODS FOR MIGRATION STUDIES
Sociology 122A – Fall Quarter 2009

Fridays, 11:00am-1:50 pm, Seminar Room 115, Center for Comparative Immigration Studies (CCIS)
(ground floor, ERC - Eleanor Roosevelt College Academic Administration Building)

MAP TO CCIS: <http://tinyurl.com/ccismap>

Prof. David Fitzgerald

Dept. of Sociology and Associate Director, CCIS
ERC 106 and SSB 499
dfitzgerald@ucsd.edu, tel. 858-822-4447

Prof. Rafael Alarcón

Post-Doctoral Fellow, CCIS and Professor of Social Science, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte
ERC 105, ralarcon@colef.mx

Leah Muse-Orlinoff

Field Research Coordinator, CCIS, and Doctoral Student, Department of Sociology
ERC 116, lmuseorlinoff@ucsd.edu

This course is the beginning of a three-course sequence, Sociology 122A-B-C, which is designed to train students to collect data in immigrant-sending or receiving communities, give them practical experience in applying these methods, and produce substantial research reports based on the data that they collect. The full course sequence is as follows:

- *SOC 122A. Field Research Methods for Migration Studies: Seminar (4 units, Fall 2009)*
An introductory survey of methods used by social scientists to gather primary research data on international migrant and refugee populations, including sample surveys, semi-structured “life history” interviews, and ethnographic observation. Basic fieldwork practices and interviewing techniques will also be covered. Students will read intensively about the fieldwork region, the locality selected as the research site in Mexico, and other Mexican migrant-sending communities. Students participate in team field research, interviewing a sample of returned international migrants and potential migrants in the Mexican research community.
- *SOC 122B. Field Research Methods for Migration Studies: Practicum (12 units, Winter 2010)* Students will interview a “snowball sample” of migrants originating in the same community studied in Mexico who are now living primarily in the United States. They will organize the data collected in Mexico and the U.S. for statistical analysis, and submit a detailed outline of a book chapter to be based on data from the fieldwork, which will be written in the following quarter (in SOC 122C).
- *SOC 122C. Field Research Methods for Migration Studies: Data Analysis (4 units, Spring 2010)* Students will analyze primary data that they have helped to collect in the field research site and co-author a book chapter based on these data for publication. Methods for analyzing field research data and report preparation conventions will be covered. This course is required of all students who take SOC 122B.

While this sequence of courses will provide general training in field research methods and techniques for organizing and analyzing field research data, it is designed to enable students to conduct fieldwork on Mexican migration to the United States, using a specific migrant-sending community in the state of Jalisco as the fieldwork site. *Please note that, to continue in the field research program in Winter and Spring 2010, you must earn at least a B+ in the Fall Quarter segment.*

These courses form the core of the “field research track” of the *Minor in International Migration Studies* at UCSD (see <http://www.ccis-ucsd.org/Programs/underminor.htm>) but may be taken independently of the minor. However, all undergraduate students taking the field research methods sequence are strongly encouraged to declare the Minor, which requires only two additional courses.

Requirements for Sociology 122A

1. You will be expected to participate in several group projects. The class will be divided into approximately 7 “chapter groups,” each consisting of 4 students (3 from UCSD and 1 from a Mexican university) that will specialize in a subject matter area to be addressed in the book that will result from the course. The group projects will include designing standardized survey questionnaires to be administered in Mexico to returned migrants from the U.S., non-migrants in Mexico, and migrants interviewed in the U.S., as well as a guide for conducting in-depth interviews with experienced migrants to the United States. These instruments will be used to collect data during the field research in Mexico (January 2-15) and in the San Francisco Bay Area and Oklahoma City after our fieldwork in Jalisco. The standardized questions will be pre-tested by interviewing each other during the Fall Quarter.
2. There is a three-part assignment due the first week of class. Please refer to the “summer instructions” email of June 2009 for specific instructions.
3. During the fall quarter, there will be three written assignments: (a) a *reverse-engineering exercise*, in which you will take a chapter published in one of the books written by previous generations of students in this program and identify its main and subsidiary points, analyze how the argument was constructed using different types of data, and suggest how the chapter could have been improved; (b) a *literature review* in which your chapter group will summarize the major findings and debates in the existing academic literature pertaining to your group’s topic; and (c) a *mock case study*, in which you will write a fictionalized but plausible life history of a migrant related to the theme of your group’s topic. Assignments (a) and (b) will be graded on the chapter group’s collective effort; assignment (c) will be graded on an individual basis. There is no mid-term exam or final exam for this course.
4. At the end of the quarter, your chapter group will make an oral presentation to the rest of the class on your hypotheses and how you expect to test them using the evidence gathered during the fieldwork.
5. Since SOC 122A is taught as a seminar rather than a lecture course, you should come to class prepared to participate actively in seminar discussions, having done all of the required readings carefully, and thought about questions that should be discussed in class. Expect to be called on if you do not initiate your participation.
6. Due to the small size of our field research team and the complexity of the project, attendance at all class meetings (and being in the seminar room, ready to start, at 11:00AM. each Friday) is absolutely essential, both to your success in the program and to the success of the program itself. We ask that you do not schedule any conflicting activities during the academic year. Any unavoidable absence (e.g., due to medical or family problems, out-of-town job interviews) must be cleared with the instructors by e-mail in advance of the class meeting. Please arrive on time.

Grading

20% chapter group ‘reverse-engineering’ written assignment

20% chapter group ‘literature review’ written assignment

20% individual ‘mock case study’ written assignment

15% chapter group in-class presentation

25% individual class participation (including practice interviews)

Staff Contacts

Sam Bazzi, Graduate Student Researcher and MMFRP Data Analyst, sbazzi@ucsd.edu

Melanie Davidson, International Migration Minor Coordinator, mbdavidson@ucsd.edu

Shannon Goodison, Sociology Undergraduate Coordinator, sgoodison@ucsd.edu

Jonathan Hicken, CCIS Staff, jahicken@ucsd.edu

David Keyes, Graduate Student Researcher, dgkeyes@ucsd.edu

Ana Minvielle, CCIS Management Services Officer, aminvielle@ucsd.edu, (858) 822-4447

Office Hours

Office hours for Prof. Fitzgerald will be Tuesdays and Fridays from 10:00.- 11:00 AM. in ERC 106. Office hours for Leah and Prof. Alarcón will be by appointment.

Required Readings

- The following book will be mailed to you, free of charge:

Cornelius, Wayne A., David S. Fitzgerald, and Scott Borger, eds. *Four Generations of Norteños: New Research from the Cradle of Mexican Migration* (La Jolla, CA: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, UCSD, 2009).

- The following books should be purchased at the UCSD Bookstore or on-line. They are often available used at bookfinder.com or amazon.com.:
 - Booth, W., et al., *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 2003).
 - Strunk & White. *The Elements of Style*. (Longman, any edition).
- The Course Reader should be purchased at University Readers. <http://www.universityreaders.com/students> or call 800.200.3908.
- These books will be distributed to you in class, free of charge:
 - Cornelius, Wayne A., David S. Fitzgerald, Pedro Lewin Fischer, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff, eds., *Mexican Migration and the US Economic Crisis: A Transnational Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, forthcoming).
 - Cornelius, Wayne A., David S. Fitzgerald, Jorge Hernández-Díaz, and Scott Borger, eds., *Migration from the Mexican Mixteca: A Transnational Community in Oaxaca and California* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009).

READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Unit 1 (September 25): Introduction

(Reminder: please come to class having read *The Craft of Research* p.1-71 and all of *Four Generations of Norteños: New Research from the Cradle of Mexican Migration* **prior** to class.)

Small-group discussions of *Four Generations*. A rapporteur from each small group will turn in notes of its discussion.

At the end of class, you will sign up for your first and second preference for a chapter group assignment.

Unit 2 (October 2): Developing Research Questions

Cornelius, Wayne A., David S. Fitzgerald, Jorge Hernández-Díaz, and Scott Borger, eds., *Migration from the Mexican Mixteca: A Transnational Community in Oaxaca and California* (CCIS, 2009), entire.

First meetings of chapter groups (in class).

Discussion leader: David Keyes, CCIS

Discuss Tlacuitapa '10 research questions in class

Unit 3 (October 9): The Art of Formulating and Asking Survey Questions of Mexican Migrants

Floyd J. Fowler, *Improving Survey Questions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), pp. 8-45.

Massey, Douglas, and Chiara Capoferro, "Measuring Undocumented Migration," pp. 257-84 in Alejandro Portes and Josh DeWind, eds., *Rethinking Migration* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008).

Unit 4 (October 16): Quantitative Analysis

Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*. 8th Edition. (Wadsworth, 1998), Chapters 15, 16, and 17.

Discuss questionnaire items pertaining to your chapter in group meetings

"Reverse-engineering" exercise due in class (chapter group project)

Discussion leader: Sam Bazzi, Doctoral Student, Department of Economics, UCSD

Unit 5 (October 23): Qualitative Fieldwork and Gaining Access

Cornelius, Wayne A., David S. Fitzgerald, and Pedro Lewin Fischer, eds., *Mayan Journeys: The New Migration from Jalisco to the United States* (CCIS, 2007), entire.

Elizabeth Francis, "Qualitative Research: Collecting Life Histories," in Stephen Devereux and John Hiddinott, eds., *Fieldwork in Developing Countries* (Boulder, Col.: Lynne Rienner, 1993), pp. 86-101.

Discuss first draft of Tlacuitapa '10 survey questionnaire in class

Unit 6 (October 30): The Social Process and Ethics of Doing Fieldwork

Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), chap. 10 (pp. 263-87).

Carol A. Bailey, *A Guide to Qualitative Field research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press/Sage Publications, 2007), pp. 95-111.

Guest discussant: David Pedersen, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, UCSD.

Discuss second draft of Tlacuitapa '10 survey questionnaire in class.

Unit 7 (November 6): History of Mexican Migration to the United States

Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration* (New York: Russell Sage, 2002), pp. 24-141.

Practice applying revised survey questionnaire in class.

Chapter group literature review due in class.

Unit 8 (November 13): Emigration, Politic, and Culture in Los Altos de Jalisco

Alarcón, Rafael. Transnational Communities, Economic Development, and the Future of Mexican Immigration." *Berkeley Planning Journal* 10 (1995): 36-54.

Practice applying revised survey questionnaire in class.

Discussion leader: Rafael Alarcón, Professor of Social Science, EL COLEF

Unit 9 (November 16-20): Joint Training with Colegas de México

Students will conduct practice interviews with each other; discuss possible revisions to the questionnaires; receive a briefing on current social, economic, and political conditions in Jalisco; discuss logistics and procedures to be used for the fieldwork in Tlacuitapa; and our colleagues from México will make short presentations on their own research. Plan to attend as many of these joint training sessions as possible during the week—not just the regular Thursday class meeting period. Training sessions will run from 10:00 am-3:30pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, with buffet lunch served from 12:00-2:00 pm. *This is critical training. Please put this on your calendar now.*

November 27: NO CLASS -- THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Unit 10 (December 4): Student Presentations on Chapter Themes

Chapter groups will orally present the primary questions their group is going to ask, their preliminary hypotheses, and the kinds of survey and qualitative evidence they will collect in Tlacuitapa, Union City, and Oklahoma City to answer their questions.

*Individual "mock case study" due on **Friday, Dec. 11** (submit electronically to Fitzgerald, Alarcón, and Muse-Orlinoff; no class meeting)*