Practicum Analysis Seminar: Syllabus
School of Education and Social Policy
Northwestern University
Spring Quarter 2004

Friday 9:00 am – 11:50am
(includes 5 minute break)

Course website: TBA

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Office hours: by appointment (Annenberg #212)

Goals of this course:

1) To give you the tools with which to study, analyze and interpret organizational settings.
2) To train you to draw conclusions from your data and write them up in the form of a clear, concise and scientifically valid research paper.
3) To give you a structured environment in which you can apply your theoretical background to a practical organizational setting.

Your grade will be determined by the following:
Seminar Participation (attendance mandatory) 30 %
Fieldnotes and other assignments 30 %
Expert Interviews 15 %
Final Paper 25 %

Beyond percentages, I am looking for your being able to integrate and apply what you have learned from your peers, the readings, and the class sessions. I encourage you not to think about how many percentage points each assignment or comment will get you, but rather to be actively engaged in the material of the course. That said, your grade for this seminar counts for 4 units, thus quadrupling the impact of this course on your overall GPA.

The seminar participation component of your grade will be based on attendance, promptness, the completion of non-graded assignments and most importantly your participation in the course. Without dropping out any of your fellow peers, I would encourage each student to speak up as much as possible. If you are not very good at speaking out loud, there may also be an online discussion forum where you can discuss the issues. The course should be a discussion between all of us, not a lecture from me.

I encourage you not to get behind with your fieldnotes. It is much easier to work on them for 45 minutes each day when you get home than to wait until Thursday evenings to type up a week’s worth. It doesn’t work, and this will inevitably be visible in the poor quality of your notes. Late assignments will be docked one grade for each additional day required to complete the assignment unless an acceptable & verifiable excuse (illness, etc.) can be provided. Fieldnotes will be due by 7am on Friday morning (please add “385” somewhere in your subject line).

We will be reading:

+ other books / articles that come to mind as we progress through the quarter. If you have something you think would be useful, let me know and I will get it photocopied.
**Syllabus**

**Week 1 - April 2** INTRODUCTION

*Assignments Due*
- Submit fieldnotes electronically by 7am Friday mornings.
- List as many expectation violations as you can from your first couple of days.

*Session Detail*
- Syllabus Review
  - Rescheduling April 14th and May 14th
- Personal Introductions
- Discussion:
  - Where is the value in this course?
  - What is the end product?
- Brief outline of expectations for fieldnotes.

**Week 2 – April 9** FIELD SITE/ FIELDNOTES

*Assignments Due*
- Submit fieldnotes electronically before class & 3 first impressions about your site.
- Come to class with your own opinions about the readings and your fieldnotes.

*Session Detail*
- In-depth look at writing fieldnotes. Why do we do it? What is a good field note? What is the end goal?
- Taking fieldnotes as an active participant.
- Discussion: Becker & issues about fieldnotes.

**Week 3 – April 14 (RESCHEDULE)** COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA: INTERVIEWING & ETHICS

*Assignments Due*
- Critique of peer fieldnotes
- Fieldnotes from week

*Session Detail*
- Ethics (Confidentiality & Anonymity)
- Interviewing detail, interview protocols.
- Triangulation
- Discussion: Spradley, Interviewing, Ethics, & pulling together other data sources.

**Week 4 – April 23** FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS

*Assignments Due*
- Fieldnotes from week.
- Condense your fieldnotes to date into a 1 page summary. Focus on 5 things. Be able to show how you arrived at them from your fieldnotes.

*Session Detail*
- Discussion:
  - Getting different types of data
  - Integrating data into a coherent question
  - What do you need to be able to thoroughly investigate your topic of interest?
Week 5 - April 30 ANALYSIS AND CODING DATA

Assignments Due
- Expert Interview #1 (Internal or External)
- Fieldnotes from week

Session Detail
- Analyzing & Coding fieldnotes: How to do it.
- TAMS software: MacOS X only: use labs on 3rd Floor.
- Discussion: Becker, working with codes, writing a paper proposal, interview experience.

Week 6 - May 7 FILLING THE GAPS

Assignments Due
- Coding scheme
- Paper Proposal (5 pages)
- Fieldnotes from week

Session Detail
- Emerging themes: What data do I have, what data do I need?
- Work on conceptual map: partner feedback
- Discussion: Feelings about the paper? Worries? Where are you most weak?

Week 7 - May 14 (RESCHEDULE) BUILDING THEORIES

Assignments Due
- Chapter 5: Logic. In Tricks of the Trade. How to think about your research while you’re doing it (pp. 146-214). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fieldnotes from week
- Critique of each other’s proposals.

Session Detail
- Problems in designing, conducting & analysis of qualitative data
- Discussion: Becker, Logic
  - Paper Proposals

Week 8 - May 21 TURNING FIELDNOTES INTO A COHERENT PAPER

Assignments Due
- Paper draft (recommended)
- Fieldnotes from week

Session Detail
- Building a conceptual map
- Discussion: Lingering issues
Week 9 - May 28 TURNING THE DRAFT INTO THE FINAL

Assignments Due
- Presentation of Conceptual Map
- Expert Interview #2 (Internal or External)
- Fieldnotes from week
- Readings TBA

Session Detail
- How to make an effective presentation.
- Discussion:
  - Draft paper reviews
  - Importance of telling ‘stories’
  - Expert Internal v. External Interview comparisons

Week 10 - June 4 CONCLUDING THE EXPERIENCE

Assignments Due
- Final student project presentations

Session Detail
- Presentations
- Wrap-up, leaving the field.
- Discussion: Writing the final paper

June 8 Final papers due by 5pm