

## **Urban Studies 921: Research Methods in Urban Studies Fall 2023**

Instructor: Joel Rast

Mondays, 4:30-7:10 pm  
Location: Bolton Hall, Room 702

Office: Bolton Hall 626  
Office Hours: Wed. 2:00-3:30  
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### **Course Overview**

This course provides an introduction to the research methods that are most often used in the field of urban studies. All of you have undoubtedly engaged in some form of research at some point during your academic and professional lives. However, you may not always have been conscious or deliberate in your choice and use of research methods. There are a variety of methods that are useful and appropriate for conducting urban research. None is intrinsically better or worse than any other. Rather, the methodology (or methodologies) you use depends on the question you are asking. Some questions are best answered through qualitative research such as interviews or historical investigation. Other questions are better addressed through quantitative research techniques like regression analysis. This course will focus principally on qualitative research techniques. It is designed to help you think more deliberately and scientifically about your methodological approaches as you design and carry out social research.

### **Course Requirements**

**Class Participation:** Weekly class sessions for this course will include discussions of the assigned reading material. Therefore, it is essential that you come to class each week well prepared. This means, obviously, that you *must* do the reading beforehand. Informed discussion of the material is one of the most important components of this class. Your participation in the class will be facilitated in two principal ways:

- ***Presentations of readings:*** Students will share responsibilities for presenting the readings each week. Presentations should consist of a brief (5-7 minute) overview of the reading and consider in particular methodological issues or questions raised by the reading.
- ***Reaction pieces:*** For each reading (excluding the text), students should write a paragraph containing comments or questions that can be used as a basis for contributing to class discussions. You should pay particular attention to methodological issues, themes, or questions which are raised by the readings. Reaction pieces may include a brief summary of the reading, but they should focus principally on *reacting* to the material rather than summarizing it. Reaction pieces should be between 1 and 2 pages (single-spaced) in length. They should be uploaded to the assignments section of the course Canvas website no later than the beginning of each class session.

**Research Proposal:** The final project for this course is a paper based on original research using one or more of the research methods covered in the course. To facilitate the research and writing of this paper, you will be asked to prepare an 8-10 page (double-spaced) research proposal, due **Monday, November 6**. The proposal will identify a research question that interests you and describe in detail both how you intend to investigate this question and why it is worth exploring. I will provide additional guidelines for the research proposal early in the semester. All proposal topics must be approved in advance by me. Once you have selected a topic please schedule a meeting with me so that we can discuss it.

**Research Paper:** The research proposal will serve as your framework and guide for preparing a 12-15 page (double-spaced) research paper. I will provide additional guidelines for the paper later in the semester. Papers will be due **Monday, December 18, 4:30 pm**.

Each of the above components will account for the following proportions of your final grade:

- Research Proposal            30 %
- Research Paper                40 %
- Reaction Pieces                20 %
- Class Participation            10 %

### **Required Books:**

- Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, third edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. [ISBN 9780226458083; \$13.00 new] Any edition of this book is fine.

Full text versions of the additional readings are posted on the course Canvas site.

**Submission of assignments:** We will operate with a paperless environment in this class. All assignments will be submitted through the assignments page of the course Canvas site. No hard copies of assignments will be accepted.

**Attendance policy and Covid-19:** While vaccines have reduced the risk of serious illness from Covid-19 considerably, it makes sense to do our best to try to minimize transmission in our class. You should not attend class if you have Covid symptoms (sore throat, cough, fever) or have tested positive for Covid within the past five days. If you have tested positive, you should not come to class until you have a negative test. Please let me know if you have to miss class and I will work with you individually to make sure you don't get too far behind.

Please get tested as soon as possible if you develop Covid symptoms. Information about testing and other UWM Covid-related services and resources can be found here:

<https://uwm.edu/coronavirus/>. Be sure to seek medical attention if your symptoms become worrisome.

## **Class Schedule**

September 11: Course Overview; Introduction to Urban Inquiry

- No reading assignment.

### September 18: Paradigms

- Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (entire book).

### September 25: Social Theory

- Clarence Stone, Marion Orr, and David Imbroscio, "The Reshaping of Urban Leadership in US Cities." In M. Gottdiener and C. Pickvance, eds., *Urban Life in Transition*. London: Sage, 1991.
- Richard DeLeon, "The Urban Antiregime: Progressive Politics in San Francisco." *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 27: 555-579, 1992.
- Stephen J. McGovern, "Mobilization on the Waterfront: The Ideological/Cultural Roots of Potential Regime Change in Philadelphia." *Urban Affairs Review* 44: 663-694, 2009.
- Richard Gendron, "Forging Collective Capacity for Urban Redevelopment: 'Power to,' 'Power Over,' or Both?" *City & Community* 5: 5-22, 2006.

### October 2: Research Design

- Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, chapter 4.
- Daniel Immergluck, "Progress Confined: Increases in Black Home Buying and the Persistence of Residential Segregation." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 20: 443-457, 1998.
- Christopher E. Plano et al. "Considering Public Transit: New Insights into Job and Healthy Food Access for Low-Income Residents in Baltimore, Maryland." *Environmental Justice* 8: 65-71, 2015.
- Richard C. Ocejo, "The Creative Class Gets Political: Gentrifier Politics in Small City America." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 41: 1167-1182, 2019.
- Eran Razin and Mark Rosentraub, "Are Fragmentation and Sprawl Interlinked? North American Evidence." *Urban Affairs Review* 35: 821-836, 2000.

### October 9: Literature Review

For this class, students should select 5-6 journal articles, read them, and write a short literature review of 3-4 pages (double-spaced) based on these readings which will be due at the beginning of class. This class session will be structured as follows:

- We'll break out into two separate groups.
- We'll then take roughly 20 minutes for everyone to read the literature reviews of their fellow group members.
- Then each group will spend 15 minutes or so discussing each literature review individually.
  - Each student will take a few minutes to present their literature review.
  - Then fellow group members will have a chance to comment.
- **Note:** Please email a copy of your literature review to your fellow group members prior to the start of class.

### October 16: Measurement

- Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, chapter 5.
- Nathalie P. Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement, "The Socioeconomic Change of Chicago's Community Areas (1970-2010)." University of Illinois at Chicago, 2014.
- Spencer Cowan, William Rohe, and Esmail Baku, "Factors Influencing the Performance of Community Development Corporations." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 21: 325-340, 1999.

- Quynh C. Nguyen et al., “Leveraging Geotagged Twitter Data to Examine Neighborhood Happiness, Diet, and Physical Activity.” *Applied Geography* 73: 77-88, 2016.
- Mark Tranel and Larry B. Handlin, Jr., “Metromorphosis: Documenting Change.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 28: 151-167, 2006.

#### October 23: Field Research

- Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, third edition, chapters 7-8. London: Sage, 2012.
- Jackelyn Hwang, “The Social Construction of a Gentrifying Neighborhood: Reifying and Redefining Identity and Boundaries in Inequality.” *Urban Affairs Review* 52: 98-128, 2016.
- Sean M. Crotty, “Strategic Visibility and the Production of Day-Labor Spaces: A Case Study from the San Diego Metropolitan Area.” *Urban Affairs Review* 54: 593-631, 2018.
- Sharon Cornelissen, “‘Remember, This is Brightmoor’: Historical Violence, Neighborhood Experiences, and the Hysteresis of Street Life.” *Urban Affairs Review* 58: 832-860, 2022.

#### October 30: Qualitative Data Analysis

- Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, third edition, chapter 12. London: Sage, 2012.
- Melissa Poulsen et al. “Growing an Urban Oasis: A Qualitative Study of the Perceived Benefits of Community Gardening in Baltimore, Maryland.” *Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment* 36: 69-82, 2014.
- Amy Lubitow, Bryan Zinschlag, and Nathan Rochester, “Plans for Pavement or for People: The Politics of Bike Lanes on the ‘Pasdo Boricua’ in Chicago, Illinois.” *Urban Studies* 53: 2637-2653, 2016.
- Joanna Lucio, Laura Hand, and Flavio Marsiglia, “Designing Hope: Rationales of Mixed-Income Housing Policy.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 36: 891-904, 2014.

#### November 6: Library Research Workshop (meet in Library Classroom A)

Research proposals due. No reading assignment.

#### November 13: Community-Based Participatory Research

- Peter Park, “What is Participatory Research? A Theoretical and Methodological Perspective.” In Peter Park, Mary Brydon-Miller, Budd Hall, and Ted Jackson, eds., *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1993.
- Erualdo Romero Gonzalez, et al., “Participatory Action Research for Environmental Health: Encountering Freire in the Urban Barrio.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 29: 77-100, 2007.
- Will Damon et al., “Community-Based Participatory Research in a Heavily Researched Inner City Neighbourhood: Perspectives of People Who Use Drugs on their Experiences as Peer Researchers.” *Social Science & Medicine* 176: 85-92, 2017.
- Patricia Maguire, “Challenges, Contradictions, and Celebrations: Attempting Participatory Research as a Doctoral Student.” In Peter Park, Mary Brydon-Miller, Budd Hall, and Ted Jackson, eds., *Voices of Change: Participatory Research in the United States and Canada*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1993.

#### November 20: Unobtrusive Research

- Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, chapter 11.
- Joy Leopold and Myrtle P. Bell, “News Media and the Racialization of Protest: An Analysis of Black Lives Matter Articles.” *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* 36: 720-735, 2017.

- Hannah Wheeler and Courtney Quinn, “Can Facebook Aid Sustainability? An Investigation of Empathy Expression within the Humans of New York Blog.” *Sustainability*, June 2017.
- Marc V. Levine, “The State of Milwaukee in National Perspective: Racial Inequality in the Nation’s 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas.” UWM Center for Economic Development, 2020.
- Joel Rast, “How Policy Paradigms Change: Lessons from Chicago’s Urban Renewal Program.” In Richardson Dilworth and Timothy P. R. Weaver, eds., *How Ideas Shape Urban Political Development*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

#### November 27: Case Studies; Comparative Case Studies

- Randy Stoecker, “Evaluating and Rethinking the Case Study.” *The Sociological Review* 39: 88-112, 1991.
- Richard Lloyd, “Neo-Bohemia: Art and Neighborhood Redevelopment in Chicago.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24: 517-532, 2002.
- Nufar Avni and Raphaël Fischler, “Social and Environmental Justice in Waterfront Redevelopment: The Anacostia River, Washington, D.C.” *Urban Affairs Review* 56: 1779-1810, 2020.
- David Reingold, “The Decentralization of Manufacturing Employment and the Role of Race: The Case of the Lakeside Press.” *Journal of Urban Affairs* 23: 191-209, 2001.
- Kevin J. Delaney and Rick Eckstein, “Urban Power Structures and Publicly Financed Stadiums.” *Sociological Forum* 22: 331-353, 2007.

#### December 4: Research Week

There will be no regular class session this week but I will be available for individual research consultations during the normal class time.

#### December 11: Research Presentations

Class presentations of research papers. No reading assignment.

**Final papers due Monday, December 18, 4:30 pm.**