

YUVA JANAAGRAHA
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SCIENCE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS:
APPLICATIONS IN DEMOCRACY
February, 2008

SYLLABUS

Course Information

Day, time, place: Saturdays, 2-4 pm beginning February 9, 2008, MES College
Instructor(s): Beth Gingold, Kritika Vishwanath, Shruti Veenam
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Office hours: As needed. Contact Beth.

Reading Materials

No required textbook. Research occurs outside the textbook.

Course Description

This course will introduce students to social science qualitative research methods in the context of the need to understand urban issues and the importance of local government and citizen participation in improving the quality of life in urban areas. Emphasis will be placed on the need to understand the views and experiences of multiple stakeholders in a democratic context. Through designing and carrying out a qualitative research project related to urban governance, students will improve their own knowledge of research methodology and governance issues, as well as contribute to Janaagraha's knowledge base.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course students will:

- Gain an understanding of the nature of urban issues and be able to identify multiple stakeholders involved.
- Gain an improved understanding of and interest in the importance of participation in local government.
- Understand the motivation for conducting qualitative research in the context of Janaagraha's work.
- Be able to apply qualitative research methods and analysis tools to a research project related to local governance and/or participation.
- Be able to communicate their new understanding of civic issues and local government to their peers.

Course structure

The course will consist of two major elements: a learning component and an action component. The learning component will address urban issues, local government, and research methods, and consist of both lecture style presentations and interactive discussions. The action component will consist of carrying out and presenting a qualitative research project that relates to urban issues, local government, and participation.

Each session will last 2 hours and will meet once per week over the course of 8 weeks, except as listed on the course schedule. When class does not meet, it is expected that students will use the time allotted to work as a team on given assignments.

Requirements

Each requirement will be further detailed. The basic requirements for the course are:

1. Team research project: Each team of 5-6 students will produce a 20-30 page type-written report responding to a project identified in conjunction with Yuva Janaagraha. Students will retain a hard copy. Subject to review for quality, student reports will be included on Yuva Janaagraha website.
2. Team presentations: The students must participate in showcasing their work to other students. During the final class, each team must create a presentation detailing findings to peers (15 min presentation, 5 min questions)
3. Assignments: During the course, assignments will include preliminary work such as topic choice and preparation of report templates and preliminary drafts of report sections. All assignments will be directly related to the final research project.
4. Participation: All students will be expected to attend all sessions and participate in discussions and team exercises.

Course Schedule

Feb 9 Week 1: Introduction to the Course: Urban Issues, Local Government, and Research

- 1) Pre-questionnaire and introduction to Janaagraha
- 2) Discussion of research
- 3) Discussion of urban issues, including democratic context and multiple stakeholders.
- 4) Motivation for carrying out qualitative research
- 5) Objectives of the course/go over syllabus

Feb 16 Please support your classmates and attend Mock City Council finals!

NO CLASS – Get excited about qualitative research and think about topics of interest.

Feb 23 Week 2 Big Picture: Introduction to Social Science Research

- 1) Introduction to Research
 - Ethics
 - Choosing a Topic and Formulating a Hypothesis
 - Structure of a Research Paper
 - Introduction to Literature Review, Research Methods and Analysis
- 2) Detailed instructions for research project and plan for moving forward

March 1 Week 3 Qualitative Research Methods

DUE at end of class: Topic choice

- 1) Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods
 - Survey design
 - Sampling and bias
 - 2) Break into teams and choose a topic
- HOMEWORK: Find 3 articles for your literature review.

March 8 Week 4: Project Planning

DUE at end of class: Completed Report Template

- 1) Research methodology planning (1 ½ hr)
- 2) Research plan and topic presentations (5 min) which include:
 - a) What is the topic?
 - b) Why was it chosen?
 - c) What data will be collected and how?

March 15 Week 5: Data Collection

NO CLASS—time reserved for carrying out data collection and literature review.

March 22 Week 6: Discussion

DUE: Literature Review and Preliminary Data Collection Report

- 1) Discussion of experiences in collecting data/limitations
- 2) Data Analysis Presentation

March 29 Week 7: Report Writing

DUE: Partial submission (at least summary of methodology, preliminary analysis)

NO CLASS—time reserved for preparing report and presentation

April 5 Week 8: Presentations and Report Submission

DUE: Report, Presentation

- 1) Each team submits final report.
- 2) Team Presentations and feedback
- 3) Post-questionnaire and feedback form

April 12 Week 9: Optional Re-submission
Students may resubmit report based on feedback.

Assignment Due Dates

March 1 Week 3: Topic choice

March 8 Week 4: Completed Report Template

March 22 Week 6: Literature Review and Preliminary Data Collection Report

March 29 Week 7: Partial submission

April 5 Week 8: Report and presentation

April 12 Week 9: Revised Report Submission

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance will be taken and is mandatory. Any unexcused absence will be reflected in a reduction in the participation grade.

Academic dishonesty

Any paper that is found to be plagiarized in any part will automatically earn a zero. We might not catch it, but in any case it is not worth compromising your personal integrity to earn a better grade. Particularly not in this course. Just don't cheat.

Marking

Just do a good job and learn something. But if you must know:

Team project (50%) – Primarily based on whether fulfills all criteria described in guidelines. A paper that fulfills all minimum criteria well will receive average marks. The only way to receive highest marks is to fulfill the criteria exceptionally and/or go above and beyond the minimum requirements.

Team presentation (30%) – Based on organization, content, subject knowledge (ability to answer questions etc), and speaking quality.

Assignments (10%) – Graded for completion, not quality. However quality will contribute to your final paper.

Participation (10%) – Discretionary: combination of attendance, participation in assignments and team activities, and participation in class discussions.

Available Support

If you have any questions or concerns or want additional help/feedback on your work please contact Beth beth@janaagraha.org 9972652290.

Certification

Upon satisfactory completion of course, students will receive a certificate from Yuva Janaagraha.

Taking it Further

Following the course, interested students will be encouraged to consider volunteering with Janaagraha in the area of research.