

FIELD RESEARCH METHODS FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

Sociology 122A – Fall Quarter 2010

Thursdays, 2-4:45 pm, Seminar Room 115,
Center for Comparative Immigration Studies (CCIS)
(ground floor, ERC - Eleanor Roosevelt College Academic Administration Building)
MAP TO CCIS: <http://ccis.ucsd.edu/about/directions/>

Prof. David FitzGerald

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

Prof. Jorge Hernández Díaz

Professor of Sociology, Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca
jorgehd00@yahoo.com.mx

David Keyes

Field Research Coordinator, CCIS, and Doctoral Student, Department of Anthropology
ERC 116; dgkeyes@ucsd.edu; 858-945-6175

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 2010)

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 2011)

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 2011)

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 Oaxaca as the fieldwork site. Please note that, to continue in the field research program in Winter and Spring 2011, you must earn at least a B+ in the Fall Quarter segment and the consent of the instructor to continue.

These courses form the core of the “field research track” of the Minor in International Migration Studies at UCSD (see <http://roosevelt.ucsd.edu/int-migrat-studies/index.html>) 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 6 “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 Oaxaca (January 3-16) and in San Diego County after our fieldwork in Oaxaca. This will be the second time the MMFRP has surveyed the Oaxacan town of San Miguel Tlacotepec, hence this year’s informal program title “Oaxaca II.” The standardized questions will be pre-tested by interviewing each other during the Fall Quarter.
2. There is a two-part assignment due the first week of class. Please refer to the “summer instructions” email of September 2010 for specific instructions.
3. 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 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 or final**

4. At the end of the quarter, your chapter group will make an oral presentation to the rest of the class on your research questions, 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 2pm each Thursday) 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 instructor 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

- Ana Minvielle, CCIS Management Services Officer, aminvielle@ucsd.edu, (858) 822-4447
- Geoffrey Fojtasek, Graduate Student Researcher and Data Analyst, gfojtase@ucsd.edu
- Shannon Goodison, Sociology Undergraduate Coordinator, sgoodison@ucsd.edu
- Melanie Davidson, International Migration Minor Coordinator, mbdavidson@ucsd.edu
- Melissa Calderon will be filling in as IMS minor advisor Melanie’s maternity leave (10/15/10-3/21/11). macalderon@ucsd.edu

Office Hours

Office hours for Prof. FitzGerald will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00.- 11:00 AM. in ERC 106. Office hours for David Keyes will be by appointment.

Required Readings

The following books should be purchased at the UCSD Bookstore or on-line. They are often available used at bookfinder.com or amazon.com:

1. Booth, W., et al., *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 2003).

2. Strunk & White. *The Elements of Style*. (Longman, any edition).
3. 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 free of charge:

- FitzGerald, David Scott; Rafael Alarcón Acosta, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff. *Recession Without Borders: Mexican Migrants Confront the Economic Downturn*. La Jolla, CA and Boulder, CO: CCIS and Lynne Rienner Publishers. Forthcoming.
- 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, 2010).
- Cornelius, Wayne A., David S. FitzGerald, Jorge Hernández-Díaz, and Scott Berger, eds., *Migration from the Mexican Mixteca: A Transnational Community in Oaxaca and California* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009).

READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 0 (September 23): Introduction

(Reminder: please come to class having read *The Craft of Research* p.1-71 and all of *Migration from the Mexican Mixteca: A Transnational Community in Oaxaca and California* prior to class. Turn in your **1-page proposal with a research question** that you would like to study in the MMFRP.)

Small-group discussions of *Migration from the Mexican Mixteca*. 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.

Week 1 (September 30): Developing Research Questions

READ *Mexican Migration and the US Economic Crisis: A Transnational Perspective*, entire.

First meetings of chapter groups. Discuss Oaxaca II research questions (in class).

Discussion leader: David Keyes, CCIS

Week 2 (October 7): The Art of Formulating and Asking Survey Questions of Mexican Migrants

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

READ: 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).

Presentation on International Migration minor at 3pm by Melanie Davidson, ERC Senior Academic Counselor.

Week 3 (October 14): Quantitative Analysis

READ: 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: Geoffrey Fojtasek, Doctoral Student, Department of Sociology, UCSD

Week 4 (October 21): Qualitative Fieldwork and Gaining Access

READ: FitzGerald, David Scott; Rafael Alarcón Acosta, and Leah Muse-Orlinoff. *Recession Without Borders: Mexican Migrants Confront the Economic Downturn*. La Jolla, CA and Boulder, CO: CCIS and Lynne Rienner Publishers. Forthcoming, entire.

READ: 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 Oaxaca II survey questionnaire in class

Week 5 (October 28): History of Mexican Migration to the United States

READ: 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.

Guest discussant Rafael Alarcón, Professor of Social Sciences, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte.

Week 6 (November 4): Mixtec Migration to the United States

READ: López, Felipe H., and David Runsten, "Mixtecs and Zapotecs Working in California," in Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera Salgado, eds., *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States* (La Jolla, CA: CCIS, 2004), pp. 249-78.

Martínez, Konane, et al. "Salir adelante: Recent Mexican Immigrants in San Diego County," in Richard Kiy and Christopher Woodruff, eds., *The Ties That Bind: Mexican Migrants in San Diego County* (La Jolla, CA: CCIS, 2005), pp. 63-96.

Velasco Ortiz, Laura, *Mixtec Transnational Identity* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2005), pp.28-39, 50-62, 67-81.

Guest discussant: Laura Velasco Ortiz, Professor of Cultural Studies, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte

Chapter group literature review due in class.

Week 7 (November 8-12): Joint Training with Colegas de Oaxaca

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 Oaxaca; discuss logistics and procedures to be used for the fieldwork in Oaxaca; and our colleagues from Oaxaca will make short presentations on their own research. Plan to attend as many of these joint training sessions as possible during the week. Training sessions will run from 10:00 am-3:30 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, with buffet lunch served from 12:00-2:00 pm. Gaspar Rivera Salgado, a Project Director at the UCLA Labor Center, will speak Friday at 12:00 pm. This is a critical training week. Please put this on your calendar now. There is NO CLASS on Thursday, Nov. 11, for the Veteran's Day holiday. This is free time to visit informally with our colegas.

Week 8 (November 18): The Social Process and Ethics of Doing Fieldwork

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

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

Discuss second draft of Oaxaca II survey questionnaire in class.

Guest discussant Nancy Postero, Associate Professor of Anthropology, UCSD.

Week 9: (November 25): NO CLASS -- THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 10 (December 2): 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 Oaxaca and San Diego County to answer their questions.

FINALS WEEK (December 10)

Individual "mock case study" due on Friday, Dec. 10 (submit electronically to FitzGerald and Keyes; no class meeting)