

SCHOOL OF URBAN + REGIONAL PLANNING
RYERSON UNIVERSITY
PLG 600 – PLANNING RESEARCH DESIGN
COURSE SYLLABUS
WINTER 2008

Course Director:

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 13-15h

Teaching Assistant:

TBA (TA information will
be posted on Blackboard)

Course Time & Location: *Tutorial* Mon 14-15h KHS 251 & *Lecture* Wed 10-12h KHS 239

LEARNING

Calendar Description

This final course in the research methods sequence builds on the use and application of statistical techniques in combination with other research methods used by planners. The course will explore in detail the research design process, emphasising the selection of research methods and instruments appropriate to research questions typically investigated within an applied planning context. Students will experiment with a range of analytical methods from *both* qualitative and quantitative perspectives, and a variety of instruments including surveys, case studies, action research, participant observation, focus groups, interviews, and textual/document analysis. Within this context, the development of theory and the ethics and politics of research will also be examined. Lecture: 3 hours. Prerequisite: PLG 410

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- distinguish between key types of research approaches, including positivist, interpretative, and critical research;
- prepare research designs in a planning context using surveys and focus groups;
- develop a research question or hypothesis and construct related survey and interview questions;
- identify basic principles and limitations of several research methods;
- select an appropriate research method and instruments for simple applications in planning research;
- critically analyse the use of statistical research; and
- understand the ethical and political implications of research

Lecture Schedule & Study Plan

The course is organised to cover material in and progress through *theory, methods, and analyses* in social research as it applies to planning. The schedule of lectures and related practical lab sessions is as follows:

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Reading
1	Jan. 9	Introduction to the Research Process	Ch. 1, 2
2	Jan. 16	Research Typologies & Approaches	Ch. 3, 4
3	Jan. 23	Ethics & Politics in Research	Ch. 5
4	Jan. 30	The Literature Review	Ch. 5, 16
5	Feb. 6	Research Design & Method Selection	Ch. 6
6	Feb. 13	Survey Methods	Ch. 10
--	Feb. 20	Reading Week (NO CLASS)	None
7	Feb. 27	Interview Methods	Ch. 10, 13
8	Mar. 5	Focus Groups	On reserve
9	Mar. 12	Ethnography & Participant Observation	Ch. 13
10	Mar. 19	Non-Reactive Research & Multiple Methods	Ch. 11
11	Mar. 26	Measurement	Ch. 7, 9
12	Apr. 2	Statistical Data Analysis	Ch. 12
13	Apr. 9	Non-Statistical Data Analysis	Ch. 15

Required Reading

Neuman, W. Lawrence (2006). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches*. 6th edition. Toronto: Allyn & Bacon. 592 p. **HM571.N48 2006**

The course textbook is available for purchase from **Ballenford Books**, and is also on reserve for short-term loan in the Ryerson library. The link to the course texts can be found at: <http://innopac.lib.ryerson.ca/search/r?SEARCH=plg600>. **Ballenford Books** is a local bookseller specialising in books on architecture, design and planning; they offer a 10% discount for students and are located at 600 Markham Street in Toronto (across from the Bathurst Subway). Tel. 416.588.0800 or <http://www.ballenford.com>.

Students are expected to come to class prepared by having read the assigned material in advance. Readings are an important complement to the lectures and students will need to draw on the information in readings **and** lectures to be able to complete the assignments, test and the exam satisfactorily. Additional readings may occasionally be assigned and these will be available on reserve in the Ryerson library.

Recommended Reading

Adler, Emily S. and Roger Clark (2003). *How It's Done: An Invitation to Social Research*, 2nd Edition. Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning. 583 p. **HM571.A38 2003.**

This text is **recommended** as a complement to lectures and the required text. It is on reserve for short-term loan at the Ryerson library. The following sources are also recommended for consultation in the process of completing the assignments, and **doing research**, i.e. in terms of *design, writing, method selection, and analysis of data*. (Many of these sources will also be used for the following course in this series, PLG 700 *Planning Proposal Development*.) All references are available in the Ryerson University library's regular collection, many with multiple copies.

Writing Aids: *(There are many to choose from in the Ryerson library!)*

Ballenger, Bruce (1994). *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Clines, Raymond H. and Elizabeth R. Cobb (2000). *Research Writing Simplified*. 3rd Edition. Addison Wesley Longman Inc. 72 p.

McMeniman, Linda (1999). *From Inquiry to Argument*. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon. 556 p.

Shea, Victor and William Whitley (2001). *Foundations: Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing*. Toronto: Prentice Hall. 316 p.

Research Design & Proposal Writing:

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams (1995). *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Creswell, John W. (1994). *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage.

Del Balso, Michael and Alan D. Lewis (2001). *First Steps: A Guide to Social Research*. Toronto: Nelson Thomson. 280 p.

Leedy, Paul D. (1997). *Practical Research: Planning & Design*. 6th Edition. Prentice-Hall. 304p.

Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen B. Rossman (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 178p.

Research Methods & Analysis:

Adler, Emily S. and Roger Clark (1999). *How It's Done: An Invitation to Social Research*. New York: Wadsworth.

Babbie, Earl R. (1998). *The Practice of Social Research*. 8th edition. Belmont, California: Wadsworth.

Berg, Bruce (1998). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 3rd Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Bickman, Leonard and Debra J. Rog, eds. (1998). *Handbook of Applied Social Science Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 643p.
- Fink, Arlene (1995). *How to Design Surveys*. London: Sage.
- Flick, Uwe (1998). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. 293p.
- Frey, James H. and Sabine Mertens Oishi (1995). *How to Conduct Interviews by Telephone and in Person*. London: Sage
- Gray, George and Neil Guppy (1999). *Successful Surveys: Research, Methods and Practice*. 2nd Edition. Toronto: Harcourt Brace. 222 p.
- Jackson, Winston (1999). *Methods: Doing Social Research*. 2nd Edition. Toronto: Allyn and Bacon. 589 p.
- Katzer, Jeffrey (1998). *Evaluating Information: A Guide for Users of Social Science Research*. 4th Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Lofland, John and Lyn H. Lofland (1995). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. 3rd Edition. Wadsworth. 268 p.
- Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 302p.
- Silverman, David, ed. (1997). *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Singleton, Royce (1998). *Approaches to Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stake, Robert E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 175p.
- Stringer, Ernest T. (1996). *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 169p.
- Yin, Robert K. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Resources from other media will also be used throughout the course to complement lectures and provide students with a variety of research perspectives. These will include video clips, newspaper features, and consumer marketing material.

CONDUCTING

Course Instruction Modes

PLG 600 is a lecture-based course. The class period is three (3) hours, and meets on Mondays from 14-15h and on Wednesdays from 10-12h. The two-hour block is the lecture period, and the single hour is typically used as a tutorial period. This session provides an important opportunity for student discussion, feedback, and practice of the skills covered in the lectures and which are necessary to complete the assignments. The tutorial also serves as a forum for discussion of readings, videos, and assignment progress.

Course Requirements & Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every student to complete the required reading prior to the lecture for which it is assigned. As the assignments, test and the final exam will be based on both the lectures and the reading materials, successful completion of this course will require regular attendance at classes and tutorial sessions, and thorough reading of all assigned materials.

There are four graded components that comprise the course requirements for PLG 600: two assignments, a mid-term test and a final exam. The assignment handouts will be posted on Blackboard as well as distributed and discussed in class; they explain in detail what is expected for the assignment and the criteria to be used in evaluation. The assignments are summarised here under **EVALUATING** (page 7).

Communicating

PLG 600 has a dedicated Blackboard site available to each registered student at **myryerson.ca**. All course materials are posted here and any announcements will be made through the Announcement Board. Students are encouraged to use the Discussion Board to post questions and problems for class discussion. Both Professor Lister and the TA are also available during our posted office hours for in-person consultation and discussion, as well as during the class time. If you have another class during our office hours or you need more time with either of us, you should feel free to make an appointment. Please note that official Ryerson e-mail is the **REQUIRED** means of communication for the purpose of making appointments or short questions of clarification. ***E-mail sent from an outside (non-Ryerson) account will be deleted by Ryerson junk mail filters.*** Furthermore, detailed or substantive questions about assignments or grades must be dealt with *in person*. Please understand that the volume of e-mail we get is often overwhelming, and we simply cannot always respond immediately. As a general rule, instructors try to respond to quick questions of clarification or appointments within 24-48 hours Monday through Friday. Your understanding and co-operation in this respect will be appreciated and will help make this a smooth term for everyone.

Submitting Assignments

Assignments are to be completed on time and submitted at the beginning of class when due. ***Under no conditions will assignments be slipped under the TA's or the Professor's office door.*** Late assignments may be submitted to the School of Planning assignment drop-slots (3rd floor of the South Bond Building, 105 Bond Street) where they will be collected daily at 4 pm and stamped with the submission date. Late assignments will be penalised in accordance with standard School policy at the rate of *5% per day*. Extensions for reasons of illness require a medical certificate. ***No work will be accepted for evaluation after the last day of classes.***

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the University, of *academe*, and of higher learning in general. Ryerson University is committed to fostering and upholding a climate of academic honesty in all teaching and learning. For more information on academic integrity, including on-line tutorials and workshops, see Ryerson University's **Academic Integrity Office** at: www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/. Each student is expected to be familiar with the *Student Code of Academic Conduct*, the policy that governs all issues of academic dishonesty including all penalties, disciplinary decisions and appeals: it can be accessed at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/> (refer to Policy 60) or through the *Academic Integrity Office* as noted above.

To protect and uphold academic integrity in the class, it is the responsibility of each student to be able to demonstrate the originality of his or her work. At any time you may be asked to explain your work, as feedback and review are essential parts of learning. All students **must** retain a personal copy of all work undertaken for this course as well as *all rough materials, references, sources, and working notes* until the marked original has been returned. For every assignment, the sources of all data and ideas must be properly referenced using a standard academic referencing style; for PLG 600 we use the APA Method, as discussed in class. ***The failure to reference properly any assignment constitutes plagiarism and will result in the required academic penalties as outlined in Ryerson University's 'Student Code of Academic Conduct'.*** Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in the maximum academic penalty.

Course Changes

Any changes to the course assignments, due dates, and/or grading scheme as indicated in this syllabus will be discussed in class prior to being implemented.

COURSE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The *Planning Handbook 2007-2008* describes the School's course management policy in detail, and is given to every student in the School of Urban & Regional Planning. It can also be accessed at <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/> (refer to Policy 145).

EVALUATING

Evaluating Student Work

Student work will be evaluated according to the following scheme, which is comprised of 50% take-home assignments + 50% in-class assessments (tests, exam):

Evaluation Component	Weight	Discussed	Due
1. Literature Review	25%	Jan. 21	Feb. 6
2. Mid-Term Test	15%	Feb. 11	Feb. 25
3. Survey Design	25%	Feb. 13, Mar. 3	Mar. 12
4. Final Exam	35%	Last Class	Exam Period

Evaluation Criteria

Each assignment will be evaluated according to specific criteria explained in detail in each of the assignment instructions. In general, these include:

- adherence to assignment instructions and satisfaction of specific objectives;
- presence of all required components;
- critical analysis (factual precision, rigour, and critical thought);
- background research, use of and influence of **quality** research on the work;
- quality and citation of references;
- communication (clarity, readability, style etc.);
- ability to stimulate discussion and/or respond to questions as applicable; and
- logic.

All criteria are weighted equally in the marking scheme unless otherwise noted. Students will receive written comments and a completed *Feedback & Evaluation Form* with each marked assignment. This form is intended as a means of enriching communication between the instructor and the student, while holding both accountable for the grade.

Evaluating the Course & Instruction

A survey of course substance and instruction quality is required by the University and is to be completed by all students on-line in March. Students will receive advance notice of the survey dates via e-mail from the University administration.