

Participant Observation: Practical Issues

Dr. Kevin Caffrey

Thursday, March 23rd 4-6pm, WJH 350

What is ethnographic fieldwork? How can students get the most out of this methodology during summer research? In this workshop, we will first define ethnographic fieldwork and then focus on some of the operational and theoretical issues associated with conducting such research. We will discuss questions such as how to set up a field-site, considerations of safety and location, as well as how to prepare to engage a different cultural context. In addition to abstractions like "objectivity," we will think about forms of documentation and the role social categories (preconceived and otherwise) can play in this endeavor and also attend to the key issue of field notes. This workshop will be based on the research students are planning to conduct. Everyone should come to this session with a 10 minute introduction of their project, should be able to generally describe their field site (even though this may be a moving target), and come prepared with a list of at least ten questions (which will be handed in at the beginning of the workshop).

An Introduction to Spatial Analysis, Mapping, and Community Data Resources

Dr. Matthew Kaliner (Sociology)

Thursday, March 30th 7-9pm, WJH 305

This workshop will introduce you to basic spatial analysis and mapping strategies to help you identify cases to study, discover patterns in your research, contextualize your findings, and present your work in visually compelling ways. We will start with *Social Explorer*, *World Map*, and the Census's *American Fact Finder*, demonstrating how to find the demographic profile of a community, its segregation level, or its patterns of change over time. You will learn how to create maps within these programs for inclusion in your thesis or tutorial paper, and how to find geographical datasets for further analysis. We will conclude by considering how spatial analysis can complement an ethnographic or historical project.

How to Approach, Research, and Ultimately Write a Theory Thesis

Dr. Bonnie Talbert

Friday, March 31st 2-4pm, WJH 305

This workshop will provide a brief overview of the methodological issues involved in a theory-based thesis, that is, a project which mainly deals with a philosophical and/or theoretical problem, or primarily interrogates ideas, concepts, and arguments by a specific author or more. Topics include 1) important questions a theory thesis should address, 2) some common pitfalls to avoid, and 3) research tips that maximize efficiency and save time.

Conducting Qualitative Interviews

Dr. Nicole Newendorp

Monday, April 3rd 4-6pm AND Friday, April 21st 10am-Noon, WJH 305

In this workshop, I will introduce students to the process of conducting qualitative interviews. We will tackle some basic considerations in planning an interview-based methodology for your thesis research, including choosing an interview format, contacting interviewees, and discussing the pros and cons of recording interviews. Particular attention will be paid to ethical considerations in collecting data from people of different cultural and class backgrounds, along with how your status as a Harvard student and researcher may influence your relationships with interviewees and the quality of the data that you collect.

Social Studies Methods Workshops

Spring 2017

Content Analysis: How to Collect and Analyze Media and Other Qualitative Sources of Data

Dr. Alison Denton Jones

Friday, April 7th 10am-Noon, Quincy House Innovation Space

This workshop will introduce students to some of the multitude of ways that researchers make use of media (including newspapers, television, and websites) as sources of data. Topics covered will include: what sorts of questions can you ask and answer using media sources? How can you collect or access existing collections of qualitative data to answer your research question? What are some ways of analyzing qualitative data (including quantitative and qualitative methods of content analysis, as well as techniques of visual representation)? Students should come prepared to discuss their research interests.

Historical Methods

Dr. Daragh Grant

Thursday, April 13th 7-9pm, WJH 305

This workshop will introduce students to the challenges of working with archival materials or texts drawn from different cultural and historical settings. Students will be introduced to the basics of the historical method, and will be encouraged to think about how a careful attention to questions of temporality, periodization, and conceptual specificity can shape and reveal new avenues in their research, whether they are pursuing a project in intellectual, cultural, or social history. In addition to these questions of historical method, we will discuss the basics of archival research. Students will also conduct an exercise in historical analysis by reading a short primary source document. This will form the basis of a discussion of how one might begin to tease reliable insights out of documents encountered in an archive. Students will be provided with a bibliography of readings on historical methodology.

Quantitative Methods Workshop

Carly Knight

Tuesday, April 18th 4-6pm, WJH 450

In this workshop, we'll be addressing some of the basics of quantitative research. How do you gather data? How do you organize it? How do you analyze it? This workshop is designed to acquaint Harvard undergraduates with the basics of quantitative research in the social sciences, with a focus on linear regression models using Stata. All prospective thesis writers are welcome to attend. Please note that we will not be able to cover statistics, but will rather assist those with some background determine when and how to apply statistical methods to their research question.