

PCST 201: RESEARCH METHODS: PEACE STUDIES

An introduction to social scientific research
(with particular attention to the field of peace studies)

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Credit Hours:	3	Office Hours:	By appointment

I. Course Description

In this course you will be introduced to the principles and methods of social scientific research with an emphasis on peace and conflict studies. The course is divided into three parts. In Part I, we will examine a range of tools and approaches now used by researchers in the light of the history and philosophy of social science. Through weekly exercises, you will develop practical skills for conducting research, from framing a question to operationalizing concepts to arriving at generalizable conclusions. In Part II, we will explore one important kind of research in greater depth: qualitative ethnographic fieldwork. You will gain insight into the research process by foraying into the wilds of Orange County as field investigators conducting your own original ethnography. In Part III, we will turn our attention to some of the unique analytical challenges as well as ethical quandaries that arise for researchers in the field of peace studies (whose work often includes studying precarious conflict and post-conflict zones).

II. Grading Scale and Distribution

The grading scale for this course is as follows: A (93-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-90); B (83-87); B- (80-83); C+ (77-80); C (73-77); C- (70-73); D (60-69); F (< 60). As a general benchmark, to receive a solid A in this course you should do **exemplary** work in all areas. To receive a grade of A- you should do **strong to excellent** work in all areas. To receive a grade in the B range you should do **strong** work in all areas. To receive a grade in the C range you should do **passable** work in all areas. You will be assessed based on the following distribution of points:

25% **Attendance** (10%) and **Participation** (15%): You are expected to attend all classes on time and to actively contribute to discussions through thoughtful dialogue with others based upon your careful reading of all assigned texts. *Note: There are no excused absences apart from days of University approved religious observance and serious medical or family emergencies. Three late attendance marks will count as one absence. However, out of consideration for the vicissitudes of college life, you are permitted two missed classes without question over the course of the semester without any grade reduction. Each additional*

missed class will result in a letter grade reduction from your final overall grade for the course.

- 25% **Weekly Exercises:** There will be regular written assignments for you to complete in conjunction with our readings to help deepen your understanding of the research process and fire your creativity as you prepare to conduct an original ethnographic field research project of your own. I will let you know what the upcoming assignments are in class each week.
- 50% **Final Paper:** You will hand in a final paper, due on the last day of class (May 11), that addresses an important question or theme arising from our readings and based on your own original ethnographic field research. Papers should be approximately 2000 words in length and be handed in on double-spaced, single-sided pages in 12-point Times New Roman font (no cover page is necessary). Use the standard citation method (MLA, Chicago, etc.) that you are most familiar with. In addition, you are required to email me an electronic Word version of your paper by the due date. *Note: there is a letter grade reduction for late papers and each additional day a paper is turned in late will result in an additional 10% deduction; papers more than three days late will not be accepted.* I will have more to say about the final paper later in the semester.

***Due March 30-April 6:** You are responsible to schedule an office appointment with me between March 30 and April 6 to discuss your research plans and research strategy.

***Due April 11:** You must bring to class a short précis or abstract (between 150 and 200 words) summarizing your research project, including animating questions and any tentative findings.

***Due May 11: Final Research Paper**

III. Students with Special Needs

Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability or special needs are should contact the Disability Services Office with the necessary documentation. The DSO will then notify me of what specific accommodations should be granted. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early as possible. More information about school policies and procedures for students who need academic accommodations can be found on the Chapman University website.

IV. Academic Integrity

Your work on all assignments should be your own. You should not use the words or ideas of others without giving full credit to them using proper citation methods. If you have any questions about how and when to cite other peoples' work you should come and

speak with me. Students found to be copying or plagiarizing the work of others on any assignment will receive an automatic failing grade for the course.

Academic integrity means more, however, than simply not cheating or plagiarizing. It also means fulfilling assignments with the care and rigor of a serious scholar, showing basic respect and courtesy to others both in and out of the classroom (including being in class on time), and being honest and forthright in dialogue. While not all of these virtues are directly subject to grading, they will serve you well in this class and in your academic and professional lives in general.

V. Electronic Devices and Recordings

This course depends upon your active participation as an attentive listener and generous conversation partner with others. Texting, Internet surfing, and social media are grave impediments to conversation and are not permitted in class at any time. I will not interrupt class to ask you to stop texting (or using the book of faces or other apps or sites). However, observed use of phones, computers, or any other electronic devices for anything other than note-taking at any time will be duly recorded and result in an automatic absence mark for the day.

Consistent with state laws and university policies, you are not permitted to take photographs or make video or audio recordings of any part of our class without the prior knowledge and permission of all persons being recorded, including the instructor. Violations of this rule will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. (Let the Golden Rule be your guide: if you would prefer not to be secretly filmed and turned into an embarrassing meme or viral video or BuzzFeed article by your classmates or professors, do unto others as you would have them do unto you.) You should contact me immediately if you have a compelling need to use a recording device for note-taking purposes and also register with the Disability Services Office (see section IV above).

VI. Required Books

You should purchase your own copies of the following books from the bookstore or online for reasonable prices from a number of booksellers:

Höglund, Kristine, and Magnus Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

Luker, Kristin, *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

Van Maanen, John, *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011).

VII. Course Outline and Weekly Reading Assignments

To encourage active reading and discussion, you are required to bring all assigned texts to class, preferably copiously marked. A typical week will require in the range of 50-60 pages of reading. Texts marked with a star (*) will be made available to you as PDF documents. Note: I might add readings or make other adjustments to this outline as our course progresses.

Part I: The Basics of Social Scientific Research

Wk.1 (Feb.2): Luker, “Ch.1: Salsa Dancing? In the Social Sciences?”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.1-22.

Luker, “Ch.2: What’s It All About?”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.22-40.

Wk.2 (Feb.9): Luker, “Ch.3: An Ode to Canonical Social Science”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.40-51.

Luker, “Ch.4: What Is This a Case of, Anyway?”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.51-76.

Wk.3 (Feb.16): Luker, “Ch.5: Reviewing the Literature,” in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.76-99.

Luker, “Ch.6: On Sampling, Operationalization, and Generalization?”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.99-129.

Wk.4 (Feb.23): Luker, “Ch.7: Getting Down to the Nitty-Gritty”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.129-155.

Luker, “Ch.8: Field (and Other) Methods”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.155-190.

Wk.5 (Mar.2): Luker, “Ch.9: Historical-Comparative Methods”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.190-198.

Luker, “Ch.10: Data Reduction and Analysis”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.198-217.

Wk.6 (Mar.9): Luker, “Ch.11: Living Your Life as a Salsa-Dancing Social Scientist”, in *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences*, pp.217-229.

*An Excursus on Writing: Umberto, Eco, *How to Write a Thesis* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), pp.xix-xxvi, 145-186

Part II: Fieldwork

Wk.7 (Mar.16): Van Maanen, “Ch.1: Fieldwork, Culture, and Ethnography”, *Tales of the Field*, pp.ix-13.

Van Maanen, “Ch.2: In Pursuit of Culture”, *Tales of the Field*, pp.13-45.

*****SPRING BREAK: Mon.-Sat., March 20–25*****

*****NOTE: MEET WITH ME BETWEEN MAR.30 – APRIL 6*****

Wk.9 (Mar.30): Van Maanen, “Ch.3: Realist Tales”, *Tales of the Field*, pp.45-73.

Van Maanen, “Ch.4: Confessional Tales”, *Tales of the Field*, pp.73-101.

Wk.10 (Apr.6): Van Maanen, “Ch.5: Impressionist Tales”, *Tales of the Field*, pp.101-125.

Van Maanen, “Ch.6: Fieldwork, Culture, and Ethnography Revisited” and “Epilogue”, *Tales of the Field*, pp.125-183.

Part III: Peace Research

*****NOTE: YOUR RESEARCH ABSTRACT IS DUE APRIL 13*****

Wk.11 (Apr.13): Höglund, “Ch.1: Doing Empirical Peace Research”, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.1-14.

Wallenstein, “Ch.2: The Origins of Contemporary Peace Research”, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.14-33.

Wk.12 (Apr.20): Öberg and Sollenberg, “Ch.4: Gathering Conflict Information Using News Resources”, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.47-74.

Höglund, “Ch.7: Comparative Field Research in War-Torn Societies”, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.114-130.

Wk.13 (Apr.27): Brouneus, “Ch.8: In-Depth Interviewing“, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.130-146.

Söderström, “Ch.9: Focus Groups”, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.146-165.

Wk.14 (May.4): Eck, “Ch.10: Survey Research in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies”, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.165-183.

Höglund and Öberg, “Ch.11: Improving Information Gathering and Evaluation”, in Höglund and Öberg, *Understanding Peace Research*, pp.183-199.

Wk.15 (May.11): **FINAL PAPER DUE**