

# IDEV\*6850: Development Research and Practice

University of Guelph

Winter 2023

## Lauren Sneyd, PhD

Dr. Lauren Sneyd currently serves as a lecturer for courses linked to her areas of expertise in food, environment and development at the University of Guelph. She was previously a visiting Assistant Professor (CL) with the Development Studies Program and the Coady International Institute at St. Francis Xavier University, and a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow at the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Lauren completed her doctorate in Geography and International Development Studies at the University of Guelph. She earned a thesis-based Master of Arts degree in Anthropology at Dalhousie University, and a second coursework-based Master of Arts degree in Development Studies at the University of Auckland. Her BA (Hons.) was in Anthropology with a subsidiary in Development Studies. Her list of courses taught and publications are listed on her website.

**EMAIL:** [lsneyd@uoguelph.ca](mailto:lsneyd@uoguelph.ca)

**WEBSITE:** <https://laurengsneyd.com/>

**OFFICE HOURS:** by appointment

**SEMINAR MEETINGS:** Tuesdays 2:30 PM - 5:20 PM, MCKN 800c

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course offers a doctoral seminar in development research and practice and provides students with the opportunity to develop their research proposals in conjunction with the literature in the field. The goal is to provide a broad interdisciplinary perspective on development research and practice, with an eye to linking these to disciplinary study in the students' respective departments. The course is intended to complement the theoretical and methodological grounding and disciplinary training that students receive in their departmental doctoral programs. It provides a methodological and practical introduction to the challenges of conducting field research in a context of social diversity and economic disparity. It also situates the dominant social science research traditions in relation to the study and practice of international development.

### Core objectives:

1. Introduce key philosophical, epistemological, political and ethical issues central to development research;
2. Familiarize students with the research process and identify appropriate research approaches and methods of data collection and analysis;
3. Develop skills to design a research proposal.

IDEV\*6850 is a seminar that depends on the active involvement of all students. The course will conclude with a “defense” of student research proposals to be evaluated by an interdisciplinary group of participating faculty. Satisfactory evaluation of the research proposal by the examining committee is required to permit students to continue in the collaborative IDS program.

## **COURSE TEXTS**

Copies of the course texts are available as hardcopies or e-books through the library. All other readings can be accessed via the library website.

Laws, Sophie, Caroline Harper, Nicola Jones, and Rachel Marcus. *Research for Development: A Practical Guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London, UK: Sage, 2013. (Call No. HD77.L39 2013)

Scheyvens, Regina, ed. *Development Field Work: A Practical Guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London, UK: Sage, 2014. (Call No. H62.5.D44 D48 2014)

Sumner, Andrew and Michael Tribe. *International Development Studies: Theories and Methods in Research and Practice*. London, UK: Sage, 2008. (Call No. HD77.S86 2008)

**Recommended** (may be useful for the final assignment, start planning early):

Walliman, Nicholas. *Your Research Project: Designing, Planning and Getting Started*. London, UK: Sage, 2020.

Watts, Michael 2001. The Holy Grail: In Pursuit of the Dissertation Proposal. Regents of the University of California. <https://sigi2016blog.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/wattsmichael-insearchoftheholyygrail-2.pdf> ; and In Search of the Holy Grail: Projects, Proposals and Research Design, But Mostly about Why Writing a Dissertation Proposal is So Difficult. 2001. Regents of the University of California <https://iis.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/general/inpursuitofphd.pdf>

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT**

### **1. Seminar Participation and Facilitation 20%**

It is expected that students will have completed all the assigned readings and be prepared to participate actively in the seminar. The first part of each session will be based on the readings. Each week, one student will be responsible for leading the classroom discussion and facilitating the seminar, introducing the seminar topic and developing relevant discussion questions. The weeks we do not have a facilitator students will share collective responsibility to facilitate our discussions via the questions, AV materials, and other ideas that they bring to the table. The second part will typically be conducted in a workshop mode. This will allow students to flesh out their individual PhD projects. As part of class participation, students will exchange different components of their research proposals in preparation for **Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7**. These assignments are listed in the course schedule and will be due via email to all course participants 24 hours before class.

### **2. Statement of Intent 20%**

Students must prepare a Statement of Intent describing their thesis proposal by **Week 7** of this course (February 28, 2023). The statement should provide a summary of the research proposal written in clear, plain language. It should be written in non-technical terms and be understandable to a range of scholars with varied areas of expertise. It should be ~**2000 words** long. It should include the following sections:

1. **Project Title:** Provide a title with adequate information about the area you propose to research using as few words as possible. Be concise but try to make the title appealing.
2. **Research Questions or Objectives:** These are the broad questions/objectives your proposed research seeks to answer/fulfill. You may create sub-questions/objectives as well.
3. **Researcher positionality statement:** A substantial section that describes your ontological and epistemological positioning as a researcher. The use of class readings as references is encouraged (for example, Holmes 2020), along with new literature to support your point of view.
  1. Holmes, A. (2020). Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide." *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2020, pp. 1-10.
  2. Also see: <https://medium.com/@Marvette/just-tell-me-what-i-need-to-know-reflexivity-and-positionality-statements-fb52ec0f4e17>
4. **Context:** Provide a brief background to the field(s) of literature related to the proposed research, showing what studies have been done in the past, the methodology researchers have used, and the findings that researchers have come up with. Students should consult at least six to eight journal articles or book chapters when writing this section and reference them accordingly. Integrate what you have read in an essay, synthesizing the literature, rather than listing and summarizing each article. In this section, you must also indicate the anticipated significance and impacts of the proposed research and how it fits with your proposed question and direction.
5. **Methodology:** Briefly summarize the way you will examine the phenomenon you are choosing to study and your data needs. This exercise will have you consider the extended methodology section for the final research proposal. Indicate a methodological approach (e.g. institutional ethnography; grounded theory, etc.), if possible, and the methods that will be employed.
6. **Reference List:** A list of all the sources cited in the literature review in a style most closely associated with your discipline.

In **Week 9** (March 14, 2023), students will present an outline of their research based on their Statement of Intent and engage in a peer review process in class. Students are also expected to consult with their faculty advisors throughout the semester.

### **3. Research Proposal and Oral Presentation**

**60%**

Each student will develop a research proposal drawing on development research/practice literature as well as development theory. Interdisciplinary development theory should intersect with theory on the chosen topic within the student's own discipline and project area. The weighting between interdisciplinary and disciplinary research will vary, but all proposals must be

fully informed by broadly understood development ideas/theory and methods appropriate for the intended research. Proposals will vary in length depending on the student's own discipline. A typical proposal will be in the range of 20-30 pages (see guidelines below for details). The research proposal is due on **March 31, 2023**.

The finalized proposals will be defended at the end of the course, during the examination period. The faculty committee will comprise your thesis advisor, the GIDS Graduate Coordinator, another faculty member from outside your own department, and the course instructor. Each student will have approximately twenty-five minutes to present their proposal and thirty-five minutes for questions and comments from the committee. Students who fail to get a satisfactory evaluation on the proposal and its defense will be assessed as 'INCOMPLETE'. They will have a second chance to resubmit their proposal to the committee the following semester. They will not be expected to re-define their proposals.

#### **4. Research Proposal Guidelines**

A research proposal is a document that explains what the proposed research is about; what the research is trying to find out and achieve; how the investigator will go about doing that; what the academic community will learn from the research; why it is worth learning; and how the knowledge produced will be mobilized. Preparing a research proposal involves a considerable amount of research in the planning and designing of the project and is considered the most critical phase of the research process. A good research proposal does not require the reader to have a previous introduction but can stand alone as a finished product. It can make sense to someone who is at the university level but who may not be an expert in the field. Your proposal should include the following elements:

##### **5. Project Title**

##### **6. Abstract (500 words)**

Provide a summary of your proposed research written in clear, plain language. It should be written in non-technical terms and clearly understood by scholars with varied areas of expertise. The summary should provide the reader a brief overview of all the essential elements of the proposal, concentrating on what the study is about and what it is aiming to do, how you are going to fulfill these aims, and finally, why this is important (i.e. how it contributes to the advancement of knowledge and wider social benefits).

##### **7. Detailed Description**

In writing this section of your proposal, avoid jargon, acronyms and highly technical terms. All reviewers may not have an intimate knowledge of the subject matter of all proposals. Clearly indicate the following:

###### **1. Research Questions/Objectives**

**2. Researcher positionality statement:** A substantial section that describes your ontological and epistemological positioning as a researcher and how it informs your proposed research approach.

###### **3. Context**

The problem motivating the research

Where the issue fits within the broader academic literature

The "gaps" in existing literature that the proposed research will fill, including how

the study will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and/or policy-making and why the proposed study is important or original. The target audience for the proposed research and why it will be of significance to them, including the foreseeable social benefits of the research. Clear references to the material you will cite in your bibliography

4. **Methodology**

How do you plan the research to proceed and what underlies your decisions? o How have the theoretical perspectives outlined in the context section informed your research design? Who are the participants in the study? How many do you intend to include? How will you recruit them?

o How will you collect data? If you are conducting interviews, what type will you use and what information will you seek? Are you using focus groups or a survey? How are you selecting participants and how will you structure the discussion or questionnaire? How will you analyze the data?

5. **Ethical Concerns, Feasibility and Research Limitations**

While most of these will be covered within the institutionalized REB Application you will complete, you are required to briefly reflect on ethical issues, feasibility considerations, and research delimitations pertaining to your project.

6. **Knowledge Mobilization Plan**

This section briefly outlines how and where you plan to share the results of your research. Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) defines it as "the specific activities and tools that facilitate the multidirectional flow and exchange of research knowledge." Clearly indicate: how you intend to exchange the knowledge you produce among various appropriate audiences or participants, how you will make it accessible, how you will engage appropriate audiences or participants, and on the purpose of the knowledge mobilization activities. Helpful resource: Bennett, G. and Nasreen Jessani. (2011). The Knowledge Translation Toolkit. London, UK: Sage. <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/46152/IDL-46152.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

8. **List of References**

Must include at least 30 peer-reviewed journals and/or academic books.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS**

### **WEEK 1 – January 10 Introductory Meeting**

No required reading. Introductions and we will choose facilitation weeks.

### **WEEK 2 – January 17**

#### **What is "Development Research"?**

- Sumner & Tribe. (2008). Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-52
- Laws et al. (2013). Chapter 1, 2 pp. 1-19 ; 20-39
- Scheyvens (ed.). (2014). Chapter 1, pp. 1-16

- Lantsoght, Eva. (2018). *The A-Z of the PhD trajectory*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. Chapter 5, pp. 75-87.

Guiding Questions: *What is the focus of Development Studies? Why should we study it?*

Assignment: "Auntie-Uncle Statement"

**WEEK 3** – January 24

### **Foundational Issues: Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology**

- Sumner & Tribe. (2008). Chapters 3-4, pp. 53-98
- Hulme, David and Toye, John. (2006). "The case for cross-disciplinary social science research on poverty, inequality and well-being." *Journal of Development Studies* 42(7), pp. 1085-1107.
- Jackson, Cecile. (2006). "Feminism spoken here: Epistemologies for interdisciplinary development research." *Development and Change* 37(3), pp. 525-547.
- Wasserman, Richard. (2011). "Electronic medical records (EMRs), epidemiology, and epistemology: Reflections on EMRs and future pediatric clinical research." *Academic Pediatrics* 11(4), pp. 280-287.

Guiding Questions: *What can we know in Development Studies? How can we know it?*

Assignment: Draft Research Question(s)

**WEEK 4** – January 31

### **Designing Rigorous Field Research**

- Sumner & Tribe. (2008). Chapter 5, pp. 99-128
- Laws et al. (2013). Chapters 7 and 12, pp. 135-145 and 224-248
- Scheyvens (ed.). (2014). Chapter 2, pp. 19-38
- Gustafsson, Karl and Hagström, Linus. (2018). "What is the point? Teaching graduate students how to construct political science research puzzles." *European Political Science* 17(4), pp. 634-648.

Guiding Questions: *What are the (dis)advantages of qualitative and quantitative research approaches? What special role does participatory research play in development studies?*

Assignment: A one-page summary of your research puzzle

**WEEK 5** – February 7

### **Case Studies and Inference**

- King, Gary, Keohane, Robert and Verba, Sidney. (1994). *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press. Chapter 1, pp. 3-33.
- George, Alexander and Bennett, Andrew. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapter 1, pp. 3-36

- Collier, David. (2011). "Understanding process tracing." *PS, Political Science and Politics* 44(4), pp. 823-830.
- Lerner, Daniel. (1958). *The passing of traditional society: Modernizing the Middle East*. London, UK: Free Press. Chapter 1, pp. 19-42.
- Freedman, David. (2010). "On types of scientific inquiry: The role of qualitative reasoning." In Henry Brady and David Collier (eds.): *Rethinking social inquiry*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. Chapter 11, pp. 221-236.

Guiding Questions: *Are case studies more rigorous than other research approaches? According to what principles might research cases be selected? What are the strengths and weaknesses of single-case studies (vis-à-vis comparative designs)?*

Assignment: Summarize three distinct research designs that have previously been applied to questions closely related to your research puzzle. (Bullet points, approximately two pages.)

**WEEK 6** – February 14

### Data Collection

- Scheyvens (ed.). (2014). Chapters 3-5, pp. 39-100
- Laws et al. (2013). Chapters 10-11, pp. 179-223
- Komil-Burley, O. (2021). Conducting Research in Authoritarian Bureaucracies: Researcher Positionality, Access, Negotiation, Cooperation, Trepidation, and Avoiding the Influence of the Gatekeepers. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 20:1-10.
- Pisarska, Katarzyna. (2019). "Conducting elite interviews in an international context: Lessons from the world of public diplomacy." *Sage Research Methods Cases Part 2*. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526478290>
- Perara, Kaushalya. 2021. Interviewing academic elites: a discourse analysis of shifting power relations. *Qualitative Research* 21(2): 215-233.

Guiding Questions: *How do different methods of data collection relate to different research designs? How do we ensure the method meets the data needs and research question? What special considerations are necessary for researchers in developing country contexts?*

Assignment: A two-page draft research design: What data do you need to collect? How and from which sources do you aim to collect your data? How will you select your case(s)?

\*\*\*February 17-21: Winter Break\*\*\*

**WEEK 7** – February 28

### Theory and Practice of Data Analysis

- Laws et al. (2013). Chapters 13-14, pp. 251-310
- O'Leary, Zina. (2017). *The essential guide to doing your research project*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Chapters 14-15, pp. 297-344.
- Case studies (pick 3); all drawn from *Sage Research Methods Cases, Part 2* (2019):
- Ireland, Patrick. "A mixed-method study comparing migrant integration outcomes in five global cities." DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526477200>



- Epley, Jennifer. “Better questions, better answers: cross-cultural considerations and strategies for international research designs and methods.” DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526478115>
- Holmberg, Christopher. “Conducting mixed-methods research in the mental health care setting: A study exploring job satisfaction among nursing personnel” DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526479921>
- Banta, Benjamin. “Critical discourse analysis and the study of humanitarian war.” DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526466075>
- Heracleous, Loizos and Fernandes, Orlando. “Challenges in coding qualitative data.” DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526476210>
- Lukongo, Onyumbé, “Applying a multiple-case study research strategy to civil war, real income, and productivity in Africa.” DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526484895>

Guiding Questions: *What are the most common methods used for qualitative data analysis in international development studies? What advantages do mixed-methods approaches present?*  
 Assignment: Statement of Intent (due before class)

**WEEK 8** – March 7

### **Research Ethics, Positionality and Practical Research Considerations**

- Sumner & Tribe. 2008. Chapter 6, pp. 129-162
- Scheyvens (ed.). 2014. Chapters 8-12, pp. 160-251
- Laws et al. 2013. Chapter 9, pp. 163-178

Guiding Questions: *What role does the development researcher play in developing country contexts? What ethical considerations are necessary in researching human participants? (How) Can we prepare ourselves for the challenges that development research presents?*

Guest Speaker: Research Ethics Coordinator, Office of Research

**WEEK 9** – March 14

### **Presentation and discussion of preliminary proposals**

- *No required reading*

**WEEKS 10-12**

### **Independent proposal preparation and meetings by appointment**

This part of the course is intended for independent writing and reflection that you will need to work on for the research proposal. Set up individual appointments to meet and discuss your research proposals during this period. The research proposal is due on **March 31, 2023**.

### **POLICIES AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Communication:** As per university regulations, students are required to check their University of Guelph email accounts regularly. Email is the official route of communication between the University and its students.



**When you cannot meet a course requirement:** When you find yourself unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious reasons, please advise the course instructor in person or via email. In all but the most exceptional circumstances this should be done well in advance of the due date. See the graduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. [https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/2019-2020/genreg/sec\\_d0e2195.shtml](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/2019-2020/genreg/sec_d0e2195.shtml)

**Academic Misconduct:** The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. Students are responsible for being aware of the University's policy and abiding by it. Transgressions relating to plagiarism, misrepresentation of personal performance and/or damage to the integrity of scholarly exchanges will be strictly enforced according to the rules of the University. Please review the relevant sections in the graduate calendar: [https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec\\_d0e2645.shtml](https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e2645.shtml)

### Drop Date

Courses that are one semester long must be dropped by the end of the last day of classes; two-semester courses must be dropped by the last day of classes in the second semester. The regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses are available in the Undergraduate Calendar. Deadlines can be found in the Graduate Calendar.

### Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required, however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 14 days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). Similarly, new or changed accommodations for online quizzes, tests and exams must be approved at least a week ahead of time. More information: [www.uoguelph.ca/sas](http://www.uoguelph.ca/sas)

### Recording of Materials

Presentations which are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

#### Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings, changes in classroom protocols, and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via Courselink and/or class email.

This includes on-campus scheduling during the semester, mid-terms and final examination schedules. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

#### Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

#### COVID-19 Safety Protocols

For information on current safety protocols, follow these links: ·

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campus/how-u-of-g-is-preparing-for-your-safe-return/> ·  
<https://news.uoguelph.ca/return-to-campus/spaces/#ClassroomSpaces>

Please note, that these guidelines may be updated as required in response to evolving University, Public Health or government directives.