

IDEV 6300 – Research and Analysis in a Development Context
Guelph Institute for Development Studies, University of Guelph
Fall 2022

Dr. Matthew McBurney

mmcburne@uoguelph.ca

Lectures: Every other Wed, 2:30pm – 5:20pm in MACK 318

Office Hours: Wed, 1:30pm-2:30pm or by appointment via Zoom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This two semester course prepares students to conduct research in a development context. It emphasizes power relations and supports students as they reflect on their own positionality and the development context of their research. Through reading, discussion and practice, students develop skills in areas such as: scoping research questions, data collection, data analysis, navigating ethical complexities and knowledge mobilization. There will be an emphasis on reflective writing and on communicating development research and analysis to diverse audiences.

This course outline is for the Fall 2022 portion of the course. The Winter 2022 course outline will be posted in December.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. Critically reflect on their position as researchers in a development context
2. Formulate research questions
3. Practice and reflect on data collection techniques
4. Practice and reflect on data analysis techniques
5. Consider ethical and other research dilemmas specific to development contexts by analyzing ‘real-world’ examples
6. Understand best practices for knowledge mobilization
7. Clearly communicate research results visually to relevant audiences
8. Practice descriptive and reflective writing in relation to their own Masters research

FORMAT

Weekly readings must be completed before lectures and seminars. Lectures are led by the instructor and will include lectures and films. Seminars are led by teaching assistants (TAs). They are discussion-based and will cover readings, lectures, and films. Attendance of lectures and seminars is mandatory.

GRADING SCHEME

Semester	Assignment	Description	Due Date	Percentage
Full Year	Participation	Class attendance, speaking, listening, engagement, participating in activities	Ongoing	20% (10% each Semester)

Fall Semester	Preliminary Research Question, Methods, and Bibliography		Nov 2	10%
	Research Problem, Justification and Scholarly Relevance		Dec 2	20%
Winter Semester	Ethics Discussion	A discussion of the ethical issues in your research proposal.	Feb/Mar 2023	10%
	Research Presentation	Presentation of Final Research Proposal (10 minute presentation)	March/April 2023	10%
	Final Research Proposal	A final research proposal that will include a reworking (in some cases provide more detail) of previous assignments into one final document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem statement Methods, and Bibliography • Research Problem, Justification and Scholarly Relevance • Ethics 	March 2023	30%

Preliminary Research Question, Methods and Bibliography

OPTION ONE:

- Based on the research you have planned for your Masters degree, fill out the “Designing Research Questions Activity Sheet” (found on CourseLink) and submit it to CourseLink Dropbox. [note: this is just for practice, if your Masters project completely changes after this it is totally fine, you are not bound in any way to these research questions!]
- Come up with an original research question that will form part of your final research proposal in the end of the Winter term of this course.
- On top of the Research Questions Activity Sheet, submit a separate document that contains a discussion (2-3 pages) about your methods (see below) and a preliminary bibliography (see below)

OPTION 2:

- Based on the Quinoa case description in Week 4, fill out the “Designing Research Questions Activity Sheet” (found on CourseLink) and submit it to CourseLink Dropbox. Since this is an activity for practicing research question creation, you do not need to do any additional information about this case. You can make assumptions to the best of your ability about the scenario in order to create good research questions.
- Come up with an original research question that will form part of your final research proposal in the end of the Winter term of this course.

- On top of the Research Questions Activity Sheet, submit a separate document that contains a discussion (2-3 pages) about your methods (see below) and a preliminary bibliography (see below)

This is the beginning of the foundations of your research proposal, and the work you put into this will be reflected in your final project. For this assignment you need to have a well-stated research question. Your research question, stated at the end of the activity sheet, should be a clear and concise question.

You will present a brief discussion of the methods you are using, and how you are going to use them. Think of your own research (or the research question you have put together for Class 4 based on the quinoa article), and come up with a 2-3 page (double spaced) description and explanation (brief) of the research methods you will use to collect the data required to answer your research question. There is no minimum number of research methods that should be chosen. However, I would suggest describing more than 1 method. How many methods you choose will indicate how much detail you can provide for each method in the 2-3 page limit. If you have the room in your assignment, give a brief description of who your subjects are, how you are going to find these people (recruitment), where you are going to interact with them and some of the questions you will ask them. This is the part of the project where you have to figure out what doing research is all about logistically.

At this stage, this research question should be refined enough to start a literature review. In a research proposal, you would explore the literature on a variety of aspects of the larger research terrain you have identified. For example, if you wanted to research the impacts of global resource extraction on Indigenous communities in Guatemala, you would research topics such as global resource extraction, Indigenous livelihoods, the political economy of Guatemala, environmental aspects, and so on. You would also look at local, national, regional, and international responses to these problems, such as global mining policy, Canadian mining policy, Canadian and Guatemalan government policies on mining, grassroots responses to mining, etc. The bibliography of this assignment should demonstrate that you have identified many dimensions of the larger topic area, have selected what is most representative of the existing published research, and isolated the most specifically relevant literature. Unfortunately, this course does not permit us the time to conduct a standard literature review, although some of the skills will be tested in this assignment. You are making your first foray into the existing literature relevant to your topic, so you will need to show that you have examined multiple dimensions of your proposed research topic. As to number of sources, this is difficult to predict, but I would say you should include no fewer than 20 well-selected, relevant sources from multiple disciplines, activist voices, and/or public discourse/policy. Having said that, a **minimum of 10 scholarly sources must be annotated (4-6 sentences) in your bibliography.** These sources should be the KEY sources, meaning that they are well focused on the kind of issue/question you are discussing for your proposal. What matters most is that the sources you include are specifically helpful to advance your preliminary idea for a research project into a more specific and credible research proposal. As a result, your bibliography must demonstrate that you are learning about national, international, community and local/individual context for the research you wish to conduct. I will evaluate this part of the assignment both on the clarity and precision of your brief (4-6 sentences) citations and the relevance to your project. Also, citation style matters. Please use Chicago style citation for all assignments.

Research Problem, Justification and Scholarly Relevance

Your *research problem* has two parts: *background* and *problem*. Background information is what explains the context: what is happening on the ground in the social setting you want to investigate? Your background should precisely and succinctly summarize this context. It indicates both the dominant trends in thinking and analysis about the abstract issue of your research, and how those ways of thinking chart different approaches to a research problem. Much of your understanding about the background and the problem will come from reading about your topic (both scholarly and non-scholarly work).

Second is the *problem* itself. This is a longer discussion of the question that you want your project to answer. Here you link the background to the specific problem you want to investigate. Your research problem discussion should give substance and meaning to the single sentence you produce as a research statement: “This research examines X in the context of Y in Z”.

Justification of your research project is a simple description of why this research question is useful or makes sense at this moment in time. This part of your proposal presents ‘what’s happening now’ that makes your research timely.

Following from above, the *scholarly relevance* section identifies what makes your research project as a whole a suitable response. Why is this project useful for the broader community of researchers you are part of, including your research partners in the community? Why is this research important? What will it contribute to academia, and, I would argue, society as a whole? In other words, what are the academic and practical contributions you hope to achieve with your research?

READINGS

Readings must be completed before attending lectures and your seminar. The readings for this course can all be found as digital copies through the University of Guelph Library. However, if you want to purchase physical copies, the main readings are.

Laws, Sophie. 2003. *Research for Development: A Practical Guide*. London, UK: Sage Publications

LECTURES

Lecture slides will not be posted. You will have to be in touch with a classmate to get notes for the classes that you miss.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

You are welcome to use your laptop to access your readings and type up notes in the lecture. Please use your laptop for these purposes only. The lecture will proceed at a quick pace and it will be difficult to follow if you are checking emails or surfing the web. If laptops become a distraction or hinder learning, the use of electronic devices may be banned during lectures. All cellphones must be on silent mode.

TAPING/RECORDING LECTURES

Taping and/or recording lectures and seminars is **not** permitted.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using others' work but pretending that it is your own. This is an academic offence with serious consequences. You can avoid plagiarism by identifying and attributing all of your sources in your text, whether you are quoting them directly or paraphrasing them. If you need guidance on how to properly reference and footnote your work, please consult the university's Writing Services (see below). There is also information on plagiarism here:

<https://academicintegrity.uoguelph.ca/plagiarism>

LATE SUBMISSIONS

The penalty for the late submission is 5% per day. This includes weekends and holidays. Late submissions will be accepted for seven days after the deadline. After this, a grade of 0% will be assigned.

EXTENSIONS

Extensions may be granted by the instructor for unforeseeable reasons (eg medical situations) or exceptional circumstances (eg religious events) IF documentation is provided by the student. The instructor will decide on a case by case basis. No extensions will be provided without documentation. No extensions will be provided after a deadline has passed.

GRADING APPEALS

There is a one week "cooling off" period before you can appeal a grade. If, after one week, you would like to make an appeal, you must do this in person. The appeal must be accompanied by a typed statement that outlines why you believe the grade is inappropriate. Re-grading may result in an increase or decrease to your mark.

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH SERVICES

- *Writing Services* - Students are encouraged to make use of the university's writing services. You can book an appointment: <https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/get-assistance/writing/book-appointments>.
- *Counseling Services* – Our university also has individual and group counseling to support you: <https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/counselling/>.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1 – September 14 – Introduction

This class will be used to review the course outline and assignments. We will also use our time to introduce ourselves to one another and learn more about what to expect from the year ahead for this course.

Class 2 – September 28 – Why is Research Important in Development?

Readings

Laws, S., C. Harper, N.Jones, and R. Marcus. 2003. "Chapter 2: How is research used in development work?" In *Research for Development: A Practical Guide*. London, UK: SAGE. Pp 25-48.

Murray, W., & Overton, J. 2014. “Designing Development Research”. In R. Scheyvens *Development Field Work: A Practical Guide*. Sage Publishing, Pp. 19-38. (this reading can be found through the U of Guelph library)

- Read from beginning of chapter and stop reading at the subtitle “How can I think of a research topic?” (pages 1-6 of PDF). Feel free to skim the rest though – lots of great info in here!

Class 3 – October 12 – Positionality and Reflexivity

Readings

Merriam, Sharan et al. 2010. “Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures” *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 20 (5).

England, K. 1994. “Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality and Feminist Research.” *The Professional Geographer*, 46(1): 80---89.

Bilgen, A., et al. 2021. “Why positionalities matter: reflections on power, hierarchy, and knowledges in “development” research” *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*

Philpott, J. 2010. Training for a global state of mind. *AMA Journal of Ethics*, 12(3), 231-236.

Soedirgo, J., & Glas, A. 2020. Toward Active Reflexivity: Positionality and Practice in the Production of Knowledge. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53(3), 527-531.

Class 4 – October 26 – Research Design – The Research Question

The purpose of this class is to practice designing research questions. There are two options below: option one is for those of you who would like to work on designing and refining your own research questions for your Masters work. Option 2 is for those of you who would not find that useful and can instead practice designing research questions for a topic that I have chosen. For both options you will need to read the case study in order to be able to understand the conversations and activities that we will use during the class.

Before class:

Read/Watch:

1. Video: Developing a research question, Laurier University Library:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1oJNO6PYZe4>
2. Murray, W., & Overton, J. (2014). “Designing Development Research”. In R. Scheyvens *Development field work*. SAGE Pp. 19-38. a. Read pg 26 – 30 (How can I think of a research topic? to Box 2.5) Feel free to skim the rest though – lots of great info in here!
3. Case study: Quinoa: Good, evil or just really complicated? (everyone should read this for context to Option Two)
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jan/25/quinoa-good-evil-complicated>

During class:

Be prepared to share your research questions with classmates and receive and provide constructive criticism on how to improve research questions. We will discuss best practices for question design and next steps in terms of broader research design.

Class 5 – November 9 – Introduction to Research Methods

Readings

“Chapter 16: Choosing Methods”

“Chapter 17: Seven Key Research Techniques”

“Chapter 18: Some Packages of Methods for Research for Development Work”

In Laws, S., C. Harper, N.Jones, and R. Marcus. 2003*Research for Development: A Practical Guide*. London, UK: Sage Publishing.

Class 6 – November 23 – Interviewing and Focus Groups

Readings

Berg, Bruce L. and Howard Lune. 2017. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Ninth Edition. Boston: Pearson. **Chapters 4 and 5** (This reading can be found as a digital copy online)

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail 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 an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for [Academic Consideration](#).

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.

Copies of Out-Of-Class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

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

Academic Misconduct

The [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) is detailed in the Undergraduate Calendar.

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and **it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct** and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Instructors **shall not** determine if academic misconduct has occurred. This is up to the Associate Dean Academic's office. Instructors shall not assign a grade of zero even if they believe that the student has committed some form of academic misconduct (e.g., copied material from a website like CourseHero) on an assignment or exam.

Instructors **can** determine if a student has poorly paraphrased and/or improperly cited material and can provide a grade accordingly as long as this is clearly identified as part of the assessment criteria via a rubric or other assessment tools.

For more information about Academic Integrity resources and how to prevent Academic Misconduct see: <https://csahs.uoguelph.ca/faculty-research/hub-teaching-learning-excellence/academic-integrity>

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.