

C4a – Research Methods in Social Sciences

Instructors

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Objectives

The course will introduce the essential qualitative, quantitative and participatory research methods used in social sciences for applied conservation, environment and development research. Emphasis will be placed on organizing and executing research projects and combining disciplinary approaches and methods in field settings.

At the end of the course, the students should be able to

- a) independently develop appropriate methodological protocols to answer questions in applied research on conservation, environment and development.
- b) design, organize and execute field oriented academic research projects requiring a mix of disciplinary approaches and methods.
- c) critically assess social research methods and tools used in research projects and studies.

Prerequisites and approach

A broad understanding of different social science disciplines, particularly the conceptual foundations, is desirable. Experience in working in research projects would be an advantage.

The course involves a mix of lecture and practical sessions. A combination of core and supplementary readings, including select chapters or sections from both textbooks and journal articles, will be used. There will be a short hands-on application in the field.

Credits and contact hours

1 credit, 16 hours

Grading

(a) Field assignment and presentation (group) 70% (40+30)

The students in groups of two will identify a short problem worth investigating, do a field exercise applying a set of methods and present the 'research' in the class. It is expected that the group will spend 8-12 hours for the whole exercise.

(b) Participatory exercise 20%

(c) Participation in class 10%

Overview and topics

Module 1

1.1 Foundations of social research and research process

Module 2

2.1 Sampling in quantitative and qualitative research

Module 3

3.1 Ethnography and participant observation

3.2 Policy analysis

3.4 Analysis of qualitative data

Module 4

4.1 Questionnaire surveys

Module 5

5.1 Select participatory methods (focus group discussion, transect walk, participatory mapping)

Core text book

- Helen Newing with others (2011), *Conducting Research in Conservation: A Social Science Perspective* (NEW)

Additional readings from textbooks

- C. Seale (2004) *Researching Society and Culture* (SEA)

- H. Russell Bernard (2006) *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (RUSS)

- Kitchin, R. and N. J. Tate (2000) *Conducting research in human geography: theory, methodology and practice*, Pearson: Prentice Hall (KIT)

- Chapter 5, Rossman, G. B. and S. F. Rallis (2012) *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, SAGE (ROSS)

- Chapter 13 (by L. Mayoux), Desai, V. and R. B. Potter (eds.) (2006) *Doing Development Research*, New Delhi: Sage.

More readings will be provided during the course.

Session-wise time-table (Wednesdays – 10:00-10:50am)

Hour	Date	Topic	Instructor	Readings
1	8 th Jan 14	- Introduction to the course - Overview of social research process	BT	-KIT Ch. 1&2 -ROSS Ch. 5, 118-24
2	22 nd Jan 14	- Overview of social research process (contd.)	BT	-MAY, 2006 -NEW Ch. 1
3	29 th Jan 14	- Sampling in social research - Quantitative and qualitative sampling techniques	BT	-NEW Ch. 4
4	5 th Feb 14	- Sampling techniques (contd.)	BT	
5	12 th Feb 14	- Quantitative methods: Questionnaire surveys	BT	-NEW Ch. 7
6	19 th Feb 14	- Qualitative methods: Ethnography and participant observation	SK	-NEW Ch. 5&6
7	5 th Mar 14	- Qualitative methods: Ethnography and participant observation (contd.)	SK	
8	12 th Mar 14	- Qualitative methods: Policy analysis	SK	TBA
9	19 th Mar 14	- Participatory methods: overview	SS	-NEW Ch. 9&10
10-12	26 th Mar 14 (whole day)	- Participatory methods: exercise	SS	
13-16	30 th Apr 14 (half day)	- Presentation of field exercise	All instructors and invited faculty	
	5 th May 14	- Submission of assignment	To BT on email	
	19 th May 14	- Feedback and results	Academy	

BT-Bejoy Thomas, SS-Siddappa Setty, SK-Siddhartha Krishnan