

C4a – Research Methods in Social Sciences

Instructors: Siddappa Setty (coordinator: siddappa@atree.org), Bejoy K Thomas, Siddhartha Krishnan and Ulka Kelkar.

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 - Newing et al (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.

Timetable:

Hour	Date	Topic	Instructor	Readings
1	11 th January 2016	- Introduction to the course - Overview of social research process	SS/BT	-KIT Ch. 1&2 - ROSS Ch. 5, 118-24 -MAY, 2006 - NEW Ch. 1
2	18 th January 2016	- Overview of social research process (contd.)	BT	
3	25 th January 2016	- Sampling in social research - Quantitative and qualitative sampling techniques	UK	NEW Ch. 4
4	1 st February 2016	- Sampling techniques (contd.)	UK	

5	8 th February 2016	- Quantitative methods: Questionnaire surveys	UK	-NEW Ch. 7
6	15 th February 2016	- Qualitative methods: Ethnography and participant observation	SK	-NEW Ch. 5&6
7	22 nd February 2016	- Qualitative methods: Ethnography and participant observation (contd.)	SK	
8	29 th February 2016	- Qualitative methods: Policy analysis	SK	TBA
9	7 th March 2016	- Participatory methods: overview	SS	-NEW Ch. 9&10
10-12	14 th March 2015 (Whole day)	- Participatory methods: exercise	SS	
13-16	21 st March 2015 (Half day)	- Presentation of field exercise	All instructors and invited faculty	
28 th March 2015		- Submission of assignment	To SS on email	
11 th April 2015		- Feedback and results	Academy	

BT- Bejoy Thomas, SK- Siddhartha Krishnan, UK- Ulka Kelkar, SS- Siddappa Setty