

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of Global Studies

Master of Arts in Transformational Urban Leadership (MATUL) Program

**TUL670 Research Project/Thesis**

**(6 units)**



Credit: Fadwa El Guindi, Qatar University

**Fall 2013, Summer 2013**

Term 1: Sept. 04-Dec. 14, 2012

Term 2: Jan. 07-May 03, 2013

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**I. Course Description**

Students apply the analytic frameworks and practical skills acquired through the MATUL program to an investigation of a specific urban poor issue. Qualitative and/or quantitative research methods are used to gather and organize pertinent information, culminating in the writing and oral presentation of a thesis or professional report.

**II. Expanded Course Description**

**The MATUL Commission course description**

Students apply analytic frameworks and practical skills to an investigation of a specific issue on behalf of a church movement or community organization that involves local residents in specific transformation efforts. Research methods are taught and used to gather and organize pertinent information, culminating in the writing and oral presentation of a Professional Report. (This may be replaced with a thesis if required by some accrediting bodies).

New Knowledge: One of the major tasks of a graduate program is to train students to *produce* new knowledge, and then to *communicate* that new knowledge to relevant audiences. For advanced MATUL students, this entails the design of a research project, the organization of tasks and activities, the use of a variety of research methods to collect information, and the presentation of findings to a public audience. In social sciences tradition, this involves “field research”: Students leave the campus compound, library or laboratory in order to obtain first-hand information within community contexts. This is not a PhD, where the aim is to develop a new theory, but a Masters enerally takes extant theory and evaluates or extends an aspect of it.

**Theological Action-Reflection:** This degree began with reflection on the process of Transformational Conversations, a development of the Hermeneutic Cycle in urban ministry. This begins in action that defines a question, iterates through theological conversation, social analysis and returns to a new point of action. This theological paradigm parallels action-research theory in the social sciences.

**Community Organization Focus:** The Thesis or Project is designed to structure a process by which student-investigators conduct field research oriented towards the needs of a specific community organization. This organization can be public, private, or non-profit. In some cases it will be an urban poor church; in other cases an issue-oriented community organization with a large professional staff. Although the range of possible partner organizations is broad, it is imperative that it be “high quality.” The capacity, reputation, and level of public involvement of the organization will all directly affect whether project planning will be ‘participatory,’ as well as how well research results will be applied within specific populations or communities. Students should thus exercise great care in selecting partner organizations that can support their research effort. Students will eventually negotiate with the organization a particular issue and research question that supports its mission and agenda. Then they will select appropriate approaches and methods for investigating it.

**Program Integration and Preparation for Your Future:** In architecture, the “capstone” is the crowning piece of an arch, the center stone that holds the arch together, giving it shape and strength. The research and writing involved in the Thesis or Projectplays a similar role, challenging students to tie together, extend, and deepen the work they’ve already undertaken during their core courses and practical training (internships), and based on this integration to then potentially project forwards to the future ministry or career of the student.. As action research it should result in a specific extension of a church or community context . The parallel course in Entrepreneurial Leadership can well be utilized to broaden this thesis into a fundable proposal, including a workable business plan and funding proposal.

As this degree is a missions theology degree, a degree in social entrepeneurship, and in movement leadership and the multiplication of churches, this research could move in each one of these directions. It would be wise to choose your focus in the direction of your gifts and call. It could also ideally integrate the spiritual, theological, and socio-economic aspects of the degree, but research, to be successful, tends to be focused on a narrow topic, rather than broad ideas.

**Research Skills:** This final project report, as the culminating course product, is intended to profoundly shape student learning. It asks students to define a research agenda, familiarize themselves with similar studies, collect and analyze fresh data, develop conclusions and recommendations, and represent findings to a public audience it all in a clear and operational format. The report not only contributes to the students’ education, but also becomes a significant resource for the public good.

The actual seminar walks students through a research and writing process that extends over a two-term (27 week) period. Successful completion of the course earns 6 units of graduate credit and represents approximately 320 hours of “invested learning.” Learning activities include: completing assigned reading and video viewing, consulting with organization staff, participating in on-line forums, conducting fieldwork, producing project reports, and disseminating results. It is expected that the student will spend, *on average*, ten hours per week on course-related activities.

The objective of the instructor-advisor is to structure a research process by which students can apply disciplinary knowledge and discover their potential as problem solvers. Thus, to experience the gratification, frustration, uncertainty, and enlightenment that accompany field research, and to prepare themselves for assuming new levels of community leadership and service. While the quality of the research and writing must be high to be of use to the host organization, the specific findings and recommendations are secondary to *mastering the research process*. What students and organizational staff learn together from a collaborative process of inquiry is at least as important as the results they obtain. That is why it is critical that students enrolled in the course be sincerely motivated and committed to **participatory research** that empowers community organizations, as opposed to students seeking to merely fulfill a program requirement.

**III. Student Learning Outcomes**

The research and writing activities that are central to *Thesis or Project* aim to connect and enhance learning in several domains: intellectual (“head”), attitudinal (“heart”), and skill (“hands”). By the end of the course, students should be able to:

**Intellectual (“head”)**

* Articulate the philosophical, theological, and practical distinctives of participatory action research.
* Critically discuss literature (books, book chapters, articles, reports) related to the research topic and central question.
* Discuss the relevance of various qualitative research techniques to answering the research question within a specific social context.
* Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research findings as evidence for conclusions and recommendations.

**Affective (“heart”)**

* Demonstrate personal warmth, humility, power sharing, and empathy with community organization staff and “clients”

**Skills (“hands”)**

* Demonstrate *project management* skills—i.e. the ability to: (a) assess the capacity and reputation of partner organizations, churches or movements; (b) frame and refine the theological and socio-economic elements of the research problem in consultation with church, NGO or movement leadership; (c) develop a project plan with timelines and deliverables; (d) monitor progress against the project plan.
* Demonstrate *interpersonal* skills—i.e., the ability to develop rapport and sustain trust relationships with organizational leadership and study group members
* Demonstrate *in-field research* skills—i.e., the ability to (a) gain access to the study population in their social settings; (b) select appropriate data collection methods; (c) conduct interviews with select informants; (d) analyze the data; and (e) effectively communicate findings in writing and a public presentation.

**IV. Course Materials**

Students are responsible to obtain the “required” materials below in either hard copy or electronic version. The “recommended” materials, though optional, offer valuable information for the various phases of the project. Portions of the text can be accessed online. Students are also required to identify 5 local materials that feature case studies of research among urban poor populations from their particular region.

**Required**

Desai, V. and Potter, R. (Eds.) (2006). *Doing development research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Maxwell, J. (2004). *Qualitative research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**Recommended**

Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing research in the real world* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Scheyvens, R. and Storey, D. Eds. (2003). *Development fieldwork: A practical guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Diana Mitlin & David Satterthwaite. Eds. (2004). *Empowering squatter citizen: Local government, civil society and urban poverty reduction*. Earthscan Publications. [*This book provides eight case studies of community-driven initiatives based on participatory research processes. It profiles some projects where the primary development agent is local government, and others where grassroot organizations are the main catalysts. Reading this text will suggest potential research topics and questions. It also serves to highlight the importance of building, strengthening, and working through competent, accountable local organizations formed by the poor themselves.*]

**For those with a Church Planting Movement Emphasis**

Schwartz, C. A. (2003). Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of a Healthy Church. D-25924 Emmesbull, Germany, C & P Publishing. ($5.90 Amazon)

Waymire, B. and C. Townsend (2000). Discovering Your City : Bringing Light to the Task of Community Transformation, Light International.

**V. Expectations & Grading**

Students will be awarded 3 credits for the first term and 3 credits for the second term. The end-of-first-semester grade will be reported as “IP” to reflect the “work in progress” nature of the seven month project. Final grades are assigned at the end of the second semester.

**Assessments** (Components of Final Grade)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Online Discussions & Course Projects** | **Weight/ Points** |
| **Term 1** | |
| *Online discussions* (Weekly forum discussions)  Evaluative criteria: Online: quantity and timeliness of post; quality of posts. Skype: “attendance” at calls; quality of participation. | 10%  10 pts. |
| #1 *Urban research design*  Evaluative criteria: timeliness, completeness, evidence of idea integration from assigned materials, writing quality | 10%  10 pts. |
| #2 *Agency assessment and selection*  Evaluative criteria: timeliness, completeness, depth of analysis, writing quality | 10%  10 pts. |
| #3 *Project plan and timetable*  Evaluative criteria*:* timeliness, completeness, evidence of idea integration from assigned materials, feasibility of plan | 10%  10 pts. |
| #4 *Literature review*  Evaluative criteria: # of high-quality (authoritative) sources; completeness, quality of literature analysis, writing quality | 10%  [10 pts.] |
| **Term 2** | |
| *Online discussions* (Weekly forum discussions)  Evaluative criteria: Online: quantity and timeliness of post; quality of posts. Skype: “attendance” at calls; quality of participation. | 10%  10 pts. |
| #5 *Information description*  Evaluative criteria: selection of appropriate research methods; blend of observational and interview data; # of informants; quality of interview guide; quality of data collected; clear organization of data by labeled themes; writing quality (clear, succinct, spelling, persuasiveness). | 15%  15 pts. |
| #6 *Information analysis*  Evaluative criteria: evidence of collaboration with national guide; evidence of concept integration from prior studies; clear identification of relationships between variables; succinct but insightful conclusions; writing quality (use of headings, clarity, conciseness, spelling, grammar, and persuasiveness) | 10%  10 pts. |
| #7 *Professional report*  *Evaluative criteria:* Timeliness (submission of product on time); incorporation of “description” and “analysis” sections, as well as the other structural elements outlined in Addendum D of the “Real World Research” doc; mastery of the research issue/problem, including knowledge of the larger context of the study and background knowledge from prior studies; writing quality (formatting, clarity, conciseness, spelling, grammar, and persuasiveness). | 5%  5 pts. |
| #8 *Public presentation*  Evaluative criteria:organization of event; creativity in presentational techniques; clarity of presentation; persuasiveness. | 10%  10 pts. |
| **Totals:** | 100%  100 pts. |

**Grades** are assigned according to the following levels of proficiency:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | APU | |
| Grade | GPA | Numeric |
| A+ |  | Not given |
| A | 4.0 | 95-100 |
| A- | 3.7 | 92-94.99 |
| B+ | 3.3 | 89-91.99 |
| B | 3.0 | 84-88.99 |
| B- | 2.7 | 81-83.99 |
| C+ | 2.3 | 78-80.99 |
| C | 2.0 | 73-77.99 |
| C- | 1.7 | 70-72.99 |
| D+ | 0 | 69-69.99 |
| D | 0 | 68-68.99 |
| D- | 0 | 65-67.99 |
| F | 0 | 0-64.99 |
| Inc. |  |  |

Your final grade is a reflection of a combination of your talent, effort and achievement, *not effort alone*. Different students may earn very different grades, even though they expend the same amount of time and energy. The meanings I attach to “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” and “F” grades are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **A** | Outstanding performance: shows intrinsic interest in the course and subject; consistently asks penetrating questions and/or offers thoughtful reflections during Forum discussions; demonstrates exceptional intelligence and creativity in project reports; earns high scores on course assignments—usually the highest in the class. |
| **B** | *Above average* student in terms of participation, preparation, attitude, initiative in asking questions, time management, and assignment quality. |
| **C** | Average or typical student in terms of participation, preparation, attitude, initiative in asking questions, time management, and assignment quality. |
| **D** | *Below average* or atypical student in terms of participation, preparation, attitude, initiative in asking questions, time management, and assignment quality — minimally passing in performance. |
| **F** | Repeat course. Inadequate/insufficient performance. |

**Online Discussion Guidelines**

Online or “threaded” Discussions (“Forums” in Sakai) are topically organized dialogs or conversations that take place in Sakai. The Forums enable MATUL students and faculty to link messages in order to exchange project-related insights from geographically dispersed locations.

During threaded discussions, students interact with *content* (e.g. assigned readings and videos), their *classmates* (via discussion, peer review), and with the *instructor* (as they seek to instruct, guide, correct, and support learners). Messages in a given thread share a common topic and are linked to each other in the order of their creation. All students have a “voice” in the discussions; no one—not even the instructor—is able to dominate or control the conversation. Because the course is available *asynchronously* (i.e. at any time and from any location with an Internet connection), online discussions enable participants to reflect on each other’s contributions, as well as their own, prior to posting. As “iron sharpens iron,” each student’s contribution enhances the learning of all other students, and feeds back into our life within our host communities.

To make this process work for all, “posts” must be made during specified time periods (as specified under each project). ***This means that you will have to finish processing any assigned reading and/or other project-related work within those same time periods.*** To write substantive posts, you will need to stay healthy, focused, and organized.

*Procedure*

* Begin a particular project within the specified time period.
* Wait for the instructor to pose a topic-related query.
* Each student responds with an initial, substantive post.
* Students respond to each other’s posts.
* Instructor interacts with student responses, redirecting the discussion when necessary to improve participation, while also encouraging the exploration of topic-related issues

*Guidelines for participation*

* Students adhere to specific timeframes for discussion and reflection.
* For each topical thread, each student contributes at least three (3) posts.
* Students pay attention to the *quantity/timeliness* and *quality* of their postings (see rubric below)

*Assessment rubric*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Quantity and timeliness of post** | * Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely * Appears indifferent to learning community | * Responds to most postings several days after initial (scheduled) discussion; * Takes limited initiative | * Responds to most postings within a 24-hour period; * Rarely requires prompting to post | * Consistently responds to posting in less than 24 hours * Shows initiative in motivating group discussion’ |
| **Quality of post** | * Posts topics unrelated to discussion topic; * Appears “rushed” with poor spelling/ grammar and unclear expression | * Occasionally posts off topic; offers short posts with limited insight on the topic; * Difficulty in expressing ideas clearly | * Frequently posts topics related to discussion topic * States opinions and ideas clearly; contributes insights to topic | * Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic * Clear, creative expression of ideas and opinions |

**VI. Course Policies**

**Workload Expectations**

Credit values for MATUL courses (including practitioner training courses) are calculated by equating one credit with what, in the professional judgment of faculty, should require an average of approximately 50 hours of “invested learning” activity (i.e., 160 hours for a 3-unit course). Successful completion of *Thesis or Project* earns 6 units of graduate credit and represents approximately 320 hours of deliberate and structured learning activities. Those activities include a wide range of educational practices, including participation in online discussions (“Forums”), self-guided reading, on-line and library research, community fieldwork, report writing, and public presentations

This 6 unit course delivered over a 15 week and a 12 week term will approximate 10 hours per week including: 3 hours of direct faculty instruction through asynchronous online discussion (forums) and synchronous (chat), and an additional 6-10 hours consisting of faculty-guided instruction, learning activities / projects and assessment.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Credit-hour Distribution** | Approx hours per week | Hours over a term |
| 1. Direct instruction by discussion   * Discussion Forums * Adobe Connect * Local Expert Content | 1 clock hour per credit hour  1-3 hrs | 7 ½ -15  22 ½  10-30 |
| 2. Faculty-directed instruction   * Readings & research | 2-5 | 30-50 |
| 1. Learning activities and projects (experiential learning)  * Projects | 2-7 | 20-40 |
| 4. Assessment (writing) | 1-3 | 25-60 |
| **Total Hours** | **8-11** | **140-180** |

The correlation of class hours and assignments with local delivery is to be evaluated in the first week of whichever starts first – local or online (See document *Planning Work Load with Partnering Schools Courses*).

**Late Assignments**

All assignments are due by the specified deadlines. Assignments not turned in on this date will be penalized 10% of the total point value, and will *only be accepted up to one week after they are due*. This strictness regarding the submission of completed assignments is to guard students from procrastination and falling behind in their academic and field assignments.

**Academic Integrity**

* The mission of the MATUL program includes cultivating in each student not only the knowledge and skills required for a master’s degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to Christian community. Those privileged to participate in the MATUL educational community have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty, and a right to expect the same standards of all others. Students assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Some of the most noteworthy forms of academic misconduct in course focusing on research and writing are as follows:
* Presenting the work of another as one's own.
* Quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source.
* Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructor.
* Receiving assistance from others in informational research or field data collection that constitutes an essential element in the undertaking without acknowledging such assistance.
* Fabricating data by inventing or deliberately altering material (this includes citing "sources" that are not, in fact, sources).

Violations of academic honesty will result in sanctions that may include a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade in the course, and/or academic probation.

**VII. Online Schedule At-a-Glance**

Skype call times: Friday – L.A. Thurs. 8-9:30pm ; Manila 12:00noon -1:30pm; Bangkok 11 am-12:30; India 8:30-10:00 am;

TD = Threaded Discussion

**Term 1** [Jan 07-April 26, 2012]

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Skype Call** | **Threaded Disc** | **Project Due Date** | **Topic** |
| 1 | Thurs/Fri am 10&11/01 |  |  | Course introduction; Q&A |
| 2 | 01/17 | TD#1 |  | Participatory urban research |
| 3 | 01/24 | TD#1 [cont.] | Project 1: 01/22 | [Cont.] |
| 4 | 01/31 | TD#2 |  | Charting the research journey |
| 5 | 02/07 | TD#2 [cont.] | Project 2: 02/04 | [Cont.] |
| 6 | 02/14 | TD#3 |  | Research Plan |
| 7 | 02/21 | TD#3 [cont.] | Project 3 (1st draft): 02/18 | [Cont.] |
| 8 | 02/28 | TD#4 |  | Ethics of fieldwork |
| 9 | 03/07 | TD#4 [cont.] |  | [Cont.] |
| 10 | 03/14 | TD#5 |  | Literature Review |
| 11 | 03/21 | TD#5 [cont.] | Project 4: 03/18 | [Continue searching and reading lit.] |
|  | 03/28 EASTER |  |  |  |
| 12 | 04/04 | TD#5 [cont.] |  | [Continue in-depth reading of lit.] |
| 13 | 04/11 | TD#6 |  |  |
| 14 | 04/18 | TD#6 [cont.] |  | Fieldwork: Participant Observation |
| 15 | 04/25 |  | Project 3 (final draft): 04/22 | Integration of insights from course readings, local guide |

**Term 2** [May. 06- July 26, 2013]

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Skype Call** | **Threaded Disc** | **Project Due Date** | **Topic** |
| 1 | 05/09 |  |  | Term 2 introduction; Q&A |
| 2 | 05/16 | TD#7 |  | Informant interviewing |
| 3 | 05/23 | TD#7 [cont.] |  | Informant interviewing [cont.] |
| 4 | 05/30 | TD#7 [cont.] |  | Writing data description |
| 5 | 06/06 | TD#7 [cont.] | Project 5: 06/03 | Writing data description |
| 6 | 06/13 | TD#8 |  | Writing data analysis |
| 7 | 06/20 | TD#8 [cont.] | Project 6: 06/17 | Telling the story: guide’s review of draft report |
| 8 | 06/27 | TD#9 |  | Final professional report preparation |
| 9 | 07/04 | TD#9 [cont.] | Project 7: 07/01 | Returning results |
| 10 | 07/11 | TD#10 |  | Returning results [cont.] |
| 11 | 07/18 |  | Project 8: 07/15 | Public presentation preparation |
| 12 | 07/25 |  |  | Public presentation sharing; course evaluation |

**VIII. Course Policies**

**Professor Acessibilty:** My various phone numbers, SKYPE and email are on the bottom of my emails. While I have adjusted to overseas times with class schedules, late into my evening and early morning, I prefer to work with student enquiries between 8 am – 6 pm PST, so as to preserve family dynamics. I attempt to answer myemails within 1-2 days unless travelling or leading a conference.I usually check the first forum for any issues twice per week and seek to review any forums once or twice per week. Please do not call on weekends as I try to care for family. I seek to grade within a week after a deadline, but if there are some people in the class who have not submitted I will wait for all to be submitted os that grading can be done with fairness. Technical Support: Call 1-815-5050 or email Support@apu.edu

# Academic Integrity: The mission of Azusa Pacific University includes cultivating in each student not only the academic skills that are required for a university degree, but also the characteristics of academic integrity that are integral to a sound Christian education. It is therefore part of the mission of the university to nurture in each student a sense of moral responsibility consistent with the biblical teachings of honesty and accountability. Furthermore, a breach of academic integrity is viewed not merely as a private matter between the student and an instructor but rather as an act that is fundamentally inconsistent with the purpose and mission of the entire university. A complete copy of the Academic Integrity Policy is available in the Office of Student Life, the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs, and online.

# References to author and text must be included whenever the author is quoted or ideas used. This is simple respect. Use the APA6 Author-Date system. It is required that you get a copy of EndNote from IMT or the Library for keeping your references over the years. It will do most of the formatting for you.

# Disability Procedure: Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should communicate with the MATUL program director, as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

**Satisfactory progress** in the degree requires a GPA of 3.0 or above, across your courses.

# Class attendance: Students are required to join in the class SKYPE discussions each week, with an opening statement in response to one of the questions and 2 responses to others comments later in the week in the online forums. This gives the core coherence to the online learning process. .

# Make up and extra credit: If a student has an “excused” absence from a week’s work that delays an assignment, they may make that up within the next week. If they have no excuse from the weeks work, they will receive a 10% drop in grade if submitted the next week, and 20% if submitted two weeks later. Assignment will not be accepted three weeks late. We all tend to mess up on an assignment, so there is recourse in one extra credit assignment for 2 extra marks.

# Incompletes: The grade of “Incomplete” can only be given in the case of a verified personal/family emergency and with the approval of the course professor and the college dean.

# Returns: We will attempt to grade work the week submitted though this is not always feasible. The course work and grades will be open to view two weeks after the end of the course.

**Fairness:** Course outlines, grading rubrics etc., are not legal contracts, where you pay for a grade according to predetermined standards, but are submitted to you to give some understanding of the basis of grading and fairness. However grading of papers is multivariate and to some extent will always include the subjective, based on years of experience, and at times tailored to the learning process of the student, or accommodating specific needs. In this class across several cities, the context is different, the contracts with partnering groups are different, learning contracts are set up in some cities prior to class that allow for equivalency, living conditions affect capacity, content of prior degrees affect the level of difficulty for some students in some courses, so fairness requires that each students work will be graded within these limitations. You are competing with yourself not others.

**University or Department Policies:** All university and departmental policies affecting student work, appeals, and grievances, as outlined in the Graduate Catalog and/or Department Handbook will apply, unless otherwise indicated in this syllabus.

**Support Services:** There are many available support services for graduate students including the Graduate Center, Regional Centers, Libraries, Computer Center, Media Center, Writing Center, Counseling Center, and International Center. See the Graduate Catalog for more details.

In addition to these there is the Learning Enrichment Center. Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

**Writing Assignments:** papers are due on assigned dates. All assignments should be:

* Times New Roman or Cambria, single spaced, 12 point
* 1 inch margins
* Titled, Name and date in right upper corner,
* Page numbers in right lower corner
* single spaced

Late assignments will be deducted 5% for each week late (1 week late = 5% deduction, 2 weeks = 10% deduction). After 2 weeks they receive a zero. If late please note at the top left “1 week” or “2 weeks”.

**Study time:**

In the MATUL it is easy for local leaders to wish to use the foreigner as an extra worker in the ministry. Your primary objective is not to respond to every request for ministry but to complete your masters, learning as you go. You are strongly advised to advise your pastor that you are restricted to Sunday activities and one other night. On the other hand success in the MATUL is based on successful engagement with the community more than with the computer.

# Copyright Responsibilities: Students and faculty are both authors and users of copyrighted materials. As a student you must know the rights of both authors and users with respect to copyrighted works to ensure compliance. It is equally important to be knowledgeable about legally permitted uses of copyrighted materials. Information about copyright compliance, fair use and websites for downloading information legally can be found at <http://apu.libguides.com/content.php?pid=241554&search_terms=copyright>

# Information literacy is defined as “a set of abilities requiring individuals recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information” (American Library Association, 1989). In this course, teaching and learning processes will employ the following information literacy standards, as endorsed by the American Association for Higher Education (1999), the Association of College and Research Libraries (2000), and the Council of Independent Colleges (2004). The students in this course will:

• determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

• access needed information effectively and efficiently.

• evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

• individually or as a member of a group, use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

• understand many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

**Legal Disclaimer:** This course is in constant development and may change at the professor's discretion. All effort is made to not materially change major assignments once they have been begun, and if so to do so to the students' advantage. Grading rubrics are not a legal entity but simply a helpful guide to the student as to some elements the professor uses to grade, as grading involves considerable subjectivity. Creativity is encouraged and alternatives to assignments recognized, but normally should be negotiated beforehand.

**VIII. Syllabus**

**Term 1**

**Topic 1: Planning Slum-based Participatory Research**

The research we undertake within urban poor communities has a particular character that can be described as community-based, participatory, and action-oriented. Rather than merely obtain knowledge for knowledge’s sake, our research aims to contribute to the practical concerns of urban poor residents in their immediate community or problematic situation through by a collaborative process and within a mutually acceptable ethical framework. As a by-product, it also contributes to the goals of mission and social science. The relationship between researcher and researched is fundamentally changed to recognize the unique strengths that grassroots organizations bring to social change efforts.

What community organization, church or movement we elect to affiliate with depends, to a large extent, on the particular issue or topic we decide to focus our research on. The range of potential topics is as broad as social experience.

Nevertheless, nine challenges closely correlate with the the quality of life of urban poor groups:

These are rooted in a limited lifegiving spirituality (1) *lack of access to faith communities, (2) lack of knowledge of the transforming power of the gospel, (3) poor discipling and (5) faltering faith community growth patterns and (6) low levels of moral-spiritual integrity* reflected invision, values, affections, habits, and ways of thinking;

Contextual factors greatly affect these core elements of life:

(1) *inadequate income* which gives rise to inadequate consumption levels of basic life necessities, (2) *low educational attainment,* (3) *inadequate* *shelter* (poor quality, overcrowded and insecure)*,* (4) *inadequate provision of “public” infrastructure* (piped water, sanitation, drainage, roads, footpaths, etc.), (5) *inadequate provision of basic services* (daycare centers, schools, vocational training centers, health-care clinics, public transport, law enforcement, etc.); (6) *inadequate protection of marginal groups’ rights through the operation of the law,* (7) *voicelessness and powerlessness* of poorer groups within political systems and bureaucratic structures, and (8) *inadequate* *accountability* from aid agencies, NGOs, public agencies and private utilities. Carefully consider what quality-of-life issue you wish to research, along with the assets of prospective urban poor organizations addressing that challenge.

***Preparations***

* Slimbach, “Real World Research” (Scan all)
* *Doing Development Research*, Ch. 1, 2, 11, 13
* “Participatory Research”: h[ttp://www.unesco.org/education/aladin/paldin/pdf/course01/unit\_08.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/aladin/paldin/pdf/course01/unit_08.pdf)
* “Participatory Urban Appraisal”

<http://www.forum-urban-futures.net/files/Participatory_Urban_Appraisal.pdf>.

**Threaded discussion (TD) period for Topic 1:** 17/01-30/01

**Project 1**

***Urban research design (approach, topic, question, and methods)***

Our first course project asks us to consider the general *approach* we take in doing community-based research, along with specific *models* of research actually completed by others. In a 3 to 4 page, single-spaced, typed report, do three things:

1. Carefully read the assigned materials. Refer to specific ideas (via paraphrases or direct quotes) from these readings in #2 below.

2. Draft responses to two questions: (a) What are the key assumptions and distinctive principles/features of a *participatory* approach to development-oriented research? (b) How do “participatory” approaches help equalize power and control in the research process?

2. Select four (4) case studies, each from a different region, from the “Participatory Urban Appraisal” website (above). Compare and contrast those studies in terms of (1) problem or topic addressed, (2) central research question(s), and (3) the key methodological considerations in partnering with communities (for research planning, data gathering, and dissemination of results).

Submit Project 1 to “Assignments” in Sakai by **22/01**.

**Project 2**

***Church, NGO or movement assessment and selection***

Our field research will be conducted *through* and *on behalf of* a respected grassroots organization of some kind. This requires that we complete a three-step assessment of prospective organizations.

*Step 1:* Become familiar with a range of local organizations in various development sectors (i.e. church growth, health, education, human rights).

*Step 2:* Narrow your interest down to three (3) highly regarded organizations working on issues aligned with your research interest.

*Step 3:* Conduct an in-person assessment with supervisors or directors from each of these organizations. During this assessment, ascertain (a) the internal capacity of the organization [see questions below]; (b) the current mission of the organization, (c) how a community-based research project might advance their outreach agenda and fill a gap in the work of the organization, (d) what specific types of information the organization seeks to acquire, and (e) who would be available to both assist in data collection and guide/supervise the project.

Compile this information for all three organizations in a typed, 3 to 4 page (max) report. Submit Project 2 to “Assignments” in Sakai by **04/02**.

Also, prepare to summarize your findings in a 3-4 minute oral (Skype) presentation.

Questions to Ascertain the Internal Capacity of Community Organizations

1. Does the organization and its leadership enjoy a reputation in the host community for being honest and sincere, without evidences of misconduct related to fund use, management, and governance? [Legitimate]
2. Does the organization address specific community dilemmas and risks (e.g. ill health, failing schools, economic shocks, human rights abuses, land tenure)? [Problem-focused]
3. Is the organization acknowledged as a “model” of best practices and effectiveness in that specific sector of development? [Exemplary]
4. Does the organization include, in both its staff and beneficiaries, a cross-section of community residents, crossing tribal, religious, caste differences? [Public]
5. Does the organization involve local residents in defining and carrying out an agenda for community improvement? [Participatory]
6. Does the organization have bilingual national staff who are able and willing to provide outside researchers expert supervision and feedback? [Supervised]

**Topic 2: Charting the Research Journey**

Once an organization, church or movement has been selected to host your research, systematic planning can begin. Planning begins with a personal assessment of the primary research instrument—*you!* It then moves to confirming a subject focus and formulating a clear research question that addresses the needs of the host agency and study group. From there, fieldwork unfolds to include the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data.

***Preparations***

* Richard Slimbach, “Real World Research” (carefully read pages 1-6)
* *Doing Development Research* (Ch. 4, 5)
* *Qualitative Research Design* (Ch. 2, 3)

**Threaded discussion (TD) period for Topic 2:** **31/01-6/02**

**Topic 3: Composing a Project Plan**

***Preparations***

* *Doing Development Research*, Ch. 1, 2
* *Qualitative Research Design* (Ch. 4, 5, 7, appendix)
* Slimbach, “Real World Research” (carefully read Phases 1-7, “Interlude”, and Addendum C)

**Threaded discussion (TD) period for Topic 3:** **10/08-10/21**

**Project 3**

***Project plan and timetable***

The project Plan, with timetable, depicts the various research design decisions you make in consultation with members of your host organization. Follow these four steps in formulating the Plan.

*Step 1.* Draft a Project Plan/Proposal using the template provided in Addendum C of the “Real World Research” doc. Strive for completeness, clear organization, clarity, and feasibility in the Plan.

*Step 2.* Confirm a project supervisor within your host organization. Then meet with her/him to review the Plan. Incorporate their feedback into a revised version of the Plan.

*Step 3.* Establish a tentative timeline (tasks and begin/end dates) for the project. Include it in the final version of the Plan.

*Step 4.* Obtain signatory approval from your project /guide for the Plan. Scan the final Plan and submit it to Sakai.

Submit complete 1st draft of Project 3 to “Assignments” in Sakai by **Sunday 10/21**.

**Topic 4: Ethical Practices**

***Preparations***

* *Doing Development Research*, Ch. 3, 6, 7
* “Research Without Consent”: #51 at <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU15.html>
* Slimbach, “Real World Research” (carefully re-read Phase 6)
* American Anthropological Association *Statement on Ethics*. Available online at: <http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/ethstmnt.htm>.

**Threaded discussion (TD) time period for Topic 4:** **10/22-11/04**

**Topic 5: Doing Fieldwork: Literature Review**

Once the proposal has received instructor approval and supervisor acceptance, we next consider how to go about collecting the types of information that will answer the main research question or problem. These are our research methods. Primary emphasis will be given to discussing three of the most important sources of data: (1) *other*, similar studies that have been produced on the topic, (2) “participant observation” that immerses researchers into local situations in order to understand and document how things *really* are and not just what is said about what “is”, and (3) informal interviewing of persons in those situations in order to uncover “insider” perspectives related to the research question.

***Preparations***

* Slimbach, “Real-World Inquiry” (carefully re-read Phase 7)
* *Doing Development Research*, Ch. 22, 28, 19, 15, 16, 18, 20
* Complete the following two tutorials: Internet searching tutorial: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/FindInfo.html> Electronic database searching tutorial: <http://library.uwaterloo.ca/libguides/cdrom/introsrch_selection.html>

**Threaded discussion (TD) time period for Topic 5:** **11/05-11/25**

**Project 4**

***Literature Review***

It is hard to imagine any prospective topic *not* being researched before. Prior studies not only exist, but they are easily accessed via a combination of the Web and electronic databases. Our job is to identify them, study them, and allow them to model possible approaches to collecting topic-specific information. The “literature review” is completed *before* we start field research. This allows us to see what has and has not been investigated, to identify data sources that other researchers have used, and to identify potential relationships between concepts and your primary research question. Our work plan can then be refined and clarified on the basis of our review.

1. Complete an Internet search (using Google Scholar) and relevant electronic databases to locate at least 10 prior studies on your research topic. (APU subscribes to a number of electronic databases; consult with the research librarian to identify the most appropriate databases for your search.) Maintain complete bibliographic information in APA format.

2. In a 3-4 page typed “literature review”, answer the following questions. Be sure to carefully reference ideas from specific prior studies.

* After an extensive search of prior studies, what are my top five (5) textual sources?
* What specific gaps in my knowledge of the subject do these studies help to fill?
* What do these studies reveal as the most controversial *issues* surrounding the topic?
* What data collection *methods* have other researchers used to study my topic? How appropriate are those methods to my proposed research?

3. Submit the Project 4 report to “Assignments” in Sakai by **Sunday 11/25**.

**Topic 6: Doing Fieldwork: Participant Observation**

***Preparations***

* Re-read Slimbach, “Real-World Inquiry” (refer to Phase 7)

**Threaded discussion (TD) time period for Topic 6:** **11/26-12/09**

***Note:*** Final draft of Project 3 (Research Plan) due by Friday 12/14.

**Term 2**

**Topic 7: Doing Fieldwork: Informant Interviewing**

***Preparations***

* Re-read Slimbach, “Real-World Inquiry” (refer to Phase 7)
* *Qualitative Research Design,* Ch 5 (“Methods…”)
* Video: “Getting People to Talk” <http://vimeo.com/1269848> [33 min.]
* Question types: <http://www.design4instruction.com/articles/pdf/The%20Ethnographic%20Interview.pdf>.
* Paying informants? <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU14.html>
* Joint interviewing? <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU15.html>

**Threaded discussion (TD) time period for Topic 7:** **01/14-02/10**

**Project 5**

***Information Description***

Fieldnotes based on structured observations of community settings and groups have now been completed. Electronic mounds of interview data, whether in the form of transcribed text and/or extensive notes, are also organized on your hard drive, ready for processing. The next two projects ask you to take these “raw” notes and convert them into the “description” (Project 5) and “interpretation” (Project 6) sections of your final report. These two projects are credited at 15 pts each as they represent the “core” of the final report.

The process of describing and analyzing data is detailed in the assigned materials, as well as in “Real World Research” doc (Phases 8-9, along with Addendum D). Please adhere to the specified content and length guidelines as you set out to construct the “story” through the two projects.

For Project 5, construct as complete a record as possible of what you have seen (via observation) and heard (via interviews). Complete the sorting and coding process in order to identify key themes that can provide some organizational structure to the description section. Seek to remain faithful to the actual reality, especially your informants’ thoughts and words. *How* did they talk about this aspect? *How many* talked about it? What did they *not* include? The data, which you have painfully collected, should be the “star" in the description. Present it in all its richness, breadth and depth, with a generous number of direct quotes. When all is said and done, *writing* quality is based on *data* quality—that is, on how well you have done at collecting and preserving quality information.

Submit Project 5 to “Assignments” in Sakai by **Sunday, 02/10**.

**Topic 8: Analyzing Data**

***Preparations***

* Re-read: Slimbach, “Real-World Inquiry” (carefully re-read Phases 8-9)
* View: “I Have Some Interview Data. What Next?” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em3dRhwQEAA> [9 min.]
* Read: Ryan & Bernard, “Techniques to Identify Themes” <http://www.engin.umich.edu/teaching/crltengin/engineering-education-research-resources/ryan-and-bernard-techniques-to-identify-themes.pdf>
* *Qualitative Research Design,* Ch 6 (“Validity…”)

**Threaded discussion (TD) time period for Topic 8:** **02/11-02/24**

**Project 6**

***Information Analysis***

A solid “description” section is indispensable to presenting clear analysis. It provides the necessary background and points of reference for your reader to appreciate the “sense” you make of the data. Analysis *interprets* data sources (what you’ve read, observed in social settings, and heard from informants), and *relates* them back to the main research question. In contrast to the descriptive record, the analysis section requires that we interpret the data in meaningful ways. We draw connections between different ideas or “themes” that emerge from the data, and identify patterns of associations between variables. Writing the analysis section of the report is a creative exercise where you draw heavily on (1) your background knowledge (from academic reading on the topic), (2) your ability to take good fieldnotes and compile solid descriptive data, and (3) your capacity to link specific observations and pieces of interview information to more general concepts and relationships. The Project 6 report is credited at 15 points. It, along with Project 5, constitutes the “core” of the final report.

Project 6 asks you to go through the data questioning, coding, and linking process explained in Phase 8 of “Real World Research”. The themes you may have used to organize the “description” section can now be used to *build an argument* that establishes the points that answer your research question. Under what conditions does this theme emerge? What actions/interactions/strategies are involved? Are there differences in the characteristics and boundaries for a theme across informants or sites? Do themes occur more or less frequently for different group members? Are they expressed differently? The analysis *asks questions* of the data—who, why, what, when?—for each main theme.

Again, the “Real World Research” doc (Phases 8-9, along with Addendum D) describes the analysis and writing process in some detail. Please adhere to the content and length guidelines.

Submit Project 6 to “Assignments” in Sakai by **Sunday, 02/24**.

**Topic 9: Telling the Story (report writing)**

The main sections of your final report (“description” and “analysis”) are ultimately integrated into a Professional Report (PR). The PR is a formal statement of the results of an investigation conducted on behalf of a community organization. In addition to the “description” and “analysis” sections, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made. Reports have a specific purpose and structure. They are primarily used to *convey information* and *to make recommendations*. Information is presented clearly, cogently, and coherently in a well-structured format. Readers can take in the information quickly, at twice the speed of listening, without having to re-read the document. In this way a PR is different from an essay that explores theoretical ideas at a much higher level of abstraction.

***Preparations***

* Re-read Slimbach, “Real-World Inquiry” (Phase 9)
* *Doing Development Research*, Ch. 30

**Threaded discussion (TD) time period for Topic 9:** **02/25-03/10**

**Project 7**

***Professional Report***

Project 7 consists of a complete, written professional report (PR) that conforms to the guidelines in Addendum D of the “Real World Research” field guide. In writing the PR, you are expected to demonstrate a firm grasp of how the knowledge and abilities acquired as a MATUL fellow can be applied to enhance the capacity of slum churches or organizations to address a specific problem. Although the nature and structure of a PR is informed by the professional protocol of the host organization, the academic advisor’s role is to ensure that its quality is equivalent to that of a conventional thesis. As such, the faculty advisor may, at their discretion, recommend supplementary reading, research and analysis to augment the quality of the PR and to ensure that its academic objectives are met.

What makes the report “professional” is a clear, inviting layout and an engaging, factual writing style.

* Headings and sub-headings should be clear, meaningful, and follow a logical order so that the reader can interpret them correctly and find information quickly.
* Avoidlong paragraphs with redundant information. Break up the text into shorter paragraphs (“chunks”) with clear transitions. Keep the “story” moving with vivid, factual prose.
* Organize the PR according to the outline structure presented in Addendum D (“Sample Report Outline”) of “Real World Research”.
* Use at least 1½ inch spacing, with a 12-point font. Insert electronic page #s.
* Do a final spell- and grammar-check on the entire document. Submit one electronic copy of the Professional Report to Sakai by the posted deadline. For additional format recommendations, refer to the following websites:
* University of Texas: <http://www.utexas.edu/lbj/students/pr> [scroll down to “Format Requirements”]
* Purdue University: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/reportW/index.html>

Submit the final report to “Assignments” in Sakai by **Sunday 03/17**.

**Topic 10: Returning Results**

Once the written PR is completed, submitted to Sakai and to the project guide, we are ready for the finale of the research process: the communication of findings to one or more community groups. As explained in Phase 10 of “Real World Research”, there are many potential audiences, as well as many potential formats for communicating research findings to them.

***Preparations***

* Re-read Slimbach, “Real-World Inquiry” (Phase 10)
* *Doing Development Research*, Ch. 31
* “How to Deliver a Report without Getting Lynched”: <http://www.asktog.com/columns/047HowToWriteAReport.html>
* Effective Oral Presentations:
* <http://www.kumc.edu/SAH/OTEd/jradel/effective.html>
* <http://www.projectorreviews.com/effectivepresentations.php>

**Threaded discussion (TD) time period for Topic 10:** **03/18-04/07**

**Project 8**

***Public Presentation***

1. Prior to the presentation, we meet with staff from our host organization to *plan* a public presentation of our research findings. Draft responses to the following questions:

* What audience(s)?
* Using what creative format?
* Presented at what venues?
* Who is presenting?
* In what language(s)?
* How to balance “explanation” with “application”?
* Promoted with what means?

2. Schedule and complete the presentation. List dates and venues.

3. After the actual presentation, take time to *mull over* the results with members of your host organization. Draft summary responses to the following questions: (a) How many of the intended community members (audience) actually showed up? (b) What “worked” well in the presentation? (c) How might the presentation be improved? (d) What evidence is there of at least some community members wanting to “own” the findings, and take some action based on them?

4. Submit (a) the actual presentation, and (b) a 3-4 page, typed, single-spaced report on the presentation to “Assignments” in Sakai by **Sunday 04/21**.