**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**.