



CIEE Beijing, China

Course title:	Directed Independent Research
Course number:	INDR 3901 BJCH
Programs offering course:	Sustainable Development
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. Semester Credits:	3
Contact Hours:	45
Term:	Spring 2020

Course Description

This course introduces students to both methodologies, particular qualitative methods, used in social science field study as the student works on honors-level, individual research projects. In this course, the students will design and prepare a field study project utilizing the learned research methods, understand the proper ethics and protocols involved in social science field work, learn the basic logic, principles and methods of conducting field work, and prepare a written and oral presentation of their field work.

Method of presentation

The course will be conducted as a weekly one-on-one discussion of theoretical material and research methodology, as well as ongoing consultations regarding work progress. The course will include an in-class component and a field component. Students are expected to be in class for two hours every week and devote a minimum of 10 hours each week on actual research. The seminar is organized into three parts:

Part I: Social research and methodology workshop

The course will introduce students to issues related to conducting social research, such as formulating research hypothesis, ethics of social research, limitations of social research in China, and methodologies appropriate to research topics. By the end of this period, students should be able to choose the appropriate research methodology, develop a hypothesis and a means to test it, and plan a timeline for completing the project.

Part II: Field Work and writing workshop

Students will follow the professor's lead in approaching the field work and conducting the research on their topics. During this phase of the seminar, students will report to the class on their data collection process, issues and problems. Some seminar meetings will address the actual write-up of the research project and approaches to preparing for and delivering a scholarly presentation.

Part III: Final Paper and Presentation Preparation

The final paper will be 3200 to 4000 words with full bibliography. A 15 minute presentation of the research to instructor, peers, and the wider CIEE community.

Learning Objectives



By completing this course, the students will:

- identify and formulate a researchable question in a scholarly manner and appropriate in the Chinese society
- formulate a hypothesis and place it into the real context
- identify the most appropriate research methodology and tools for data collection
- write up research hypothesis using scholarly norms
- analyze the research result and test the research hypothesis

Assessment and Final Grade

Class Participation	15%
Regular Journal assignments	20%
Faculty Advisor Meetings	15%
Final Research Paper	40%
Final research presentation	10%

Course Requirements

Class participation (15% of Final Grade)

Your participation in the course is partially measured by your presence in class on a consistent basis. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before every lecture. Incorporating your learning from the reading is expected in your final research project. Physical attendance alone does not help students earn the full 25%. This portion of your grade takes into account:

- Offering comments and posing questions. Each week, bring at least one question about the assigned readings that you would like the entire class to discuss. Show that you have read and thought about assigned readings, relating them to previous weeks and to the course's larger theme. Actively discuss and respond to the readings and also to your classmates' and instructor's interpretations.
- Citing specific passages of the reading assignments. As you are reading, take notes on central themes, details you think you need to know, and questions that come to mind. Bring your notes and assigned readings (either books, printouts, or e-versions) to class each week, and be prepared to mention the page numbers of passages that particularly interest you.
- Attendance and punctuality. It is essential that you attend each weekly session; there is no way to make up or recreate our discussions. Being punctual, including returning from breaks on time, shows respect to your classmates and instructor. As per CIEE academic policy I must deduct points: you will lose 2% for every unexcused absence, and 1% every time you are late.



- Late papers are deducted 5% if they are 1 day late. Every subsequent day we will deduct an additional 1% from the assignment grade. Or you may use the *jolly coupon* to receive a 24-hour extension for papers. You may also choose to use the coupon for one free absence from class.
- Respect others in the classroom: Please do not work on your presentations, readings, homework, Chinese homework, diaries, emails, Skype, WeChat etc. in the classroom during class. This is very distracting to those who are presenting (including your teacher), and is incredibly rude. This will affect your participation grade, 2% subtracted each time.
- According to the University of Colorado Boulder's useful standards: "Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include: failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or inventing sources; and copying information from computer-based sources, i.e., the Internet." If you are discovered to have plagiarized, you will automatically fail the class.

Regular Journal assignments

You are required to keep a journal throughout the course of the semester in which you make substantive entries about your weekly progress. You will be expected to submit three journals during the semester (at the end of week 2, 6 and 8).

Faculty Advisor Meetings

The student will meet with his/her research advisor regularly throughout the semester. The schedule of meetings will be determined based on mutual agreement between the student and the advisor and is set no later than by the end of Week 2. The research schedule and project milestones will be submitted by the end of Week 4. During the meetings, the student will present the progress and advances in the field work and research based on the research schedule.

Final Research Paper

Students will conclude the term with a research paper of between 3000 - 6000 words long and which includes the following sections: an introduction, a literature review, a methodology section, a discussion on your findings and a conclusion that includes suggestions for future research. You will be graded on the quality of your writing, your ability to think analytically and the degree to which you have incorporating the feedback received from the clean draft of your final paper. The student will submit the first draft of the project and main findings by the end of Week 11.

Final Presentation

The student will present and defend his/her findings before a panel consisting of faculty and experts in the field of research. The presentation will address the main questions for the project, milestones and final results. Following the presentation, the student will answer questions concerning the research project raised by the faculty and experts and defend his/her research findings. The Final Presentation notes or PowerPoint slides are to be submitted prior to the Final Presentation, by the end of Week 13.



Weekly Schedule

- Week 1: Introductory meeting**
Agreeing on class expectations, semester schedule, research plans and research products.
- Week 2: Getting started with the “search” part of research**
An applied exercise in using first hand data from Chinese language and China-based English sources.
Assignment due: first journal and faculty advisor meeting schedule
- Week 3: The “research” part of research**
Reading: Bernard, H.R.. Research Methods in Anthropology. Chapter 3. Observations; sources and resources; hypotheses; causality; research approaches; research design. Note that topic for Week 10 is meant to be ironic, and if you indeed are looking to use statistics in your project, you should plan for that already at this stage.
- Week 4: Background research and literature review**
Assignment due: research schedule and milestones
- Week 5: Reference management**
Social research ethics, theory and application
- Week 6: Theoretical roots of social research**
Bernard, H.R.. Research Methods in Anthropology. Chapter 1.
Assignment due: second journal
- Week 7: Why should a random blond dude do research on China?**
Reading: Steinmüller, H.. Communities of Complicity. Introduction, Conclusion, Appendix A
What are the practical problems of being a foreign researcher in China? Why China? How does researching a Chinese case connects your research to the wider general background?
- Week 8: Making sense of what you are seeing**
Reading: Steinmüller, H.. Communities of Complicity. Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. Of the things you are observing and reading about, what is important and what’s not?
Assignment due: third journal
- Week 9: Managing your data**
Using Excel to manage, analyze, and present data
- Week 10: Data analysis**
What data do I have and how should I use it? Should I throw some stats at my



data?

Week 11: Ok, how do I do stats? / What are other ways of assessing the validity of my findings?

Use of univariate statistics and basic indicators of statistical significance.
Triangulation of data.

Assignment due: final Paper first draft and final presentation preparation

Week 12: Effective description of available data and analysis results

Week 13: Making sure that your results address your original research hypothesis and general theoretical framework.

Assignment due: final presentation notes or PowerPoint slides

Weeks 14 and 15: Reading week and final presentation

Assignment due: Final research Paper Due

Course Materials

Readings

Bernard, H. R. (2017). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Sixth Edition. AltaMira Press.

Steinmüller, H. (2013). *Communities of Complicity: Everyday Ethics in Rural China*. Berghahn Books.