The Logics and Methods of Migration Research

2017

Course Coordinator: Dr Becky Walker
Rebecca.Walker@wits.ac.za

THURSDAYS 9:30-12:30
(please note the times for the supplementary workshops below)

Location: SH2143
Consultation on Thursday afternoons by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is intended to strengthen your understanding of, and capacity to conduct, social research on issues related to migration. The focus is on developing an understanding of what social research is, the various methods employed and their logics and the challenges and questions different kinds of social research present. You will also work to develop your skills in evaluating the merits of published material, analysing data and developing strategies for conducting methodologically sound and theoretically relevant research in the contexts in which migrants are typically found.

Note: This course is compulsory for the following students:

- Students registered for the MA (coursework and research report) in Migration and Displacement.
- Students registered for the Honours in Migration and Displacement

It is strongly recommended for:

- MA (dissertation) without a strong background in social science research.
- ACMS Doctoral students without a strong background in independent social science research
STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT

The course consists of:

- three-hour classroom sessions based on prior reading;
- 3 intensive practical workshops;
- an examined research proposal;
- 2 response papers (4 for honors students); and
- student presentations of their research proposals.

Each classroom session will be a mixture of lecture and discussion based on assigned readings. All students should come to class having read the key assigned readings and be prepared to discuss and explore with their lecturer, and fellow students. The classes are an opportunity to obtain more intensive hands-on practice with methods discussed in class. Attendance is compulsory. There will be a qualitative methods workshop and also 4 day long quantitative methods workshop – both will end with an examination, which together will comprise **25% of the final mark**. Students will also write 2 response papers each (4 for honours students) and these will comprise **25% of the final mark**.

Students will be required to work on their own research proposal throughout the course and submit it for examination at the end of the course. **This will comprise 50% of the final mark.** Before submission students will present their proposals to ACMS staff. In addition to the course, students are required to attend both the internal and external research seminars run by ACMS throughout the year.

Unless pre-approved, attendance is mandatory and active participation is expected. To ensure a common ground for our discussions, students are required to complete KEY READINGS before class meetings. You will be asked for your thoughts and feedback on the readings and therefore are expected to come to class prepared. Those planning to use a discussed method/technique for their research report should also undertake RECOMMENDED READINGS (given in this outline and available in the course dropbox) on this topic. It is expected that the research methods section of all proposals will be informed by classroom discussions, seminar readings, and additional readings. There is also a list of key texts at the end of this outline – all texts are available in the Wits libraries or online.

Response papers: The response papers will enable students to engage with the course material and practice critical thinking and develop their writing styles. Each student must write two response papers (4 for honours). One response paper will be based on the third workshop on mixed/participatory methods. The other one can be chosen from any of the
week’s topics, and must be a response to the issues raised in the readings. At least two readings must be used. The response paper should demonstrate the student’s ability to critically engage with the topics and key issues in the readings and to develop their own argument (response) to this. Papers will be submitted electronically to the methods course email and students will receive a grade and comments. Feedback on the response papers will be useful when writing the research proposal.

The course will be assessed in the following way:

**MA (Coursework and research report):**
- Research proposal for submission (50%)
- Examinations on workshop 1 and 2 (25%)
- Response papers x 2 (25%)

**Honours:**
- Research proposal for submission (50%)
- Examination workshop 1 (10%)
- Response papers x 4 (40%)

Further details on these assessments will be provided during class sessions.

**Workshop Schedule 2017**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th April</td>
<td>9am - 1pm</td>
<td>Interpreting and analysing qualitative data</td>
<td>Using data collected by the ACMS, this workshop will give practical experience analysing qualitative data. <strong>At the end of the workshop you will be given an interview transcript to analysis for examination.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>18th - 20th April</td>
<td>18 – 1.30 – 4.30pm</td>
<td>Quantitative data analysis</td>
<td>This will be an intensive 4 day workshop using a statistical analysis programme and ending with an examination. <strong>NB: This workshop is for MA students only</strong></td>
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<td>18th - 20th April</td>
<td>19 – 9.30-3.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>18th - 20th April</td>
<td>20 – 9.30-3.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th &amp; 11th May</td>
<td>9am – 2pm</td>
<td>Mixed/participatory methods workshop (with Carlton students)</td>
<td>2 day mixed methods workshop (with Carlton students). Includes an emphasis on visual methods.</td>
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WEEKLY SESSION SCHEDULE: TOPICS AND READINGS.

WEEK 1: 16th February (Orientation Week)

- SESSION 1: GETTING STARTED: SOCIAL SCIENCE AND MIGRATION RESEARCH
  (Prof. Ingrid Palmary)

This introductory session covers the following key topics:

- What is social research?
- How does the context of migration affect social research?
- What is a research question?

KEY READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


WEEK 2: 23rd FEBRUARY:

❖ SESSION 2: WHAT IS AN EFFECTIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL?  
(Prof. Ingrid Palmary)

This session will discuss what makes an effective research proposal and what issues and questions must be considered.

KEY READINGS:

1) Grad Studies Handbook on the Research Proposal [available from the faculty office]

http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop/process/


RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Cape Town: UCT Press.

WEEK 3: 2nd March

❖ SESSION 3: Qualitative research – concepts, experiences and questions  
(Dr Becky Walker and Dr Barbara Bompani)

This session will introduce the different research methodologies used when conducting a qualitative study. These include an overview of different types of interviews, ethnography, participant observation, and case studies – and looking at their advantages, limitations and some of the critical questions that can arise. We will also explore some of the key terms used in research such as epistemology, ethnography, ontology etc. In the second part of the session, Dr Barbara Bompani will discuss her experiences of research in South Africa and focus in particular on the emotional and ethical aspects of fieldwork.

KEY READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


WEEK 4: 9th March

❖ SESSION 4: PARADIGMS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

(Prof. Ingrid Palmary)

KEY READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READINGS


WEEK 5: 16th March

❖ SESSION 5: ENGAGING IN RESEARCH: FIELDWORK AND THE CHALLENGES OF RESEARCH “ON THE GROUND” (Dr Becky Walker)

This session will draw on session 3 to further explore qualitative research methods in relation to your research question. In this session we will look at student’s preliminary research questions and ideas about methodologies. We will also look more at ethnography both as a research method and as a particular way of writing about the things we study – particular in relation to migration. We will consider the complex, often controversial history of ethnography as a genre in anthropology and more broadly in the humanities and use the key readings to explore the various issues and challenges that can arise when engaging in research on sensitive topics and with people in marginal spaces.

KEY READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


WEEK 6: 23rd March

♣ SESSION 6: Designing Interviews, Questionnaires and Surveys
(Dr Mhatso Kamndaya)

This session will explore interviews, questionnaires and surveys as research methods and for data collection. It will consider the processes of design and implementation and also look at the advantages and limitations of each method. An emphasis will also be placed on understanding how the analysis and coding of data drawn from qualitative research develops.

KEY READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


TEACHING BREAK
24th March – 2nd April
WEEK 7: 6th April

SESSION 7 (Workshop 1): PROCESSING DATA: Qualitative Analysis (Dr Becky Walker & Dr Alexandra Hiropoulos)

WORKSHOP 1: PROCESSING DATA: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This workshop is based on the analysing of qualitative data including coding, thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Students will draw on the key readings to discuss the process of working through collected data to consider 1) coding as a process and practice; 2) analysing interview data; and 3) ensuring rigour in qualitative data analysis. The workshop will mainly focus on interview transcripts and will use data collected by ACMS to gain practical experience in coding and highlighting themes.

Working individually students be given a take home exam from which they will write an analysis of an interview transcript. This will be handed in the next day.

Analysis deadline: 7th April 4pm.

KEY READINGS FOR WORKSHOP


SECTION 2: QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGIES

WEEK 8: 13th April

❖ SESSION 8: INTRODUCTION TO QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH.
   (Dr Mphatso Kamndaya)

This session will discuss the wide variety of research designs available to social researchers. It will introduce students to how to design a study, specifying exactly who or what is to be studied when, how and for what purpose. It will also explain different models of explanation and the prerequisites for establishing causality. The aims will be:

- To identify the two major tasks of research design and define and illustrate the basic purposes of research.
- Define units of analysis and identify and illustrate each of the basic types.
- To clarify what social scientists mean when they speak of causal relationships.

KEY READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


WEEK 9: WORKSHOP 2 18th – 21st April. Basic Quantitative Data Analysis with IBM SPSS.

WORKSHOP 2: Basic Quantitative Data Analysis with IBM SPSS (Dr Mphatso Kamndaya)

This 4 day long workshop will provide practical experience with quantitative data analysis – IBM SPSS, culminating in an examination at the end of the week.
Test to be completed in class on Friday 20th April.
ALL students must have the software loaded onto their computers prior to the workshop.

Data set for the workshop: "Exploring The Migration Profiles of Primary Healthcare Users in South Africa" (will be provided prior to the workshop)

KEY READINGS FOR WORKSHOP 2:

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

WEEK 10: 27th April – Public Holiday – no class

WEEK 11: 4th May

❖ SESSION 11: Ethics and real world challenges. (Prof. Jo Vearey)

This session will explore the ways in which ethical – and associated methodological – challenges arise in conducting real-world research, including with disadvantaged migrant populations. Consideration will be given to the role of the (social) researcher in mediating and responding to ethical concerns in relation to knowledge production, including: notions of “vulnerability” in relation to specific population groups in research; positionality, power and reflexivity; recruitment, participation and informed consent; anonymity and confidentiality; and, the roles of research ethics committees (RECs). The ethics associated with different forms of knowledge production, research dissemination and ways of using research will also be explored. The aims are:

• To equip students with a grounding in social research ethics and the skills required to develop an ethical research proposal.

• To explore ethical considerations of research with disadvantaged migrant groups, including undocumented migrants.

• To debate the tensions that exist between research ethics committees, researchers, and “real world problems” when generating and using research.

KEY READINGS


3) Steven L. Vanderstaay, S. (2005) One Hundred Dollars and a Dead Man: Ethical Decision Making in Ethnographic Fieldwork Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 34: 371-408


RECOMMENDED READINGS


- Wits University Guidelines: https://www.wits.ac.za/research/about-our-research/ethics-and-research-integrity/
WEEK 12: 10th and 11th May: WORKSHOP 3: Exploring alternative research methods – mixed, visual and participatory research in marginal contexts. Inc. Carlton Students

Workshop 3: Mixed and Visual Methods Workshop
(Dr. Becky Walker, Dr. Glynis Clacherty and Prof. Jo Vearey)

Complex experiences and social realities, such as those explored in migration-focused research are not always easily or usefully explored using traditional qualitative or quantitative methods. As such mixed methods and alternative approaches (participatory, visual, arts-based) to research offer a different and often innovative way of exploring these issues. This two-day workshop will explore these different methodologies and think through how and why different contexts require different approaches. Drawing on the experience of ACMS researchers and their projects the workshop will include a practical exercise based on the Wits campus.

ACMS students should write a response paper on the issues raised in the workshop using at least TWO of the key readings.

READINGS MUST BE DONE PRIOR TO THE WORKSHOP

KEY READINGS

Day one


Day two


RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Day one


• Denzin, N. (2009). The elephant in the living room: or extending the conversation about the politics of evidence. Qualitative Research, 9(2): 139-160


Day two

• Special issue on participatory visual methodologies in global public health http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rgph20/11/5-6


**WEEK 13: 18th May**

❖ **SESSION 13: Students away on Fieldwork – no class**

Please use this week to catch up on any readings missed and ensure you are prepared for the next class.

**WEEK 14: 25th May**

❖ **SESSION 14: RETURNING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION: THINKING THROUGH YOUR PROPOSAL**  
(Dr Becky Walker & Dr Mphatso Kamndaya)

This session will draw on the previous classes and workshops to explore ways in which data can be understood and analysed, and findings drawn. It will centre the research question – as guiding and shaping the design, collection and analysis of research data. Students will discuss their research questions and methods in the class as well as discuss literature reviews and writing styles.

Please come to class prepared with a written draft outline of your research question(s), aims, ideas of literature and description of your chosen methodology(ies).

**KEY READINGS:**


WEEK 15: 1st June

❖ SESSION 15: Proposal mock presentations to class
(Dr Becky Walker & Dr Mphatso Kamndaya)

WEEK 16: 8th June.

❖ SESSION 16: Proposal presentations to staff

WEEK 17: 22nd June

❖ Proposal submission deadline.
   All proposals must be submitted by 3pm. No late submissions will be accepted.

If you have any questions or concerns about the course please contact Dr Becky Walker: Rebecca.Walker@wits.ac.za

You can also contact any of the individual lecturers:

- Dr Mphatso Kamndaya: kamndayam@yahoo.com
- Prof. Ingrid Palmary: Ingrid.Palmary@wits.ac.za
- Prof. Jo Vearey: Jo. Vearey@wits.ac.za