

Prof. Nilda Flores-Gonzalez
BSB 4160/ (312)996-6886
nilda@uic.edu

Course Description

The main objective of this class is to teach students how to conduct a research project. The course will focus on qualitative methods in Participatory Action Research (PAR) with a community-based organization. In traditional qualitative research approaches, the researcher determines the problem to be studied, the way it will be studied, conducts the investigation, and writes up the conclusions based on his/her interpretation of the data. The only input that members of the community have to the study is in their participation as “research subjects.” By contrast, PAR is a collaborative approach in which community members participate actively (to different degrees) in designing, carrying out and discussing the findings. During this course, students will work on a research project in partnership with community members.

Another objective of this class is to help students make meaning of the community and the issues they are studying. For this reason, literature about the community as well as theoretical approaches to studying the topic will be discussed in class.

Selected Research Topic and Site

Students will work on the project “Fighting Gentrification in Puerto Rican Chicago.” This project will study the various coordinated initiatives that are under way in the Humboldt Park community of Chicago. What is unique about this community is its coordination of redevelopment and anti-gentrification efforts through the Puerto Rican Agenda, a coalition of community leaders and organizations. The Puerto Rican Agenda’s initiatives cover housing, business, education, politics, and culture. Some of the organizations that are part of the Puerto Rican Agenda are Hispanic Housing, Division Street Business Development Association, Humboldt Park Vocational Center (Wright College), Association House, 26th Ward, Puerto Rican Human Rights Network, Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Batey Urbano and the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture. Depending on the class size, we may focus on one or more research sites to investigate how the community fights gentrification. The specific topic and research problem to be studied will be determined by the instructor jointly with community members before the beginning of class. The study will meet all IRB requirements and the instructor will obtain IRB approval to conduct this research.

Requirements

- (1) This course requires students to fulfill a total of 50 hours of “on-site” visits. There are no exceptions. While students will be spending an average of 5 hours a week “on-site,” from week 2 to week 12, the actual weekly hours may vary depending on the schedule and needs of the organization.
- (2) Students will input their “on-site” hours into a log, and keep detailed fieldnotes of site visits. A separate notebook should be used to keep the “log,” to write fieldnotes and to jot down anything related to the research. Please turn off all pagers and cell phones while doing “on-site” visits, and especially if conducting an interview.
- (3) Students will turn in typed fieldnotes each week which will be posted on Blackboard, a website that can only be accessed by the instructor and students enrolled in the class. Fieldnotes are due each Monday. Students must read each others’ fieldnotes weekly and come ready to discuss them in class.
- (4) Students are encouraged to use their own tape recorders and digital cameras “on site.” The instructor has transcribers that can be used by the students.
- (5) Students are required to read all materials (including fieldnotes) and to come to class ready for discussion. Participation is expected and will count towards the final grade. Attendance is taken and

unjustified absences will affect the final grade. Since this class meets only once a week, missing more than one session will result in a failing grade. Students are expected to get to class on time and to Turn off all pagers and cell phones before entering the classroom

(6) Each student will write a 6-10 page report on their specific topic of research. Each individual report will be incorporated to a larger document that will be presented to the community.

(7) The class will present the report in a power-point presentation in the community.

Grading

(1) "On-site" Visits and fieldnotes = 25%

(2) Class participation = 25%

(3) Final report and Presentation= 50%

Readings (Books available at Chicago Textbook— 1076 West Taylor 312-733-8398)

Feagin, Joe R. And Vera, Hernan. (2001). Liberation Sociology. Boulder, CO: Westview.
(Selected Chapters)

Perez, Gina. (2004). The Near Northwest Side Story: Migration, Displacement, and Puerto Rican Families. CA: University of California Press. (Selected chapters)

Ramos-Zayas, Ana Y. (2003). National Performances: The Politics of Class, Race, and Space in Puerto Rican Chicago. (Selected chapters)

Additional Reading Materials are posted on e-reserves and on Blackboard

Week 1 Participatory Action Research and Qualitative Research Methods

Week 2 History of Community, Research Topic and Research Site

Padilla, Felix (1987) Puerto Rican Chicago

Chapter 2: "Growth of the Puerto Rican Barrio and Intensification of Ethnic Subordination."
Pp.78-98

Chapter 3: "Organizational Response to Ethnic Oppression." Pp.117-143.

Perez, Gina. (2004) The Near Northwest Side Story

Chapter to be determined

Ramos-Zayas (2003). National Performances

Chapter 2: 'Cold in the Windy City: Migration, Settlement, and Political Stories in Puerto Rican Chicago.'" Pp.43-71.

Flores-Gonzalez, Nilda. "Paseo Boricua: Claiming a Puerto Rican Space in Chicago." Centro Journal, XIII(2):7-23.

Week 3 Site Visit and Tour of Community

Whyte, William Foote, Greenwood, Davydd J. And Lazes, Peter. (1991). Participatory Action Research: Through Practice to Science in Social Research. In William Foote Whyte (ed), Participatory Action Research. NY; Sage.

Week 4 Selection of Research Sub-Topics (Anti-gentrification initiatives) and Methodology

Feagin, Joe R. and Vera, Hernan (2001). Liberation Sociology. Boulder, CO: 2001.
Selected Chapters

Week 5 Ethnographic Research/Observations and Understanding Gentrification

Smith, Neil (1992). "New City, New Frontier: The Lower East Side as Wild, Wild West." In _____ Variations on a Theme Park, (Michael Sorkin, ed).

Mendieta, Ana. "Pioneers' look beyond crime." Chicago Sun-Times, July 23, 2000

Buck, Genevieve. "Hot in Humboldt Park," Chicago Tribune, January 27, 2001

Richards, Cindy. "Who'll defend the real pioneers," Chicago Sun-Times, May 15, 2002

Week 6 Ethnographic Research-Interviewing and Understanding Community Reactions to Gentrification

Selected chapters of "Dudley Street"

Tenderloin District

Garza, Melita Marie. "Humboldt Park Power Play," Chicago Tribune, August 1, 1999

"Humboldt Park residents vow to buck housing trend," Telegraph-Herald, November 12, 2002

Week 7 Archival/Historical Research and Understanding Community Reactions to Gentrification

Selected chapters from Muniz, Vicky. (1998). Resisting Gentrification and Displacement: Voices of Puerto Rican Women of the Barrio. New York: Garland Press.

Week 8 Using the Census

James, Frank. "US Hispanic Population grows by 58%." Chicago Tribune, March 8, 2001

Irvine, Martha. "Hispanic Influx Shaping Chicago." Chicago Sun-Times, March 11, 2001.

City Population Bounces Back. Chicago Tribune, March 15, 2001

Osnos, Evan and Mendall, David. "Total of 2.89 million as influx of Hispanics ends long decline.".

Chicago Tribune, March 15, 2001

Washburn, Gary. "Hispanics Increase city's population." Chicago Tribune, March 15, 2001

Week 9 Preliminary Data Analysis and Gentrification in Puerto Rican Chicago

Alicea, Marisa (2002). "Cuando nosotros viviamos..." Stories of Displacement and Settlement in Puerto Rican Chicago." Centro Journal, XIII(2):166-195.

Week 10 Preliminary Data Analysis

Selected Chapters from Ramos-Zayas' National Performances

Week 11 Discussion of Findings

Selected Chapters from Perez' The Near Northwest Side Story

Week 12 Discussion of Findings and Structure of Final Report

Week 13 Discussion of Preliminary Reports and Preliminary Power Point Presentation

Week 14 Discussion of Final Report and Power-Point Research Presentation

Week 15 Research Presentation in the Community