

**Studies in Policy and Practice
Faculty of Human and Social Development
University of Victoria**

**SPP 550 – Advanced Thesis Seminar – 2010/11
Adapted from Kathy Teghtsoonian’s course outline (2009/10)**

Course Taught By: Susan Boyd
Office: HSD B246
Phone: (250) 721-8203
e-mail: scboyd@uvic.ca

Course Meets: September–December 2010 and January–April 2011
Thursday 1:30-4:15
First term: HSD A270 Second term: location tba

Course Description: SPP 550 is a non-credit seminar intended to support graduate students in the thesis research and writing that they undertake following the completion of their coursework. The seminar provides a context within which graduate students can discuss their work as it unfolds and offers a forum for collective brainstorming and problem solving in response to the issues that arise in the processes of research planning, data collection, analysis and writing. The course is premised on the assumption that principal responsibility for guiding graduate students’ research rests with the formally constituted supervisory committee and, in particular the student’s supervisor. The intent of the seminar is neither to supplant nor to challenge the advice and guidance provided by the supervisor/committee. Rather, it is to create a space within which graduate students can come together as colleagues to discuss matters of mutual interest, and to work collaboratively in developing and discussing approaches to the tasks and challenges that are integral to any research project.

The course will meet during each term, generally every two weeks. Topics and readings have been identified below and presented in a tentative order. These arrangements will be discussed during the first class session and confirmed or revised, depending on the configuration of students in the class and where they are in their thesis/dissertation process.

Course Texts: There is not a lot of assigned reading for the course, in recognition of the fact that students enrolled in the seminar have, as their top academic priority, work on their thesis or dissertation. Nevertheless, one or two readings have been identified for several of the class sessions in the hope that they will point to topics that might usefully be discussed or raise interesting questions for debate. Most of the journal articles are available to download via the UVic on-line library catalogue. One hard copy of each assigned reading has been left with Daisy Williams in the SPP main office, HSD B240 for short term loan. If you borrow readings from Daisy, please return them as soon as possible so that others may have access to them. Please do not write on or otherwise mark up borrowed readings.

Course Requirements: There are no graded assignments. You will receive credit for the course if you meet the following requirements: (1) attending regularly; (2) making positive contributions to the work of the seminar; and (3) presenting your work-in-progress.

By “attending regularly” I mean no more than one absence each term. If health, family or other circumstances interfere with your ability to attend regularly please advise me as soon as possible so we can decide how best to proceed.

By “positive contributions” I mean attentive and engaged listening, respecting and working to facilitate “air time” for all class members, a willingness to try out and consider new ideas, bringing forward questions or perspectives that stimulate class discussion, and providing constructive feedback on the work-in-progress of other class participants.

There are a number of different ways in which you are asked to take up the task of presenting your work-in-progress:

* *preparing a time-line* for your thesis research and writing, to be handed in to me in advance of the second class session. We will talk about this task during the first class session and discuss the timelines you have developed during the second class meeting. I’ll ask you to revisit and revise your time-line at the beginning of January.

* *preparing a brief statement of your research interests and/or issues you are currently wrestling with as you develop your thesis proposal*, to be circulated to all class members and discussed during our third class meeting.

* *circulating draft writing* for other seminar participants to comment on. We can make decisions about how and when you will take up this task in light of where you are in your research process, but I would like each person to do this at least once per term. Possibilities for how to focus your writing for this component of the course include some aspect of your thesis proposal, ethics submission, or data analysis-in-progress

* *making a presentation to the class* based on some aspect of your thesis/dissertation research. This could take the form of a practice presentation for the oral examination of your thesis, but could also be focused on some aspect of your “work-in-progress” if you are not anticipating being ready for your oral exam in the near future. Either way, the goal is to practice the public presentation of your ideas.

* *informal discussion* of research questions and conundrums you are trying to think through, analytic choices you are wrestling with, or writing strategies and/or challenges that you are considering. Ideally, this is something that will part of your ongoing contribution to the work of the seminar.

Classes and Readings

NOTE: In general the class will meet every two weeks, although this pattern will need to be adjusted in order to work around the statutory holidays

Fall Term: September–December 2010

September 16: Introductions and Goals

- * who is in the class?
- * where are you in your program?
- * current goals/challenges?
- * timeline exercise for next class session

September 30: Thesis/Dissertation Research and Writing – Experiences and Strategies

Ian Cook. 2001. You Want to Be Careful You Don't End Up Like Ian. He's All Over the Place: Autobiography in/of an Expanded Field. In Pamela Moss, ed. *Placing Autobiography in Geography*, pp. 99-120. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Lesley Patterson, Heather Barnett and Vicki Culling. 2007. Writing a thesis? How to make a writing group work for postgraduate women, *Women's Studies Journal*, 21(1): 63-77

Optional:

Suzanne Schwarz McCotter, The journey of a beginning researcher, *The Qualitative Report*, 6(2). Available on-line at: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR6-2/mccotter.html>

Valerie-Lee Chapman and Thomas J. Sork. 2001. Confessing regulation or telling secrets? Opening up the conversation on graduate supervision. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51(2): 94-107.

October 14: Preparing your thesis/dissertation proposal

Marge Reitsma-Street. 2007. *A Guide to Completing a Thesis or Project Proposal*. A hard copy is available in Daisy's office, or on the web at <http://web.uvic.ca/spp/people/faculty/documents/compthesis.pdf>

Kathy Teghtsoonian. 2008. Some Notes on Doing a Literature Review (2-page document to be distributed via e-mail)

October 28: Ethics: requirements and considerations in research and analysis

Review forms and guidelines regarding ethical review available on the UVic website

Colleen M. Davison, Micaela Brown and Pertice Moffitt. 2006. Student researchers negotiating consent in northern Aboriginal communities, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(2): 1-10.

Susan Malone. 2003. Ethics at home: informed consent in your own backyard, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(6): 797-815.

Optional:

Kevin D. Haggerty. 2004. Ethics creep: Governing social science research in the name of ethics, *Qualitative Sociology*, 27(4): 391-414.

Peter Cole. 2004. trick(ster)s of aboriginal research: or how to use ethical review strategies to perpetuate cultural genocide, *Native Studies Review*, 15(2): 7-30

Magda Lewis. 2008. New strategies of control: Academic freedom and research ethics boards. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14(5): 684-99.

November 18: Writing practices, advisors, and grad studies

Julia Colyar. 2009. Becoming writing, becoming writers, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(2): 421-36.

Kevin Haggerty. 2010. Tough love: Professional lessons on graduate studies, *American Sociology*, 41: 82-96.

December 2: Relationships with research participants

Dara Culhane. 2003/2004. Domesticated time and restricted space: University and community women in downtown eastside Vancouver, *BC Studies*, 140: 91-106.

Karen Ross. 2000. Unruly theory and difficult practice: Issues and dilemmas in work with women politicians, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 2(3): 319-36.

Optional:

Robert D. Wilton. 2004. Keeping your distance: Balancing political engagement and scientific autonomy with a psychiatric consumer/survivor group in Duncan Fuller and Rob Kitchin, eds., *Radical Theory/Critical Praxis: Making a Difference Beyond the Academy?* Vernon/Victoria, BC: Praxis (e)Press, 2004. www.praxis-epress.org/rtcp/rw.pdf

Lene Tanggaard. 2008. Objections in research interviewing, *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7(3): 15-29.

Deborah Ceglowski. 2000. Research as relationship. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6(1): 88-103.

Joseph A. Conti and Moira O’Neil. 2007. Studying power: qualitative methods and the global elite, *Qualitative Research*, 7(1): 63-82.

DECEMBER BREAK

Spring Term – January 2011–April 2011 (to be revisited in January)

January 13 and 27: What do I do with all this data?

One or two class sessions with a visit from faculty members in SPP or elsewhere on campus (depending on availabilities) to talk about how they work with data

Optional:

Marie Hoskins and Jo-Anne Stoltz. 2005. Fear of offending: disclosing research discomfort when engaging in analysis, *Qualitative Research*, 5(1): 95-111.

February 10 and 24: Responding to each other’s work/responding to feedback

At least one class session focused entirely on presentation and discussion of work-in-progress

Stephen Bocking. 2005. Gatekeeper or Helpful Counsel? Practices and Perceptions in Academic Peer Review. In Anne Menely and Donna J. Young, eds. *Auto-Ethnographies: The Anthropology of Academic Practices*, pp. 67-79. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.

Review/revisit Patterson, Barnett and Culling. 2007. Writing a thesis? from September 24 class.

March 10: The oral examination of your thesis aka “The Defence”

Read through the Guidelines that are provided for the Chair and the External Examiner. These are available on the UVic website at:

<http://web.uvic.ca/gradstudies/pdf/ChairsGuidelinesThesis08.pdf>

http://web.uvic.ca/gradstudies/pdf/Guidelines_for_Externals.pdf

March 24: Presenting your work to various audiences (e.g., academic conferences; groups of practitioners; policy-makers; research participants)

Theresa Garvin and Renee Gravois Lee. 2003. Reflections on the “policy-relevant turn” in Research, *Social Justice*, 30(4): 20-53.

Review Ian Cook’s account of his experiences at academic conferences in the reading
