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**Capstone Research Seminar**  
**HSOC/STSC 420**  
**Wednesday 2-5PM**  
**Cohen Hall, Rm. 337**

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Prof. Beth Linker  
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**Course description:** This course is designed to provide HSOC and STSC with the tools necessary to undertake original research, guiding them through the research and writing process. Students will produce either a polished proposal for a senior thesis project, or, if there is room in the course, a completed research paper by the end of the term. Students work individually, in small groups, and under the close supervision of a faculty member to establish feasible research topics, develop effective research and writing strategies, analyze primary and secondary sources, and provide critiques of classmates' drafts. Most of the initial work will be under the supervision of Professor Linker, but students will be encouraged to seek out other Penn faculty in HSOC and STSC who have expertise relevant to the student's research topic.

The course objectives include developing the following research and writing skills:

- 1) Articulating research problems.
- 2) Reviewing the literature, i.e. understanding and evaluating the secondary literature from the appropriate disciplines relevant to your research topic.
- 3) Determining an appropriate methodology; i.e. deciding what kind of information is needed to support the project's thesis and how to obtain it.
- 4) Summarizing the research problem, review of literature, and methodology in a clear and understandable way.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

**Class participation and group work (30%):** Regular class attendance and participation *are required*. Everyone begins the semester with a participation mark of an "A" (100 percent). You will maintain it with regular attendance, full preparation, and informed participation. Various exercise sheets, writing assignments, and peer review write-ups will be due throughout the semester. You will also be responsible for leading one in-class discussion based on an article of your choosing.\* I will assign each exercise a check or check-minus. A check-minus means that either you misunderstood the assignment or it did not meet my expectations. The major purpose of these various exercises is to develop habits of mind necessary to becoming a critical reader and an effective researcher.

**\*Student-led discussion:** *Each student will choose a scholarly article with which to lead an in-class discussion. The article should teach your classmates something about your chosen research topic. Pick an article that can serve as a model for both research methods and writing. You will need to send a url link or pdf copy of the article to Professor Linker ONE week before your scheduled day to lead class discussion. Professor Linker will then post the article on Blackboard for the rest of the class to access.*

**Assignments (70%):** Students will begin work on their Senior Thesis, or a semester-long research project to be completed in several steps throughout the course of the semester. Senior Thesis students will complete a prospectus with all its working components (problem statement, research question, literature review, significance of research, methodology, writing plan, and a bibliography). Students working on a

one-semester capstone project will complete a critical review of the literature, a prospectus, and a final paper. If you intend to produce a research paper (rather than a prospectus), you must notify Professor Linker, in writing, by February 18<sup>th</sup>.

1. “Significance” Write-up (10 %)—Due Feb 4<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of class
2. “State of Studies” Write-up (10%)— Due Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of class
3. Methodology Write-up (15%)— Due Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of class
4. Prospectus draft #1 (15%)—Due Fri., March 27<sup>th</sup> by 5PM in Prf. Linker’s mailbox, 303 Cohen
5. Final prospectus (20%)—Due April 22<sup>nd</sup> at the beginning of class\*

*\*For those collecting data through field research with human subjects, a copy of your IRB application and approval notice is also required.*

**Academic integrity policy:** Students are expected to adhere to the university’s Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html>) on all assignments. Students who violate these policies risk failing the course.

### **Readings:**

Most of the readings in this course will be individualized and directly related to students’ chosen research projects. However, there will be common readings throughout the semester.

The following two items are **required** for the course:

- Booth, Wayne C. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed.. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003).
- All assigned articles will be posted on Blackboard.

The following are **recommended** readings and are either in the reference stacks or on reserve at the Van Pelt Library:

- Bernard, H. Russell. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006).
- Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2003).
- Fetterman, David M. *Ethnography: Step by Step*. 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1998).
- Storey, William Kelleher. *Writing History: A Guide for Students*. 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

### **Course Schedule:**

- W Jan 14 Introduction and Overview
- W Jan 21 Jason Schnittker, Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology  
Readings:
- Booth, pp. 1-68

- Hacker, pp. 92-3
- Jason Schnittker, “Working More and Feeling Better: Women’s Health, Employment, and Family Life, 1974-2004,” *American Sociological Review* 72 (April 2007): 221-238.

Assignments:

- Complete Prf. Linker’s Bib. Sheet for Schnittker reading [Bib sheets on Blackboard].
- Answer questions posed in Booth, pp. 26-7
- Using Booth, pp. 59-61 as an example, chart your own Topic/Research Question/ and Significance (limit one sentence to each).

W Jan 28 Paula L. W. Sabloff, Adjunct Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology

Readings:

- Booth, pp. 68-86
- Hacker, pp. 93-102, 207-224

Assignment:

- An Annotated Bibliography of 10 key sources in *CHICAGO* Style (see Hacker, 207-224 and Blackboard for sample Annotated Bibliographies).
- Develop your own individual form for note-taking that includes all of the information listed on Booth, p. 86.

W Feb 4 Jonathan Moreno, The David and Lyn Silfen University Professor, Medical Ethics, HSSC

Readings:

- Booth, pp. 87-101
- Hacker, pp. 3-5 (Active Verbs)
- Jonathan Moreno, “ ‘The Only Feasible Means’: The Pentagon’s ambivalent Relationship with the Nuremberg Code,” *Hastings Center Report* (Sept-Oct 1996).
- Beth Linker, “Feet for Fighting: Locating Disability and Social Medicine in First World War America,” *Social History of Medicine* 20 (2007): 91-109.

Assignment:

- Complete your own note-taking/Bib sheet for Moreno and Linker reading
- “Significance” write-up: A three-page paper that focuses on why anyone would care about your proposed research project. Explain who the targeted audience is, and why you, in particular, are well-suited to conduct this research. Discuss what the consequences might be of your project’s development and publication. In this assignment, pay particular attention to verb usage: use active instead of passive verbs (Hacker, 3-5).

W Feb 11 Adriana Petryna, Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology

Readings:

- Adriana Petryna, “Ethical Variability: Drug Development and Globalizing Clinical Trials,” *American Ethnologist* 32 (2005): 183-197.

Assignment:

- Complete your own note-taking/Bib sheet for Petryna reading.
- “State of Studies”[SoS] write-up: A 5-7 page literature review, giving a brief overview of trends in the general scholarly literature on your topic. Describe what has been already done on your topic, and also what remains to be research. Your SoS should end with a succinct formulation of your research

problem. [One copy to me, and one copy to each individual in your writing group]

- W Feb 18 Student-led discussions/readings [Das, Pruzansky, and Zhou]  
Readings:
  - TBA by your classmates in charge of class that dayAssignment:
  - You must commit to either the thesis or research paper track
  - One-page response to each of your peers' SoS [one copy to Prf. Linker and another copy to the SoS author]
  - Complete note-taking/Bib sheet on student-assigned readings
- W Feb 25 Student-led discussions/readings [Ng and Yuen]  
Readings:
  - Booth, pp. 105-138
  - TBA by your classmates in charge of class that dayAssignment:
  - "Methodology" write-up: A 5-7 page paper that describes your methodology. YOU MUST CITE at least ONE of the "Recommended" books listed above. You must also be clear about which citation style you intend to use (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc) from here on out (use Hacker). How do you envision the early stages of research? What kind of sources will you be using? Will you feature primary or secondary sources? How accessible are these sources? Is IRB necessary? [One copy to me, and one copy to each individual in your writing group]
  - Complete note-taking/Bib sheet on student-assigned readings
- W Mar 4 Student-led discussions/readings [Blebea, Dickson, and Gaffney]  
Readings:
  - Booth, pp.139-170
  - TBA by your classmates in charge of class that dayAssignment:
  - "Thesis" write-up. Articulate the working argument of your paper in ONE paragraph. [One copy to me, and one copy to each individual in your writing group]
  - One-page response to each of your peers' "Methodology" [one copy to Prf. Linker and another copy to the Methodology author]
  - Complete note-taking/Bib sheet on student-assigned readings
- W Mar 11 NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
- W Mar 18 Student-led discussions/readings [Boytim, Chryssanthakopoulos, and Stull]  
Readings:
  - TBA by your classmates in charge of class that dayAssignment:
  - One-page response to each of your peers' "Thesis" write-up [one copy to Prf. Linker and another copy to the thesis author]
  - Create a one-year research/writing calendar [Please refer to the Ven Pelt Library website:  
[www.library.upenn.edu/courseware/coursetools/researchpaper](http://www.library.upenn.edu/courseware/coursetools/researchpaper)]

- Complete note-taking/Bib sheet on student-assigned readings
- W Mar 25      WORK DAY [Class will not meet. Prf. Linker will hold office hours during class time]  
Assignment:
- F Mar 27      **Full prospectus draft #1 due** by 5pm in Professor Linker's mailbox, Cohen 303 [One copy to me, and one copy to each individual in your writing group]
- W Apr 1       Student-led discussions/readings [Abdel-Rahman, Eisenberg, and Winter]  
Readings:
  - TBA by your classmates in charge of class that day
Assignment:
  - Complete note-taking/Bib sheet on student-assigned readings
- W Apr 8       Student-led discussions/readings [Dogani, Pierce, Sperling]  
Readings:
  - TBA by your classmates in charge of class that day
Assignment:
  - A 2-3 page response to peers' prospectus draft #1 [One copy to Prf. Linker and one copy to prospectus author]
  - Complete note-taking/Bib sheet on student-assigned readings
- W Apr 15      WORK DAY [Class will not meet. Prf. Linker will hold office hours during class time]
- W Apr 22      Wrap-up: Discussing our Research Plans for the remainder of the Year  
*Honors Thesis students: **Final thesis prospectus due***  
*Capstone Students: **Final capstone research paper due***