

**POL299: Public Interest Research:  
Community Development and the Arts  
Spring, 2002**

**Instructors:**

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**Course Description and Objectives:**

Students in this class learn quantitative and qualitative research methods by applying them in contemporary practical and academic research projects. Students conduct research that will help policy makers, community activists, leaders and citizens find solutions to current social and political problems and improve the lives of area residents. The course is designed to increase students' practical skills in areas like survey research and the use of computers in social, political and historical analysis, making them more attractive as job applicants. The course is appropriate for students interested in careers in community-based, public, nonprofit, business and educational organizations.

During spring semester, 2002, students will participate as researchers in an arts-led community development effort in downtown Cleveland. The community partner, Music & Performing Arts (M&PA) at Trinity Cathedral, Inc., pursues a mission that includes using the arts to promote community development in downtown Cleveland. Its programming includes projects such as a Noontime Concert Series, an Urban Artist in Residence initiative, and an arts residency in the DePaul School for Pregnant Teenagers. The students and instructors in this course will assist by providing research support. The specific research projects will include case study research on arts-led community development efforts in the Cleveland area, and research on ongoing M&PA programs.

By conducting professional quality applied research, students in this class will produce knowledge, not simply consume it. The knowledge that students produce will minimally be summarized in course papers and portfolios. It will potentially be presented as well in professional reports, in news articles in local and national media, at academic conferences, and in applied and academic publications.

## **Course Requirements**

### **Readings:**

The following book, available for purchase at the Baldwin-Wallace College bookstore, is required:

W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Fourth Edition (Allyn and Bacon, 2000)

Students are additionally expected to read any course materials that the instructors distribute. Students are also expected to read and document materials that they discover in their individual and group research.

**Attendance and participation:** Attendance at all classes, lectures and presentations is required. Active participation in the forms of listening, discussing, presenting, asking questions, (respectfully) challenging others, and submitting your own ideas to scrutiny by others is a central ingredient of this course. Participation also includes contributing substantially to the process of designing and conducting research projects. In addition to the regularly scheduled classes on Wednesday evening, students may also be asked to participate in other events during the semester. The time and location of these events may vary. Consistent with official BW academic policy, students may miss no more than one (1) **unexcused** class and/or event without penalty.

Each student is required to maintain access to an email account, and to check it regularly (at least every day or two).

**Timeliness:** Class will begin promptly, and students are expected to arrive on-time. Persistent tardiness may result in a reduced participation grade and confrontation by the instructors. Assignments not handed in on the due date will be penalized one half of a letter grade for each day that they are late. Students can make up exams or assignments only upon prior permission of the instructors or if due to provable medical reasons.

**Academic integrity:** Honesty and integrity are values which are considered fundamental to academic institutions. Plagiarism or cheating on an assignment or exam are violations of these values, and may result in dismissal from class and at a minimum will result in an F on the particular assignment or exam.

**Basis for Evaluation:** Students' course grades will be based on the following:

1. Midterm portfolio including short summary of preliminary findings, outline of plans for course term paper, and all materials collected thus far, worth 10% of the final grade.
2. Participant-observation paper (5-7 pages) worth 10% of the final grade.

3. Interview transcription, submitted at midterm, worth 5% of final grade.
4. Journals (minimally one page typewritten per week) worth 10% of final grade.
5. Course research paper (25-50 pages) worth 25% of the final grade.
6. Final course portfolio worth 15% of the final grade.
7. Class participation worth 25% of the final grade.

The participant-observation paper, due toward the end of the term, will include a description, interpretation and analysis of an arts event hosted by each student's case study organization. The interview transcription will present verbatim an interview arranged and conducted by each student with an individual from the student's case study organization. The journals will detail the weekly research steps taken by each student, and include reflections on the student's research and the course. The course research paper will be a major effort in which students summarize the results of their research. It will integrate all written documents that the students have discovered, interviews conducted by the students, the results of surveys conducted by students, and any other related information and insights. It will address in some fashion the question of the relation between art and community development, including and especially as revealed in the case study research conducted by the students. Students can produce their course research paper as an individual effort, or as a group effort where team members share responsibility for a single research paper. If students select the latter option, relatively more will be expected.

The course portfolios are the students' collections of all course materials created and discovered during their research. They document the students' effort in the course. They will include all the materials used by the students in conducting their research and preparing their course paper. At a minimum, the portfolios will include recorded interviews; transcriptions of interviews; names, addresses and contact information for all interviewees and other contacts; copies of all newspaper articles, pamphlets, brochures, and other documents found in the course of research; copies of surveys and survey results; and a bibliography of any books and academic articles that bear on students' research. Ideally, it will also include photographs or other visual and audio media. Students should begin immediately assembling their portfolio. Portfolios, like the course papers, can be either individual or group efforts; and, like the course papers, more will be expected of group portfolios.

Class participation will include the usual components of attending, presenting, discussing, and contributing during class periods. It will also include participation in group case study research, surveys, participant observation during selected events, and presentation of research results orally and in writing. To ensure that those who do the work get credit for it, students will have an opportunity at the end of the course to evaluate their own and others' efforts in the class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**January 16:** Course introduction; choose case study partner

**January 23:** Field trip to Trinity Cathedral; community development and the arts; case study assignments

**Readings:**

Mattern, "Popular Music and Community" (handout)

Mattern, "Popular Music, Political Action, and Power" (handout)

Mattern, "Entering the Circle" (handout)

**January 30:** Research design; qualitative v. quantitative research methods; interview methodology

**Readings:**

Neuman, Chapters 1-2, 6

Neuman, 274-283; 370-375

**February 6:** Interviews

**Readings:**

Neuman, 274-283; 370-375 (reread)

**Due:**

First journal submission

Schedule of events of case study organization

**February 13:** Survey methodology

**Readings:**

Neuman, Chapters 7-8, 10

**February 20:** Participant-observation methodology

**Readings:**

Neuman, Chapters 13

**February 27:** Skill development

**Readings:**

**Due:**

Second journal submission

**March 6:** Skill development; informal presentations of research progress and results

**Due:**

Midterm portfolio  
Interview transcription

**March 13:** Spring break; no class

**March 20:** Introduction to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

**Readings:**

Neuman, Chapter 12

**March 27:** Surveys and survey data analysis

**April 4:** Historical-comparative research

**Readings:**

Neuman, Chapter 14

**Due:**

Third journal submission

**April 10:** Analysis of qualitative data

**Readings:**

Neuman, Chapter 15

Mattern, "Entering the Circle" (handout, reread)

**April 17:** To be determined

**April 24:** Presentation of research results

**Due:**

Fourth and final journal submission

**May 1:** Presentation of research results

**Due:**

Final portfolio

Course research paper

**May 8:** Final Exam