

RUSSIA SYLLABUS

GSEM730 Field Research for Ministry

Instructor: Monte Sahlin - msahlin@creativeministry.org
Guest Lecturer: Paul Richardson - director@creativeministry.org

Credits: 2

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will guide clergy professional in developing the capacity to utilize information and research skills in the practice of pastoral ministry, including congregational studies, systems analysis, program evaluation, structured organizational experiments, surveys, focus group research, participant observer methods and community assessments. Students will gain an understanding of the principles of the research process, ethical concerns in research, and the elements of research design as applied to the practical issues of leading a congregation, planting a church or directing a faith-based organization. As principles and methods are learning they will be applied to the student's individual context through the review of relevant action-research materials, reflection and discussion.

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Understand the terminology and key principles of the research process as it is applied in the practice of ministry
2. Locate and interpret published research finding, form a research question, and gather and analyze relevant information
3. Describe a research design appropriate to a particular problem or issue in ministry
4. Use a range of research methods, including probability sample surveys, program evaluations, focus group research, key informant interviews, congregational studies, systems analysis, structured social experiments, participant observer techniques, and community assessments
5. Identify the ethical issues related to particular research projects and know how to seek the necessary counsel and assistance
6. Manage the implementation of a research project within a defined time frame
7. Analyze and interpret raw data
8. Present research findings in the narrative and graphic forms that best convey them to the users of the information

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attend and participate fully in each class session during the scheduled intensive
2. Complete a multiple-choice test on terminology and concepts at the end of the intensive
3. Complete all reading assignments, including handouts

4. Conduct two interviews and write verbatim field notes
5. Write a paper describing the context of your ministry, your current ministry situation and particular challenges or opportunities about which more information is needed in order to act effectively
6. Select one particular research method and write a plan for the implementation of this method in response to a simple ministry situation that you currently face

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney (eds), *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (1998, Abingdon Press, Nashville TN)
Arlene Fink, *The Survey Handbook* (1995, Sage, Thousand Oaks CA)
David L. Morgan, *The Focus Group Guidebook* (1998, Sage, Thousand Oaks CA)
Monte Sahlin, *Adventist Congregations Today* (2003, Center for Creative Ministry, Lincoln NE)
Monte Sahlin, *Understanding Your Community* (2005, Center for Creative Ministry, Lincoln NE)

SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, August 14 – Overview of Course, Research Design and Ethical Issues in Research
Wednesday, August 15 – Congregational Typologies, Demographics and Generational Dynamics
Thursday, August 16 – Information Sources and Practices, Statistical Significance and Sampling
Friday, Aug 17 – Quantitative Research Methods: Surveys, Program Evaluations, Interviewing, etc.
Monday, August 20 – Qualitative Research Methods: Focus Groups, Participant-Observer, etc.
Tuesday, August 21 – Concepts of Action-Research and Social/Organizational Experiments
Wednesday, August 22 – Analyze & Interpret Data: Describing and Displaying Research Findings & Research Project Management

Note: The schedule may vary in some situations.

ATTENDANCE:

By the time a student gets to graduate study, it is assumed that s/he possesses the maturity to recognize the importance of class attendance. No attendance record will be taken. However, because of the intensive schedule and seminar format of the course, students are expected to be present and take an active part in all discussions of the readings and materials presented. Participation in the discussions will make up 20% of the final grade. Being present "in spirit" will not count toward participation. Non-attendance will have an impact on your overall grade. Learn from the experience of others. Therefore a word to the wise: do not test this policy!

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Reading Assignments---Before you start this class make sure to complete the reading of the required textbooks. Before you begin to write the papers required in this class make sure to read the handouts and at least 500 pages of the supplementary reading list. Because this is scheduled as an intensive, the reading is critical to achieving the learning objectives for the course and to many of the future classes you will take in the Doctor of Ministry program.
2. Interview Field Notes---The student will keyboard a verbatim report within 24 hours after each interview conducted

3. Major Paper---Write a 10-20-page paper describing the congregation(s) or ministry organization(s) where you serve---including basic statistics such as typical attendance and total participation, community context, demographics, growth/decline trends, involvement of volunteers, financial giving, regular activities and programs, etc.---as well as a situation analysis of your ministry (goals, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and include a concise listing of some challenges or opportunities about which you would like more information
4. Research Implementation Plan---Write two or three pages in which you select one research method and apply it to a simple ministry situation, outlining specific steps necessary for you to implement a data collection and analysis

Papers are to be sent to: Monte Sahlin - msahlin@creativeministry.org

Writing assignments are to be typewritten, single-spaced with a double space between paragraphs and may be submitted in hard copy or electronic form. Electronic submissions must be in one of the following three programs: MS Word, Word Perfect or PDF (Adobe Acrobat). Since this is a graduate course, correct spelling, proper grammar, non-sexist and non-racist language usage are basic requirements.

GRADING:

The final course grade will be based on the following:

Attendance and participation in class meetings	20% of grade
Field notes on two interviews	20% of grade
Major paper	30% of grade
Research implementation plan	10% of grade
Test on terminology and concepts	20% of grade

ADDITIONAL READING:

Nancy T. Ammerman, *Congregation and Community* (1997, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick NJ)

Nancy T. Ammerman, *Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and Their Partners* (2005, University of California Press, Berkeley CA)

Peter H. Ballis, *Leaving the Adventist Ministry: A Study of the Process of Exiting* (1999, Praeger, Westport CT)

George Barna, *The State of the Church 2002* (2002, Issachar Resources, Ventura CA)

Paula Berinstein, *Finding Statistics Online* (1998, Information Today, Inc., Medford NJ)

Irene Isabel Blea, *Researching Chicano Communities: Social-Historical, Physical, Psychological and Spiritual Space* (1995, Praeger, Westport CT)

Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (1998, Harper & Row, San Francisco CA)

Jean Bystedt, Siri Lynn and Deborah Potts, *Moderating to the Max: A full-tilt guide to creative, insightful focus groups and depth interviews* (2003, Paramount Market Publishing, Ithaca NY)

Mark Chaves, *Congregations in America* (2004, Harvard University Press, Cambridge NY)

Roger L. Dudley and Edwin I. Hernandez, *Citizens of Two Worlds: Religion and Politics Among American Seventh-day Adventists* (1992, Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs MI)

Carl S. Dudley and Nancy T. Ammerman, *Congregations in Transition: A Guide for Analyzing, Assessing and Adapting in Changing Communities* (2002, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco CA)

Roger L. Dudley and Des Cummings, Jr., *Adventures in Church Growth* (1983, Review & Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown MD)

William H. Frey, Bill Abresch and Jonathan Yeasting, *America by the Numbers: A Field Guide to the U.S. Population* (2001, The New Press, New York City NY)

Arlene Fink, *The Survey Kit, Nine Volumes* (1995, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA)

Paul Fussell, *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System* (1983, Simon & Schuster, New York City NY)

George Gallup, Jr. and Timothy Jones, *The Next American Spirituality* (2000, Cook Communications, Colorado Spring CO)

V. Bailey Gillespie, Michael J. Donahue, Ed Boyatt and Barry Gane, *Valuegenesis Ten Years Later: A Study of Two Generations* (2004, Hancock Center, Riverside CA)

Anthony E. Healy, *The Postindustrial Promise: Vital Religious Community in the 21st Century* (2005, The Alban Institute, Herndon VA)

James W. Hughes and Joseph J. Seneca (eds), *America's Demographic Tapestry: Baseline for the New Millennium* (1999, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick NJ)

Cushla Kapitzke, *Literacy and Religion: The Textural Politics and Practice of Seventh-day Adventism* (1995, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Philadelphia PA)

Carole Kayrooz and Chris Trevitt, *Research in Organizations and Communities: Tales from the Real World* (2005, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest NSW, Australia)

Eva Keller, *The Road to Clarity: Seventh-day Adventism in Madagascar* (2005, Palgrave MacMillan, New York City NY)

Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *Religion in a Free Market* (2006, Paramount, Ithaca NY)

Richard A. Krueger, *The Focus Group Kit, Six Volumes* (1998, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA)

Alven Makapela, *The Problem of Africanity in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (1996, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston NY)

Hy Mariampolski, *Ethnography for Marketers: A Guide to Consumer Immersion* (2006, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks CA)

Johnny Ramirez-Johnson and Edwin I. Hernandez, *Avance: A Vision for a New Manana* (2003, Loma Linda University Press, Loma Linda CA)

Paul Richardson and Carmen Rusu, *Public Perceptions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America* (2003, Center for Creative Ministry, Lincoln NE)

John L. Ronsvalle and Sylvia Ronsvalle, *The State of Church Giving through 2003* (2005, Empty Tomb, Inc., Champaign IL)

Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace* (1999, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ)

Monte & Norma Sahlin, *A New Generation of Adventist Families* (1997, Center for Creative Ministry, Lincoln NE)

John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (2006, SCM Press, London, England)

William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (1991, William Morrow and Company, New York City NY)

Laura L. Vance, *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (1999, University of Illinois Press, Urbana IL)

Roland L. Warren, *Studying Your Community* (1965, The Free Press, New York City NY)

Michael J. Weiss, *The Clustered World: How We Live, What We Buy, and What it All Means About Who We Are* (2000, Little, Brown and Company, Boston MA)

Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *A Field Guide to U.S. Congregations* (2002, Westminster John Know Press, Louisville KY)