

SDA Theological Seminary
Andrews University

GSEM730 Field Research for Ministry
(2 semester hours)

February 24-27, 2009

Tuesday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday, 9 a.m. to noon
(with breaks for lunch, etc.)
Drayson Center
Loma Linda University

Instructor:
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Course Description

This course will guide clergy professionals 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 learned they will be applied to the students individual context through the review of relevant action-research materials, reflection and discussion.

Course 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 findings, 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.

Outline of Topics

- I. How information supports mission and ministry
 - A. What information is needed to do pastoral ministry?
 - B. How pastors get needed information—research design
 - C. Ethical issues in research
- II. Analytical tools
 - A. Pastoral influence—power analysis
 - B. Congregational typologies
 - C. Demographics and what they mean for ministry
 - D. Psychographics
 - E. Generational dynamics
- III. Finding what is already known about a topic—literature search
 - A. Online information sources
 - B. Print information sources
 - C. Evaluating the reliability of information
 - D. Statistical significance and sampling
- IV. Quantitative research methods
 - A. Interviewing
 - B. Program evaluations
 - C. Surveys
- V. Qualitative research methods
 - A. Focus groups
 - B. The participant-observer approach—ethnographic studies
- VI. Experimental methods
 - A. Action-research
 - B. Structured social/organizational experiments
 - C. Experimental ministries

- VII. Turning data collection into useable information
 - A. Tools for analysis and interpretation of data
 - B. Describing and displaying research findings
 - C. Presenting information to decision-making groups

Course Requirements

1. Reading—The following five required textbooks are to be read. The first two are to be read before the intensive and all five books must be completed before you begin to write the required papers. In addition, the handouts distributed in class and at least another 500 pages from the supplementary reading list are to be completed. Because this is scheduled as an intensive, the reading is crucial to achieving the learning objectives for the course and to many of the future classes you will take in the Doctor of Ministry program.

A. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* by Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney (1998, Abingdon Press, Nashville)

B. *Adventist Congregations Today* by Monte Sahlin (2003, Center for Creative Ministry, Lincoln)

C. *The Survey Handbook* by Arlene Fink (1995, Sage, Thousand Oaks CA)

D. *The Focus Group Guidebook* by David Morgan (1998, Sage, Thousand Oaks CA)

E. *Understanding Your Community* by Monte Sahlin (2005, Center for Creative Ministry, Lincoln)

[You can obtain the two books by Monte Sahlin from AdventSource, the North American Division distribution center, at www.adventsource.org or (800) 328-0525. You can order the other three books from any of the major online booksellers—Amazon, Powell’s or Barnes & Noble.]

2. Participation in the Intensive—Since this is presented on a short, intensive schedule, faithful attendance and participation will have an impact on your overall grade. 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.

3. Interview Field Notes—Two (2) interviews are to be conducted and verbatim field notes submitted. The student will keyboard a verbatim report within 24 hours after each interview. An introductory paragraph must include the purpose of the inquiry and who was interviewed. (Fictional names can be used to protect confidentiality.) The interviews are to be related to

gathering information relative to an actual ministry situation. There is no minimum or maximum page requirement; the paper should be sufficiently long to demonstrate the fact finding skills of the student.

4. Research Management Plan—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. This paper should be two to five pages, outlining specific steps necessary for you to implement data collection and analysis. It must include a budget and time allocation. The assignment does *not* require actual implementation of the plan.

5. Major Paper—Write a 20 to 40-page paper describing the congregation or ministry in which you serve and its context—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, its goals and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the congregation or ministry organization, and the opportunities and threats in the community or relevant ministry context.

Writing assignments are to be typewritten according to the American Psychological Association (APA) Style Book 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 are basic requirements. Electronic submission of papers is preferred!

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	50% of grade
Research implementation plan	10% of grade

Course time parameters and calculations:

The general rule for the Doctor of Ministry program is that 80 clock hours are to be spent in study for each semester credit. Since this class is two hours, the total time that should be spent in study is 160 hours. No more than 30 hours will be spent in the intensive, so at least another 130 hours should be spent in reading, doing the assignments, etc.

Supplementary Bibliography

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)

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* (2006, Indiana University Press)

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)

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)

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)

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

Orlando Fals-Borda and Muhammad Anisur Rahman, *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research* (1991, International Training Press)

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)

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)

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

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

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 textual politics and practice of Seventh-day Adventism* (1995, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Philadelphia)

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)

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

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)

David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (2008, Zondervan, Grand Rapids)

Muhammad Anisur Rahman, *People's Self-Development: Perspectives on Participatory Action Research* (1993, Zed Books)

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

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)

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

Monte Sahlin, *Mission in Metropolis: The Adventist Movement in an Urban World* (2007, Center for Metropolitan Ministry and Center for Creative Ministry, Takoma Park/Lincoln)

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

Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (2005, Oxford University Press)

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

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

Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths* (2007, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco)

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

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

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)

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

Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *Beyond the Ordinary: Ten Strengths of U.S. Congregations* (2004, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville)

Cynthia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *Places of Promise: Finding Strength in Your Congregation's Location* (2008, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville)