Instructor:  
Prof. Catherine Tucker  
Email: tuckerc@ufl.edu  
Phone: (352) 392-0690

Office Hours:  
Grinter 309  
Thursday: 1:00-3:00 pm  
& By Appointment

Course Description:

This course aims to motivate and empower students to develop greater understanding of Latin America and research methods through practical activities, rigorous scientific inquiry and critical assessment. Participants gain knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement field and library research, which they demonstrate by developing a formal research proposal. Course participants examine some of the main paradigms and methods applied by scholars and practitioners working in the interdisciplinary field of Latin American Studies. The term “paradigms” refers here to the philosophical/theoretical traditions that shape and support the whole process of research design, implementation and analysis. “Methods” are tools used to gather, organize, and analyze information. Participants will carry out exercises to gain familiarity with common data collection methods, and practice strategies for interpreting and communicating research findings. The course helps students to develop an enduring intellectual community among the graduate student cohort through shared experiences and mutual learning engagements.

Required Readings:

Required readings are posted on Canvas/Resources/Required Readings or available on reserve in Smathers Library West Reserves indicated “(On Reserve)” in syllabus.

Suggested Reference Text:

• Online: http://lib.mylibrary.com/Open.aspx?id=307182  
• On Reserve: Smathers West Library: 2-hour and Overnight Reserve.

Learning Objectives:

Students who engage fully in the course will:  
1. Compare major ontological paradigms.  
2. Find and interpret relevant data and literature.  
3. Frame research questions and hypotheses (as appropriate), and link them to appropriate methods.  
4. Assess the utility and limitations of major research methods  
5. Explore the ethical and practical dimensions of fieldwork
6. Gain practical exposure to qualitative and quantitative data collection methods (e.g., archival documents and records, surveys, interviews, focus groups, participant observation).

7. Integrate complementary methods and findings (e.g., quantitative with qualitative, broad with deep, case studies with national and regional statistics, primary with secondary data, measurement of biophysical phenomena with subjective views of actors).

8. Reflect critically on knowledge and power in scientific research. (Identify influences of disciplinary paradigms, cultural and political stances, gender systems, geopolitical contexts, and other factors in research methods and published findings).

9. Develop and write a research proposal that demonstrates knowledge and skills relevant to scholarly investigation in Latin America and incorporates methods explored through the course.

Course Contributions to Program Objectives for a Graduate Degree in Latin American Studies

- Evaluate the significance, perspective and quality of information obtained from published literature.
- Generate new knowledge about Latin America through research designed and implemented with an interdisciplinary perspective.
- Communicate this knowledge clearly and effectively in a thesis completed for their graduate degree as well as other spoken and written means.
- Gain experience of professional behavior in academic settings.

UF Graduate Training Objectives are advanced in four interrelated areas:

- Epistemological awareness: thinking about knowledge, power, and research process.
- Practical skills: applying scientific research instruments.
- Strategic design: identifying phenomena to study, formulating questions, selecting methods.
- Communications: organizing findings, sharing critiques and insights constructively, and communicating results effectively.

Course Assignments and Evaluation:

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Total Possible Points 100
*Class Participation and Teamwork Activities*

Archival “treasures” – Sep 5  
Focus group facilitation – Nov 7
Interview practice – Sep 19  
Discussion contributions - weekly
Survey design – Sep 26  
Brief research proposal presentation (3 min) – Nov 21

**Overview of Assignments and Class Participation & Teamwork Activities (detailed guidelines will be discussed in class):**

Archival Research “Treasure Hunt”  (Due Sep 5)  
Each team: Seek out primary research sources in the Latin American and Caribbean Collection on a historical event or issue of mutual interest. Identify materials representing 3 different kinds of sources (e.g. microfilm, pamphlets, historical books, artwork, films, posters, folios). Take a photograph of each of the 3 sources and prepare a 3 minute presentation on those sources for class. Present your team’s “treasure” found in the Latin American and Caribbean library special collections or other part of the collection. Document with photos (do not use flash).

Interviews, Surveys, Focus Groups and Participatory Workshops (Dates specified in the Course Schedule):  
Teams of students will identify a topic of interest (which should change or evolve across different classes) and develop practical examples of interviews, surveys, focus group leadership and participatory workshop facilitation, and prepare presentations or practice sessions for the class. Guidelines and expectations for each exercise will be discussed in class.

CITI Human Subjects Certification: Required for anyone planning to work with human subjects:  (Due Oct 3)  
All students who plan to work with human subjects need CITI certification (the Human Subjects Research Course for Social/Behavioral Researchers) to conduct fieldwork. If you do not have CITI certification yet, take it online. **Send a copy of your notification of certification to Dr. Tucker by October 3, 2019.**

Participant Observation Exercise  (Due Sunday, Oct 6 on Canvas)  
1) Select an interesting social event or venue to conduct participant observation for at least two hours. Develop a research question, and then record individual observations that help answer your question (or gain understanding of the problem/topic of interest).
2) Write up individual detailed field notes, including maps, photos, and any other relevant supplementary material.
3) Upload your field notes by 6:00pm on Sunday, October 6 to Canvas/Discussions/Field Notes
4) Compare your field notes with those of other members in your group. Then read the field notes for one other group ahead of class on Thursday, October 10.

Individual Meeting with Dr. Tucker to discuss research proposal ideas (by sign-up: Oct 7-9)  
Each student will meet individually with Dr. Tucker to go over preliminary research topics, questions and methods for the research proposal.

Annotated Bibliography (Due Oct 10)
• Meet with UF libraries staff as needed to assure success finding relevant historical materials, electronic sources, journals, and other resources.
• Use a citation management software program to save and organize reference information, such as RefWorks, Endnote, or Zotero. This is a requirement. Online tutorials and guidance are available to select and learn one that works for you.
• Search for and identify at least 20 sources available through UF collections or online resources that may be useful for your research project proposal.
• The set should include sources on the (a) research topic, (b) theoretical and methodological approaches to be applied, and (c) the study site and region (such as: sociocultural and natural environments, political and economic contexts, historical background).
• Balance different types of sources. For example: 5 peer-reviewed journal articles, 5 books, 5 websites, and additional sources relevant to topic, such as maps, reports, popular media, historical archives, legislation, videos, statistical databases.
• Include perspectives/voices of diverse, relevant groups, such as publications written by people based in Latin America and others, men and women authors, scholarly and practical works, materials expressing different sides of a conflict.
• For this assignment, it is not necessary to read each book or article. After reviewing each source to verify relevance, students can simply copy journal abstracts, editorial summaries, or advertising blurbs about each source.
• Submit the annotated bibliography in digital format from the citation management software of your choice.

Critical Assessment of a completed Master’s thesis (Due Oct 17)
Browse through completed theses posted on university library or department websites (check out strong Latin American Studies graduate programs such as UF, U Texas, U Chicago, Tulane, Vanderbilt, UNC, etc.). Make a bibliography identifying ten Masters or Doctoral Theses that interest you. Select one thesis to study that looks similar in some ways to the thesis you would like to produce. You will need to describe and critically assess the paradigm, research design, methods, and analysis used in that thesis. Refer to the “Critical Assessment of a Master’s Thesis Guidelines” (Canvas/Files/Assignment Instructions) for details. Write up your assessment (maximum 4 double-spaced pages) and prepare to discuss your critical analysis in class. Submit a digital copy online before class on Thursday, October 17, and submit a hard copy in class to Dr. Tucker.

Research Proposal (Due Nov 14)
Design and write a research proposal that (a) addresses a feasible research question relevant to Latin American Studies, (b) shows knowledge of the topic or problem that inspired the research question, (c) follows a clear organizational structure as indicated in sample grants and guidelines, and (d) integrates research methods covered in the class.

Peer Review of Research Proposal Drafts (Due Nov 21)
After research proposal drafts have been submitted on Nov.14 to Canvas, each student will choose two proposal drafts to review and offer written, constructive critiques and recognition of weaknesses and strengths. Bring two hard copies of the constructive peer reviews to class on Nov 21. One copy will go to each of the peers who you reviewed, and the second copy will be submitted to Dr. Tucker. Peer reviews will be discussed in class following proposal presentations.
Brief Presentation of Research Proposal (Nov 21)
Each student will present a 4 minute summary of the research proposal using powerpoint, prezi, or another form of illustrative media. Each presentation will be followed by a constructive discussion to assist in improving the proposal.

Grading:
The course will be graded by standard percentages; the grade will not be curved.  
A+ = 99-100%  
A = 94-98.99%  
A- = 90–93.99%  
B+ = 87-89.99%  
B = 84-87.99%  
B- = 80-83.99%  
C+ = 77-79.99%  
C = 73-77.99%  
C- = 70-73.99%  
D+ = 67-69.99%  
D = 63-67.99%  
D- = 60-63.99%  
F = below 60%

Course Policies:

Attendance
Class participation is a key part of this course. All students are expected to complete readings and assignments before class, attend each class, and participate fully in class activities. The class involves a great deal of interaction and discussion. Students will be rewarded for efforts to learn collaboratively with respect, enthusiasm and open minds.

Personal Technology in the Classroom
During most of the class meeting time, students will not need to use personal technology devices (laptops, smartphones, iPads, and similar technologies). The instructor will indicate when devices may be used for certain class activities, such as presentations or note taking. Exceptions will be made in the case of students who need personal technology devices due to documented disabilities, or students who need to leave a phone on in anticipation of emergency calls.

UF Policies and Services:

Academic Honesty: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students
should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

**Netiquette: Communication Courtesy:** All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. [http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf](http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf)

### Course Schedule

- The course schedule and content may be changed due to evolving interests or adjustments during the semester. Any changes will be communicated by email and Canvas announcements. Students are responsible for checking email and Canvas announcements regularly.
- **Come to class ready to discuss the readings and resources assigned for that week, and engage in the class activities of the day.**
- Nearly every week will involve a research methods-related activity.

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**Aug 22:** Introduction to Course and Foundations of Research:
How do we know what we know? Epistemologies, Paradigms of Knowledge
What is Research?

**Resources To View:**
- Ontology, Epistemology, and Research Paradigm – L. Praetorius - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkcqGU7l_zU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkcqGU7l_zU)
- What is Research? - A. Ashton et al. - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq4BGyZr_Nk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq4BGyZr_Nk)

**Class Activities:**
- Individual Introductions
- Introductory discussion of epistemologies and paradigms
- Exercise: Costs and benefits of theory and mutability of perceptions

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**Aug 29:** Conducting Archival Research; Research Design, Sampling and Measurement

*Meet at 4 pm in the lobby of the Latin American Research Collections, 3rd floor of the Smathers Library, adjacent to Library West.*

**Class Prep:** Check out the online resources of the UF Latin American Library Collections [https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/lac/Index.aspx](https://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/lac/Index.aspx) before class. Come with at least one question to ask Paul Losch, Head Librarian of the Latin American and Caribbean Collection.

**Readings:**

Resources to View:
• Theoretical Framework – F. Desjardins https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcnufgQzMjc
• Qualitative and Quantitative https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2X-zQSU6-hPU
• Telling a Complete Story with Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research - Dr. John W. Creswell https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5e7kVzM1fs

Class Activities:
• Introduction to the Latin American and Caribbean Collection by Paul Losch (4-5 pm)
• Discuss research design and sampling
• Foot measurement
• Form teams and discuss expectations for the Archival Treasure Hunt due Sep 5.

Sep 5: MALAS Orientation, Pt 2 // Planning and Conducting Interviews // Grounded Theory

Readings:
MALAS Handbook

Barnard, H. R. 2010. Ch. 8 Interviewing I: Unstructured and Structured

Class Activities:
• Discuss each team’s archival “treasure”. Extra credit will be awarded to the team whose set of materials is voted the most fascinating, original and intriguing.
• Discuss interview approaches and practice
• Form teams for survey exercise, discuss possible topics for the survey

Sep 12: MALAS Orientation, Pt 3 // Autonomous Work in Teams Learning to Interview and Build Rapport; Questionnaires and Surveying (Tucker Away at International Conference)

Work in your teams: (1) Consider interview approaches and (2) Identify a topic and questions to pose for the Survey Exercise

Readings (To be Discussed on Sep 19):
Barnard, H. R. 2010. Ch. 9 Interviewing II: Questionnaires

Resources to Watch:
• 7 tips for good survey questions
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iq_fhTuY1hw
Work in Teams:
• Develop the team survey and plan your data collection strategy, presentation due on Sep 26.

Additional Tasks:
• Think about your own research interests and possible research questions.
• Explore resources and start seeking sources for the annotated bibliography.
• Consult online resources for citation management software packages such as Endnote, RefWorks or Zotero.

Sep 19: Interviewing, Conducting Surveys and Building Rapport // Critical Epistemologies – Intersectionality, Feminist Perspectives and Postcolonialism

Readings:

Resources to View (Sources and exercise courtesy of Susan Paulson):
• Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie TED: The Danger of a Single Story http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en
• View representations of biological processes of insemination https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsyBzIeF1zI https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5OvgQW6FG4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAnMymnJiLM

Class Activities:
• Discuss interview exercise. What worked? What was difficult? How would you like to improve your interview skills in the future?
• Test your team survey in class with other students.
• Evaluate the messages of “The Great Sperm Race” and consider alternative views.

Sep 26: Library Resources, Databases, Online Searches, and Citation Management // Ethnographic Research + Participant Observation

Meet at 4 pm in the Library West Instruction Lab

Readings:
• Conzelman. 2006. Fieldwork in Coca Country. In Dispatches from the Field
• Tucker. A Brief Guide to Writing Field Notes (Unpublished)
• Tucker. Preparing for Risks and Uncertainties in Fieldwork (Unpublished)
Class Activities:
• Workshop on library resources in Library West; Ginessa Mahar & Lisa Campbell
• Each survey design team acts out a scenario of a problem or misunderstanding that could occur during survey design or surveying a respondent
• Discussion of survey design and challenges in light of practice surveys
• Discuss challenges and advantages of ethnographic research
• Sign up for meeting with Prof Tucker on Oct. 7, 8 or 9.
• Review tasks for next week, when Dr. Tucker will be away.

Oct 3 Independent Work (Tucker Away at Invited Conference)
No Class will be held this week.

Assignment Due on Sunday, October 6:  Participant observation field notes. Upload to Canvas by 6 pm.

Use this week to:
1. Complete participant observation and field notes.
2. Complete CITI Certification if you have not yet done so. Remember to send a copy of the notification of successful certification to Dr. Tucker (tuckerc@ufl.edu).
3. Develop research proposal ideas: research topic, research question(s) and methods
4. Work on the annotated bibliography for your research proposal

Oct 7-9: Meetings with Prof. Tucker

Each student will meet individually with Professor Tucker at a mutually convenient time on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday (Oct 7, 8, or 9). The meeting will discuss annotated bibliographies and research proposal ideas.

Oct 10  Conundrums of Ethics and Power in Fieldwork; Ethnographies and Participant Observation

Assignment Due: Annotated bibliography

Readings:
• Drybread, K.  2006. Sleeping with One Eye Open: The perils of fieldwork in a Brazilian Juvenile Prison.  In Dispatches from the Field (On Reserve)
Class Activities:
• Discussion of observations and field notes. Share your experiences: What challenges did you encounter? How did you deal with them? How did your individual notes compare with the rest of your group? What might you do differently next time?
• Discussion of fieldwork ethics and conundrums.

Oct 17: Writing a Research Proposal // Participatory Approaches with Indigenous Peoples
Guest Speaker: Prof. Joel Correia (Latin American Studies)

Assignment Due: Critical Assessment of a Master’s Thesis

Readings:
MALAS Thesis Guidelines
Correia et al., TBA

Class Activity: Discussion of Master’s Thesis critiques

Oct 24: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

Assignment Due: Research Proposal Outline

Reading:

Class Activities:
• Discussion on integrating quantitative and qualitative methods
• Prepare for Focus group practice exercises

Oct 31: Focus Groups // Geo-spatial methods and qualitative insights on development in the Amazon

Guest speaker: Prof. Robert Walker (Geography and Latin American Studies)

Readings:
• Intro to Focus Groups, NOAA 2009
• Walker, R. et al. 2013. Modeling Spatial Decisions with Graph Theory: Logging Roads and forest fragmentation in the Amazon. Ecological Applications 23(1):239-254

**Class Activities:**
- Read Prof. Walker’s publications and come with at least one question for him
- Each team will facilitate a focus group with the class based on their practice with friends

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**Nov 7**  Participatory Workshops, and Co-Production of Knowledge // Overcoming Challenges in Research Proposal Development

**Readings and Resources:**

**Class Activities:**
- Sorting, classifying and consensus-building exercise (Starbucks sample)
- Discussion: Strategies and progress in writing research proposals

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**Nov 14:** Principles of Data Management, Data Management Software and Strategies

**Assignment Due:** Submit Research proposal draft for online peer review.

**Resources to View:**
- Briney, K. 2015. Rethinking Data Management. TEDxUWMilwaukee. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXKbkpilQME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXKbkpilQME)
- The why, what and how of data management planning. 2014. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYDb-GP1CA4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYDb-GP1CA4)
- Tutorials on qualitative software packages, TBA.

**Class Activities:**
- Data management strategies and why it is critical
- Examining software options for data management and analysis

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**Nov 21:** Research Proposal Presentations & Peer Review

**Assignment Due:** Submit peer reviews of two your classmates’ research proposals

**Class Activities:**
- Each student will present a brief (4 minute) research proposal presentation using 1-3 powerpoint slides.
- Peer review discussion of draft proposals: constructive comments and critiques
- Ideas for course improvement + course evaluation
Nov 28: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – No Class

Dec 5: READING DAY -- No Class

Dec 9: FINAL Research Proposals are Due on Monday, Dec 9 by 5 pm on CANVAS

Additional Useful Readings: