

# **LAS 6293 DESIGN & METHODS OF RESEARCH IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES**

**COURSE #20499**

**SPRING 2026**

**DAYS: THURSDAYS**

**TIMES: 10:40 AM - 1:40 PM**

**LOCATION: GRINTER 376**

**Instructor:**

Jairo Baquero-Melo

Email: [jbaqueromelo@ufl.edu](mailto:jbaqueromelo@ufl.edu)

Assistant Professor

Center for Latin American Studies

University of Florida

392 Grinter Hall

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 10:00 am-12:30am (and with an appointment)

## **Course Description**

The course aims to introduce students to research methods in Latin American studies. Methods for researching Latin America have focused on interdisciplinary approaches, participatory methods, and a combination of methods—or mixed methodologies. In this sense, the Master's program does not seek to focus on a single discipline, but rather on this broader field of study and its relationship to approaches in the social sciences and humanities.

The course will emphasize qualitative methods, but in dialogue with mixed methods, identifying strategies for combining different methodologies and their application in studies on Latin America. The goal is to equip students with the analytical, methodological, and ethical foundations to design and conduct rigorous, reflexive, and socially engaged research.

We will explore the planning, implementation, and interpretation of social research projects, underscoring the contribution from Latin American social sciences and approaches. It involves discussions on participatory, community-based, co-creation, and decolonial methodologies emerging from critical studies. These also include ethnographic and autoethnographic perspectives, semi-structured and in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus groups, social and participatory cartography, visual and digital methods, and collaborative inquiry processes.

Research methods studied will provide a level of depth, context, and relational understanding. Their use requires not only “technical” skills but also a reflexive and ethical stance toward the realities under study. Throughout the course, students will engage in critical reflections on their

positionality, the politics of knowledge production, and the ethical implications of working with communities and vulnerable groups.

The emphasis on mixed-methods approaches aims at emphasizing that methodological choices should derive from the nature of the research problem rather than from disciplinary conventions. In real life, research designs combine multiple methods -for example, by entangling interviews, workshops, and archival research-. Our aim is to discuss these possibilities for methodological combination and to explore how they can enrich research projects, capstone projects, and the production of research reports.

### **Course goals**

- Introduce the main methods and techniques of qualitative research to develop and refine skills in formulating research proposals, designing inquiries, collecting and analyzing data, and writing research reports and outputs.
- Practice identifying, addressing, and explaining social problems through research-based inquiry.
- Develop critical thinking and creative skills for interpreting and engaging with diverse bodies of information.
- Strengthen students' awareness of the ethical dimensions of social research and knowledge production.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Design and articulate a coherent methodological strategy for a LAS research project.
- Apply and critically evaluate research methods used in social research.
- Integrate ethical and reflexive dimensions into research design and fieldwork.
- Recognize the contributions of Latin American and decolonial perspectives to methodology in social sciences.
- Understand the potential and limitations of the research methods studied.

### **Course Requirements**

Each student will develop a methodological strategy for their individual research project, following a sequence of submissions and in-class presentations. Assignments will emphasize identifying and defining the research problem, formulating guiding questions and objectives, and discussing appropriate theoretical and methodological frameworks and tools. Students are expected to develop autonomous and critical criteria for selecting and adapting research methods that align with the aims and scope of their own projects.

### **Recommended Bibliography**

- Becker, H.S. (2008). *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. University of Chicago Press.
- Becker, H.S. (1998). *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It*. University of Chicago Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell Báez, J. (2021). *30 essential skills for the qualitative researcher* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Haraway, Donna, (1988) "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies* Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn, 1988), pp. 575-599.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE Publications, inc.
- Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Fourth Edition. Los Angeles & London: Sage Publications.

**Learning Objectives aligned with MALAS (Master of Arts in Latin American Studies) program:**

1. Apply qualitative and mixed research methods to analyze complex social, cultural, and ecological dynamics in Latin America and the Caribbean, connecting empirical inquiry with theoretical reflection.
2. Learn the use of research methods to develop critical and creative problem-solving skills to engage with real-world challenges faced by communities and institutions across Latin America, fostering leadership and ethical responsibility.
3. Communicate research findings effectively through written, oral, and visual formats tailored to academic, policy, and community audiences, contributing to inclusive and transformative knowledge exchange.

**Evaluative activities**

1. Answers to questions in the Forum (Canvas) based on the course literature (15%)
2. Detailed observation exercise and written record (10%).
3. Practical activities assigned as homework (applying the methodologies studied) (30%):
  - Interviews
  - Transcription and categorization
  - Autoethnography and storytelling
  - Writing a brief research design for your research or Capstone project.
  - Others

4. A presentation of methodology: Search the UF library and repository for TWO theses and/or capstone projects from the Center, and summarize the methodology applied (20%).
5. Development of a small project (related to your research interests) (20%)
6. Attendance (5%)

## Class Calendar

*Subject to adjustments and changes; official information will be updated on the course Canvas; students are responsible for checking Canvas and course emails.*

Week	Date	Topic
Week 1	15-Jan	Course Introduction
Week 2	22-Jan	Basic elements for a LAS Research Design: Research questions and problems; methodological paths
Week 3	29-Jan	Ethnographic approach; Affective ethnographies; and Autoethnography
Week 4	5-Feb	Designing Fieldwork and sampling: challenges, ethical considerations
Week 5	12-Feb	Interviews and focus groups: design, categories and analysis
Week 6	19-Feb	Graphic methodologies: Comics, Research and Storytelling
Week 7	26-Feb	Embodied methods, autoethnography and photo elicitation
Week 8	5-Mar	Participatory methods (1): PAR methods; Workshops; RUV methodology; community-based indicators
Week 9	12-Mar	Participatory methods (2): Participatory mapping; social cartographies
Week 10	<b>19-Mar</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
Week 11	26-Mar	Researching with Artifacts; Materialities; “Traceability” & Object-based storytelling
Week 12	2-Apr	Video, Storytelling and Documentaries
Week 13	9-Apr	Storytelling, Data and Social Mobilization in LatAm
Week 14	16-Apr	Returning from the field: transcription, cleaning, memoing and first-pass coding
Week 15	23-Apr	Presentation of Final Projects
Week 16	April 27 - May 1	FINALS WEEK - Final Project due: 25 April

## **Weekly Description of Topics and Readings**

### **Week 1 – Course Introduction**

Dialogue on goals and expectations; Explanation of assignments, works and activities to be developed along the semester.

Differences between qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research.

Presentations by students about their research topic, preliminary plan, etc.

#### **Readings:**

Creswell, J. W. (2014). “A framework for Design”, In: Creswell, J., *Research desing: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (Vol. 54). United State of America: Sage Publications, pp. 3-23.

Mayoux, L. (2006). Quantitative, qualitative or participatory? Which method, for what and when. In: Desay & , Desai V., Potter, R. (eds), *Doing development research, 1*, 115-129.

### **Week 2 – Basic elements for a Qualitative Research Design: Research questions and problems; methodological paths**

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell Báez, J. (2021). *30 essential skills for the qualitative researcher* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications. Sections:

*PART III • Introducing a Qualitative Study*  
*Chapter 10 • Writing a Good Qualitative Title and Abstract*  
*Chapter 11 • Writing a Good Introduction and Opening Sentence for a Study*  
*Chapter 12 • Scripting a Qualitative Purpose Statement and Research Questions*

### **Week 3 – Ethnographic approach: Affective ethnographies and Autoethnography**

“Ethnography” & “Autoethnography” (entries), in: Given, L. M. (Ed.). (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE Publications, pp. 48-51; 288-292.

de la Cadena, Marisol (2021) "not knowing: in the presence of", Chapter 19, in: Ballesterro, A., & Winthereik, B. R. (Eds.). *Experimenting with ethnography: A companion to analysis*. Duke University Press.

Sánchez Parra, Tatiana. 2025. “Weaving reproductive justice: Storytelling and conflict-related reproductive violence in Colombia.” *Feminist Anthropology* 6: e70018.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/fea2.70018>

Adams, T. E., & Manning, J. (2015). Autoethnography and family research. *Journal of family theory & review*, 7(4), 350-366.

#### **Week 4 – Designing Fieldwork and sampling: challenges, ethical considerations**

“Part II The Data Collection Cycle” & “Sampling and participant recruitment”, in: Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2020). *Qualitative research methods* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Boer Cueva, A. R., Giri, K., Hamilton, C., & Shepherd, L. J. (2024). A decolonial feminist politics of fieldwork: Centering community, reflexivity, and loving accountability. *International Studies Review*, 26(1), viae003.

Martínez-Rivera, M. A. (2022). Doing Research of/from/at Home: Fieldwork Research Ethics in Latinx Contexts. *Journal of American Folklore*, 135(536), 180-189.

#### **Week 5 – Interviews and focus groups: design, categories and analysis**

“Chapter 4— Analyzing Interviews: Preparing, Conducting, and Transcribing”; & “Chapter 5— Analyzing Interviews: Condensing and Coding”, in: Saldaña, J., & Omasta, M. (2017). *Qualitative research: Analyzing life*. SAGE Publications.

Seidman, I. (2006). Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences. *Columbia University*. Chapters: “why interview?”; “A structure for in-depth, phenomenological interviewing”; “Establishing access to, making contact with, and selecting participants”; “interviewing as a relationship”.

Willis, Katie (2006), Interviewing, In: Desai & , Desai V., Potter, R. (eds), *Doing development research*, 144-152.

#### **Week 6 – Graphic methodologies: Comics, Research and Storytelling**

Ojeda, Diana, Pablo Guerra, Camilo Aguirre y Henry Díaz. *Caminos condenados*. Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana / Cohete Cómic, 2016. 86 páginas. doi: 10.15446/achsc.v45n1.67573.

Catalá Carrasco, Jorge L., Paulo Drinot y James Scorer, eds. (2017), *Comics and Memory in Latin America*, Illuminations: Cultural Formations of the Americas Series, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Rappaport, J., Flórez, L., & Pérez, P. (2024). *Historieta Doble: A Graphic History of Participatory Action Research*. University of Toronto Press.

#### **Week 7 – Embodied methods, autoethnography and photo elicitation**

Sugden, J., & Sheps, S. (2025). Dilemmas in embodied methods: Towards holistic description in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 14687941251377267.

Harris, Anne & Stacy Holman Jones (2020), Massive and Microscopic: Autoethnographic Affects in the Time of COVID, *Qualitative Inquiry* 2021, Vol. 27(7) 861–869.

Caggiano, S., & Segura, R. (2021). La casa como proceso. Aislamiento y experiencia urbana durante la pandemia a través de la fotografía. *Ciudadánias. Revista De Políticas Sociales Urbanas*, (8). En: <https://revistas.untref.edu.ar/index.php/ciudadanias/article/view/1125>

### **Week 8 – Participatory methods (1): PAR methods; Workshops; RUV methodology**

Rappaport, J. (2020). *Cowards don't make history: Orlando Fals Borda and the origins of participatory action research*. Duke University Press.

Eufemia, L., Bonatti, M., & Sieber, S. COMMUNITY BASED GOVERNANCE MANUAL. ZALF, WWF, FHV.

### **Week 9 – Participatory methods (2): Participatory mapping; social cartographies**

Newaz, S. (2018). *Reversing the Iceberg: Making 'diverse economies' visible in the context of migration and gender discrimination*. KTH- Sustainable Urban Planning and Design.

Pfeffer, Karin, Isa Baud, Eric Denis, Dianne Scott & John Sydenstricker-Neto (2013), PARTICIPATORY SPATIAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TOOLS, *Information, Communication & Society*, 16:2, 258-285, DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2012.687393

### **Week 10 – SPRING BREAK**

### **Week 11 – Researching with Artifacts; Materialities; “Traceability” & Object-based storytelling**

Norum Karen (2008), “ARTIFACT ANALYSIS” & “ARTIFACTS”, in Given, L. (ed.) *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, pp. 23-25.

Mac Ginty, R. (2017). A material turn in international relations: The 4x4, intervention and resistance. *Review of International Studies*, 43(5), 855-874.

Horn, S., & Silvennoinen, K. (2025). Traceability as an Enabler of Circular Economy in the Plastics Packaging Value Chain. *Circular Economy and Sustainability*, 1-23.

### **Week 12 – Video, Storytelling and Documentaries**

Núñez-Janes, M. (2016). When ethnography relates: Reflections on the possibilities of digital storytelling. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 47(3), 235-239.

Torresan, A. (2018). Guto and Graça. Ethnographic Films and Storytelling. *Anthrovision. Vaneasa Online Journal*, (6.2).

Analysis of documentaries:

Cicalo, A. (2008), *Memories of Slavery in Brazil (Memories on the Edge of Oblivion)*

Others TBD.

### **Week 13 – Storytelling, Data and Social Mobilization in LatAm**

Rudas, N. (2025). Numbers as Fact-Icons: The Public Power of ‘6402’ in Post-War Colombia. *Cultural Sociology*, 19(3), 396-425.

Aguerre, C., & Tarullo, R. (2021). Unravelling resistance: Data activism configurations in Latin American civil society. *Palabra Clave*, 24(3).

Rodima-Taylor, D. (2024). Grassroots data activism and polycentric governance: perspectives from the margins. In *Global Digital Data Governance* (pp. 68-87). Routledge.

Nelson, D. M. (2015). *Who counts?: The mathematics of death and life after genocide*. Duke University Press. Introduction and Chapter 1.

### **Week 14 – Returning from the field: transcription, cleaning, memoing and first-pass coding**

Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, 68(3), 226. In:

Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management - PMC

### **From codes to analysis: organizing, triangulating, and reporting**

Delve (n.d.). *The Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data*.

Essential Guide to Coding Qualitative Data — Delve

### **Week 15 – Presentation of Final Projects**

**Week 16 –** FINALS WEEK - Final Project due: 25 April

## **Academic Policies**

- Requirements for **class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work** in the course are consistent with university policies. See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.
- **Students with disabilities** who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
- Information on **current UF grading policies for assigning grade points**. Here you can find [a link to the University grades and grading policies.](#)
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful **feedback on the quality of instruction** in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

- **The University's Honesty Policy** regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc.:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA in this class.

- **In-Class Recording:**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited.

Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

#### **Academic Resources:**

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email [ask@ufl.libanswers.com](mailto:ask@ufl.libanswers.com) for more information.
- [Academic Resources](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: [teaching-center@ufl.edu](mailto:teaching-center@ufl.edu). General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.](#)
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.](#)
- UF Student Success Initiative: Visit <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> for resources that support your success as a UF student.
- [Public Speaking Lab](#): (Dial Center, 501 Rolfs Hall). Offering online and in-person help developing, organizing, and practicing oral presentations. Contact email: [publicspeakinglab@clas.ufl.edu](mailto:publicspeakinglab@clas.ufl.edu).

**Campus Health and Wellness Resources:**

- UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.