



Research in Senegal

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: SNGL 4201

Number of Credits: 4

Language of Instruction: French

Contact Hours: 60

Instructor: Dr Korka Sall, PhD

Course Description

In this course, the MSID student will learn about various research concepts and practices; make decisions involved in research, including selecting a topic and title for their study, developing statements of problems, and choosing research questions and appropriate research design; learn about issues related to research ethics; and develop their skills in choosing data collection instruments and analysis of the data they collect for their research. The course does this by introducing various topics in the research cycle and providing a forum in which students can share with one another their research experience at each stage of the process. Students will learn to develop, defend, and challenge their own values and belief.

Research projects in this course are ideally projects that fit with the development agency's goals and activities; therefore, the student's research interests must blend with what is realistically happening at the development agency. Students must have approved proposals before proceeding onto their research sites to allow them collect necessary data and complete data analysis before heading back to Dakar at the end of the six-week field period. It is likely that students will participate in field activities, meetings, and other forms of engagement that will be indirectly related to and could inform their research projects. Students will be presented with concrete opportunities to identify and apply their knowledge of ethics, both in solving short-term problems and in creating long-term forecasts.

As stated on the [Senegal research page](#), the governments of the United States and MSID countries have laws protecting human subjects of research. Due to the timeline for gaining the necessary permissions for doing research with human subjects, such research cannot be conducted while abroad on LAC programs. However, there are still a wide variety of projects,

that include interaction with people, that are available. See more information on the website [Undergraduate Research Abroad](#).

The course will also include 15 hours of French or Wolof instruction to give students practical vocabulary for the workplace.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, it is expected that students would be able to:

1. Demonstrate basic knowledge of the research process.
2. Develop skills associated with research such as problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and analytical reasoning.
3. Learn how to develop, defend, and challenge their own ethics, values and beliefs.
4. Gain expertise in a particular topic within their field of study.
5. Acquire intercultural sensitivity and a more complex understanding of the local context.
6. Understand ideas, concepts, and theories related to the internship agency and community served by the agency. Articulate how the ethical issues studied in class manifest in the field.
7. Determine and use the most appropriate data collection tools and techniques.
8. Effectively analyze data comparatively and thematically.
9. Communicate findings, individually and collectively, to different types of audiences.
10. Strengthen French and Wolof communication skills.

Methodology

The course consists of a research methodology module offered in the first seven weeks of the semester and a six-week field placement to enable students to apply some of the techniques they learned in the classroom. This course offers students an opportunity to engage in research that is relevant to the needs of communities and/or civic organizations. The research methodology module offered during the classroom phase includes students' presentations, discussions, and critiques on each other's work under the guidance of MSID instructors.

During field placement, the student is expected to learn under the guidance of both their agency supervisor and MSID faculty. Most of the learning during this phase is experientially based, more independent, and individualized.

The research placement phase includes a minimum of 25 hours per week in the organization for a total of at least 150 hours.

The evaluation of students' performance in this course is based on attendance and participation in the research methodology module classes, class assignments/presentations, attendance and performance of research work at the agency, the supervisor's evaluation, and the final report.

Course Prerequisites

Four semesters college-level French or the equivalent (FREN 1004 at the University of Minnesota).

Required Reading / Materials

- Akissi, Gbocho (n.a.) Scientific Logic and Methodologies in Ouedraogo, Jean-Bernard and Cardoso, Carlos (2011). *Readings in Methodology: African Perspective*. Council for the Development of Social Science in Africa. pp 87-100
- Spradley, James C. (1980). *Participant Observation*. Fort Worth, Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Uwe Flick (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 4th Edition: SAGE publications. pp, 48-54; pp, 89,96.
- Snyder, L. 2005. "Chapter 9: The question of 'whose truth'? The privileging of participant and researcher voices in qualitative research." In Pawluch, D., Shaffir, W., & Miall, C. (Eds.). *Doing Ethnography: Studying Everyday Life*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. Pp. 128-138.
- Bernard, H. Russell (2006). "Chapter 9. Interviewing: unstructured and semi-structured." In *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. pp. 210-223.
- Emerson, R. et al. (2011) "Pursuing members' meanings," *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 2nd Edition. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 129-167.
- Temple, B. & Edwards, R. (2002) "Interpreters/translators and cross-language research: Reflexivity and border crossings," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1(2) [19 pages].
- Ellis, Carolyn (2007) "Telling secrets, revealing lives: relational ethics in research with intimate others," *Qualitative Inquiry* 13(1), pp. 3-29.
- Ross, Fiona C. (2005) "Codes and dignity: thinking about ethics in relation to research on violence," *Anthropology Southern Africa* 28(3&4), pp. 99-107.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Class attendance and participation	10%
Class written assignments (research methods)	10%
Oral exam for language component	10%
POR3 and FOR3 (during research phase)	20%
Agency supervisor's assessment	10%
Presentation in final seminar	10%
Final report	30%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Class Attendance & Participation

You are required to attend all classes and to be at your internship site at least four days a week (25 hours a week). Missing one class or internship day means a small makeup assignment (determined by the faculty); missing two classes or internship days means a sizable makeup assignment; missing three classes or internship days means a grade reduction of 2% of the total course grade. Discussions in class will focus on critical evaluation of ideas and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of what we know - is essential. For this reason, your engagement and participation are required. You are required to take responsibility for your role in the learning environment and come to class having read the required texts and ready to engage with others in a positive and thought-provoking manner.

Class Written Assignments (Research Methods)

By the end of the classroom phase, you must develop a research proposal by applying the methods discussed in class. You also must share with the faculty your production for each step of the proposal development.

FOR3, POR3 (Fieldwork Analysis)

During your research placement, you must write a personal observation report and a field observation report. The POR should present and analyze the research skills gained in the research process by using the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) model. Discuss the skills, the ways they are developed in the research, how important they are for your research project, for your future career, and how to market them. The FOR will focus on your fieldwork challenges and strategies. Make a link between research theories and methods and the reality in the field level by critically reflecting on the access to resources, data collection tools appropriateness, data quality, language and translation, and ethical considerations. We recommend that you keep a research journal and note the relevant information for your presentations.

Agency Supervisor's Assessment

Your research supervisor or facilitator will assess your overall work at the organization. The assessment includes your assiduity, dedication to the organization's mission and your research project, relationship with colleagues, cultural learning and sensitivity, research and work ethics, and work performance. Ask your research supervisor or facilitator for feedback during your fieldwork.

Final Report & Presentation

During the final seminar, you must present your research process and findings. Include the feedback received from the presentation when finalizing your report. Submit the report by email by the last day of the program.

The presentation should be a 10-minutes PPT presentation followed by 10 minutes of discussion and Q&A, all in French.

Questions to consider about your research findings in your presentation:

- What were the preliminary conclusions?
- What were the most interesting and/or exciting findings? Why do you consider these findings to be significant in this way?
- What were your specific research questions and sub-questions?

Questions to consider about the research process in the presentation:

- What theoretical concepts did you draw on to approach this research?
- What research methods did you use?
- What did you find most challenging about the research? Why?
- What ethical issues did you negotiate during the course of the research?
- What were the limitations of this research?
- If you were to extend and deepen this research, what would you do, what would you need to make it happen, and how might you do it differently?

Course Content

Classroom Phase

Unit 1

Theme

- Pre-semester survey
- Introduction to scientific research
 - Research characteristics (What research is and what it is not)
 - Research pitfalls
 - IRB research requirements: Focus on policy, process, and procedures
- Readings
 - Akissi, Gbocho (n.a.) Scientific Logic and Methodologies in Ouedraogo, Jean-Bernard and Cardoso, Carlos. (2011). Readings in Methodology: African Perspective. Council for the Development of Social Science in Africa. pp 87-100.
- French
 - French Grammar Review
- Wolof
 - Wolof grammar (Basics)
 - Greetings and introduction
 - Leaving
 - Emphasis on the complement (accomplished and unaccomplished)

Unit 2

- The research cycle
 - Selecting a topic
 - Choosing a title for your research project
 - Formulating the research question/problem
 - Selecting an appropriate design for your research
- Readings
 - Uwe Flick (2009). An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 4th Edition: SAGE publications. pp, 48-54.
- French
 - Discussion on gender in professional setting
- Wolof
 - Family, age, and occupation
 - Useful sentences around the eating bowl
 - Numbers (0 to 100)
 - Negative form

Unit 3

- Background information
- Annotated bibliography
- Literature review
- Readings
 - Uwe Flick (2009). An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 4th Edition: SAGE publications. pp, 89,96.
- French
 - Descriptive tense in French
- Wolof
 - Purchasing: at the market, at the corner shop, at the restaurant, in the street, bargaining, paying and asking for change
 - Simple comparison

Unit 4 - Excursion to Toubacouta

- During the Toubacouta excursion, students will participate in all activities, discussions, and presentations. In particular, students on the research track should pay particular attention to, and critically analyze, the following activities:
 - A visit to local and community organizations to discuss and observe the organizational architecture, work values, and power dynamics
 - An extended lunch with organizations that have received MSID interns to discuss MSID engagement, expectations, and challenges
- Assignment
 - My questions list: Before the session, each student should put in a paper the most important question they have about internship/research in a Senegalese context

Unit 5

- Types of research (qualitative, quantitative, basic, and applied research)
- Concept paper /research proposal
- Assignment
 - Drafting research proposal
- French
 - Objectives and results formulation in French
- Wolof
 - Transportation: Taking a taxi, a car rapide, a bus, and a clando
 - Directions: prepositions and prepositive phrases ○ Landmarks

Unit 6

- Data collection instruments
- Analyzing data
- Readings

- Bernard, H. Russell (2006). "Chapter 9. Interviewing: unstructured and semi-structured." In *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. pp. 210-223.
- Emerson, R. et al. (2011). "Pursuing members' meanings," *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, 2nd Edition. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 129-167.
- French
 - Narrative style in French
- Assignments
 - Concepts and expressions: research the 20 most commonly used concepts and expressions in your internship or research field, define them and write each of them in a sentence
- Wolof
 - Daily activities
 - Around the eating bowl

Unit 7

- Ethics (historical background, human rights, justice and integrity)/Comparison between the US and Senegal
- Writing the final research proposal
- Readings
 - Ellis, Carolyn (2007) "Telling secrets, revealing lives: relational ethics in research with intimate others," *Qualitative Inquiry* 13(1), pp. 3-29.
 - Ross, Fiona C. (2005) "Codes and dignity: thinking about ethics in relation to research on violence," *Anthropology Southern Africa* 28(3 & 4), pp. 99-107.
- French
 - Interrogative forms in French
- Wolof
 - Past tense
 - Talking about projects

Unit 8

- Reviewing the research cycle
- Individual check-in and advising session
- Readings
 - Temple, B. & Edwards, R. (2002) "Interpreters/translators and cross-language research: Reflexivity and border crossings," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1(2) [19 pages]
- French
 - Writing styles
 - Oral exam
- Wolof
 - Body parts and aches
 - Asking questions
 - Oral exam

Research Phase

Unit 9

- Familiarize yourself with your host agency
- Revise proposal with agency and review and test data collect instruments
- Weekly meeting with supervisor
- Phone or email meeting with MSID faculty member
- Reading
 - Spradley, James C. (1980). Participant Observation. Fort Worth, Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Unit 10

- Begin data collection
- Weekly meeting with supervisor
- Phone or email meeting with MSID faculty member

Unit 11

- Complete data collection and begin data editing and cleaning
- Weekly meeting with supervisor
- Phone or email meeting with MSID faculty member

Unit 12

- Analyze the data
- Weekly meeting with supervisor
- Phone or email meeting with MSID faculty member
- Assignments
 - Write and submit POR and FOR

Unit 13

- Compile first draft of final report
- Weekly meeting with supervisor
- Phone or email meeting with MSID faculty member
- Assignment
 - Draft final paper due

Unit 14

- Revise final report in line with feedback from supervisor/MSID faculty
- Weekly meeting with supervisor

- Phone or email meeting with MSID faculty member

Unit 15

- Present research findings to peers and MSID faculty
- Finalize research paper
- Discussions on skills gained through the experience and how you will use that going forward
- Discussion of sought-after skills by employers
- Reflection and debriefing (e.g., comparing theory and practice)

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).