

**FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND URBAN CHANGE
YORK UNIVERSITY**

**ENVS 8103: PhD Research Design Workshop [Course Outline]
Winter 2024**

**Liette Gilbert, gilbertl@yorku.ca
Tuesdays 9:30am-12:30pm in HNES 142**

Course Description

This course is designed to support PhD students in Environmental Studies as they conceive and develop their PhD dissertation proposals. While it is not a methods course per se, we will discuss, review or workshop particular approaches, methodological issues, and methods based on the interests and needs of those enrolled. Class activities and assignments are directed at students developing, writing (or refining in the case of those with a draft already written) and completing their dissertation proposals and preparing themselves for the dissertation research/writing process.

Course Objectives

- To support students in identifying and refining the key research questions they will address in their dissertation research.
- To identify appropriate research design strategies, methodologies and methods for the questions identified, and discuss pros and cons of various design options.
- To consider some of the epistemological, ethical and contextual issues involved in research design.
- To support the process of crafting and writing the PhD dissertation proposal, including the submission of HPRC or other forms where applicable.
- To discuss potential field work/research issues, ethical and practical dilemmas that may arise and possible solutions across the range of disciplinary approaches represented in environmental studies.
- To complete a solid draft of the dissertation proposal with a view to securing approval of it from the dissertation committee.

Course Outcomes

Upon the completion of the course, students will demonstrate:

- A solid knowledge of their research field and its contribution to environmental studies;
- The ability to design and implement a feasible research design (and to adjust if needed) that establishes the basis for the production of advanced scholarship and original contribution to their specific fields;
- The intellectual independence to engage in autonomous research;
- The academic integrity and the respect of ethical guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct of research;
- The ability to communicate complex issues clearly and effectively;
- An appreciation of the limitations of their own work, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods and disciplines.

Tentative Course Readings

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Rose, G. (2001). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to the interpretation of visual materials*. London. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. (2004). Twenty-five Indigenous projects. In *Critical Strategies for Social Research*, ed. William K. Carroll. Toronto: Canadian Scholars.

Solórzano, DG, & TJ Yosso. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry*. 8(1):23-44.

Sandoval, Chela (2000). *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all sessions and complete a full draft of their dissertation proposals.