

Workshop in Human Rights Field Research, Data Analysis, and Reporting

Spring 2001- International Affairs U8165 - Room 1101AB - Tuesdays 4:10-6:00 PM

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Appendix A-Project Instructions for Students

You are consultants.

You have a client who has a problem to be solved. For lack of a particular expertise, a shortage of personnel, or daily distractions, they look to you to solve the problem. The client is not your boss; the client is your customer. Your instructor is your boss!

Mutual benefit is the name of the game.

Your client is giving you access to data, to their organizational issues, and their time - all these are valuable commodities. By doing this, they assist in your education. They look to you to answer one or more questions involving data and analysis on which you and they have agreed. You and we alike want to deliver the client something of value, which will be contained in your final report to the client. We look for something more: by the nature of our clients, any assistance you give them will be realized as an improvement in human rights.

Defining a meaningful and feasible project.

You have only one term for this project and we want it completed before final examinations. It is part of the learning experience to learn how to define and plan a project so that it can be finished in the time that you have. We will work closely with you to make sure that you do not get over-committed.

Help is available!

Your instructor or one of the course assistants will - if requested - go with you to a meeting with the client at which the project is to be defined. In some cases, we may recommend that you have one of us present.

What kind of a project?

The project **must** involve data, its collection, storage, and analysis. The project must end in a report in which meaningful questions are answered. Human rights covers a broad spectrum, you have a wide possible range for subject matter.

You can propose your own project.

You may, under exceptional circumstances, propose your own projects. At the first class, we will offer a limited menu of projects for which preliminary arrangements have been made. .

Ethical concerns.

During the workshop, we will discuss ethical considerations in detail as they affect the subjects of any human rights inquiry. However, some of you will quickly become party to private information about individuals and important organizational information. Keep confidential data to yourself! To do otherwise is to risk serious harm to the subjects or clients. Be extremely careful with documents. It is a good rule to never take the only copy of a document off the client's premises. Two years ago, international human rights workers were killed and forced into exile because these simple rules were not followed. Of course, you and your clients are not in extreme danger, but learning good security practices is a part of this workshop. Be a consultant that any client can trust.

What do you want and need from the client?

Look to the client for the definition of a meaningful question to answer, and access to data sources. You are a consultants, not interns. The clients do not pay you, nor are the clients responsible for your activities.

Appendix B-Frequently Asked Questions

Who are the students?

Most of the students are Human Rights and Human Affairs majors from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). Some will be from the Schools of Law, Business and Journalism. Most will have internship experience, as well as professional experience.

What kinds of projects?

We seek projects that will answer a client's questions where data collection, fact-finding techniques, design of forms and questionnaires, field interviewing techniques, data base design, analysis of data, reporting and presentation of results are involved. The use and analysis of quantitative or qualitative data is essential.

What are typical projects?

Typical projects could be to characterize a population of individuals (age, ethnic background, violations, location, treatment received, etc.), or to evaluate the effectiveness of some treatment or

services, or to characterize the nature of services delivered, and so forth. We already have clients concerned with other types of projects, such access to health care by prisoners, evaluation of the work of legal counselors for battered women, characteristics of victims of torture, and so forth.

What is wanted from the client?

We look to the client for the *definition* of a meaningful question for which an answer is needed, and *access* to the sources of data. The students will be acting as a consulting team, and not interns. The clients do not pay them, and the client is not responsible for their activities.

What can the students do for the client?

Clearly, there is a limit to how much can be done in a single term. It is our hope that the students can produce a report that will provide most of the answers to the questions raised by the client. In some cases, they may be able only to do a pilot study, or define a model that could be useful later. This is a real-world experience, and it is possible that no useful result will result. The students are required to deliver a written report. If the client wishes, the students will make an in-person presentation.

If a potential client agrees to a project, can they expect to have a student team this term?

We offer the students a "menu" of projects. We cannot guarantee that a team will chose every project. We hope to inventory projects for future classes. Thus, a project worked out this term, may - if still of interest - be worked on in a later year.

Are you trying to make human rights majors into researchers?

Not in the usual sense. I would like to help them to understand the importance of gaining credibility for human rights advocacy through fact-finding, data analysis and effective reporting. I would like to encourage them to be credible and effective *investigators* and *fact-finders*.

Appendix C-Instructor Access Information

Why is this important?

What makes this workshop work is the close relationship between the instructor and students. This nature of the relationship in this course is probably different than you are accustomed to. The instructor - and the guest lecturers on particular topics - expect to receive direct requests for assistance from you outside of class as well as during class. Because of the nature of the project activities and your responsibilities to clients, you cannot wait a week to come to class to get a question answered.

Accessing the instructor:

In prior versions of this workshop, the principal student/instructor contact was by E-mail:

E-mail: hspirer@bigfoot.com

The next most frequent way was by telephone:

Tel: 203-322-3564

If illustrations are involved, you can use FAX:

FAX: 203-329-2424

You will get a response in less than 24 hours.

If you don't, assume something is wrong and call.

If necessary, a meeting will be arranged.