

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**  
LING 804-Field Methods (4 units)

Instructor: Donna Gerdts; Elder: Ruby Peter  
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Location: TBA, Duncan, BC  
Dates/Times: TBA

**Course Description:**

In keeping with the goal of providing analyses of all of the world's languages, linguists engage in fieldwork with native speakers. The Field Methods course teaches students to elicit, transcribe, organize, and analyze linguistic data collected from a native speaker of an understudied and often unwritten language, in this case Hul'q'umi'num'. Students meet with the native speaker in class each day, taking turns asking questions about the language. The instructor helps the students transcribe, translate, and interpret the data provided by the native speaker until the students develop sufficient skills to work with the speaker directly. Each week, we record a short (4–6 minute) story from a speaker, and students are responsible for transcribing and translating it.

Students learn techniques to discover the grammatical structure of a language and test hypotheses about that structure, rather than learning already established generalizations about the language, as would be typical in a language course. Students investigate the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic structure of a language, and develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of how the language operates. As the course progresses, students gain an understanding of the kinds of questions that will best lead to understanding the language's structure, and how to critically evaluate statements about a language gathered from a speaker.

In addition, we discuss the social, cultural, and individual dynamics of field work situations. Students practice recording and processing audio and video data, managing databases, and producing archive quality materials.

**Course Materials:**

To be distributed in class.

**Course Grading:**

In-class elicitation	30%
Assignments	30%
Daily transcriptions and translations	20%
Project and final presentation	20%