Anthropology 340C (31325)

Ethnographic Research Methods

Spring 2013
Mondays 3:00-6:00, SAC 5.118

Professor Circe Sturm
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-3:00 and by appointment.

Course Description

Understanding human behavior is immensely challenging. Fortunately, there are tools to help us make sense of social, cultural and political complexity. This course offers an introduction to the various methods and techniques used in conducting ethnographic research such as participant observation, interviewing, collecting life histories and genealogies, archival research, working with material culture, social media-based research, and visual ethnography. Our primary objectives will be to explore research design, what constitutes evidence, how to analyze data, and strategies for writing up and presenting results. We will pay particular attention to the ethical considerations entailed in anthropological research, including questions of knowledge production, power, location, experience, translation and representation. The course is run largely as a "hands–on" workshop, in which students practice a variety of ethnographic methods (both inside and outside of class), engage in ethnographic writing exercises, and actively guide one another's work. Students will apply what they learn during the course to designing their own ethnographic research project, conducting independent field research, and presenting their findings to the class. By the end of the semester, they will have a firm grounding in ethnographic research methods and be better prepared for more advanced work.

Requirements

******Attendance and Participation (15%)**: Because this class meets once a week and follows a workshop format, energetic, thoughtful and consistent participation is mandatory. Students will be expected to attend all class meetings (attendance will be taken). *Each absence, beyond one, that is not explained by a doctor's note or a university administrator will result in a 3-point deduction of your final grade*. Students are expected to complete the readings as scheduled on the syllabus and to come to class fully prepared to discuss them, with questions and ideas in mind. Students are also required to complete all writing exercises as scheduled on the syllabus. If you miss any exercise, without a formal written excuse, there will be NO make-up opportunity.

If you are having difficulty with any of the ideas presented in class, then it is your responsibility to meet with other students or attend office hours to clarify course materials. Please use these opportunities to your advantage.

Journals and Fieldnotes (10%): During the semester, you will keep a field journal in which you will record your notes on observations and interviews, as well as your responses to class readings, discussions, fieldtrips, and exercises. You may keep the journal in any format this is convenient for you (i.e. old school spiral notebooks,

computer files, or iPad notes, for example). However, you will need to write them up in clear and legible prose and hand them in on a regular basis throughout the semester.

Methods Exercises (25%): The ethnographic methods exercises require you to conduct various forms of ethnography on a weekly basis. Some exercises will take place in class. Others will involve you having to go out into the world, well beyond the UT campus. Nearly all the exercises involve writing to some extent. You will be expected take detailed field notes and to provide brief written reports or essays about your experiences. Detailed guidelines for all exercises will be given in class. Most exercises will require a 2-3-page report, in addition to regular more informal fieldnotes.

Review of Ethnographic Monograph (10%): A four-page essay reviewing a monograph-length ethnography of your choice. A brief proposal specifying which ethnography you have chosen and why will be due in class on January 28th.

Research Proposal (20%): Students will be required to submit a 5-7 page research proposal, similar to the ones that graduate students and faculty write to request funding for research. Proposal guidelines will be given in class, early in the semester, and the final proposal will be due on the last Friday of the semester. A brief abstract of the research proposal topic will be due in class on Feb. 4th.

Oral Presentation of Research Findings (20%): All students will be required to give a 15- minute oral presentation on their research findings in class. The presentation will consist of a brief description of your project and your preliminary findings, as well as a question and answer session with your classmates. Presentations will occur in class on April 22nd and 29th.

Your grade will be determined using your total point score, scaled against everyone else in the class. The scale for final grades is such that:

94 to 100 pts. = A	74 to 76 pts. = C
90 to 93 pts. = A-	70 to 73 pts. = C-
87 to 89 pts. = B+	67 to 69 pts. = D+
84 to 86 pts. = B	64 to 66 pts. = D
80 to 83 pts. = B-	60 to 63 pts. = D-
77 to 79 pts. = C+	59 pts. and fewer = F

Note: there is no midterm or final examination. You will be evaluated on the following basis:

Attendance and Participation	15 pts.
Journal/Fieldnotes	10 pts.
Methods Exercises	25 pts.
Review of Ethnographic Monograph	10 pts.
Research Presentation	20 pts.
Research Proposal	20 pts.
Total:	100 pts.

Assignments will be due at the beginning of class and there will be no make-up exams, incompletes, or time extensions, except in the case of emergencies. No extra credit assignments are available.

Cheating will not be tolerated! Anyone caught cheating will be charged under the academic misconduct code. Laptops, iPads/iPods, cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used in class, unless a documented disability requires them. Please be sure and turn all electronic devices off when you arrive (and not to simply silence them).

Required Readings

The required textbook (Angrosino) is available at the University Co-Op Bookstore or online at Amazon. The required ethnographic monograph (your choice) can also be ordered online through Amazon.com or any local bookstore. All other required articles and chapters will be posted on the course Blackboard site. They required readings are listed below.

***(Ethnographic Monograph of your own choosing)

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2005. "Writing Against Culture." In *Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology.* Edited by Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders, Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 466-479.

Angrosino, Michael. 2007 (2nd ed.). *Doing Cultural Anthropology: Projects in Ethnographic Data Collection.* Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc.

Bourgois, Philippe. 1990. "Confronting Anthropological Ethics: Lessons from Central America." *Journal of Peace Research* 27 (1): 43-54.

Clifford, James. 1983. "On Ethnographic Authority." *Representations* 1 (2): 118-146.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz and Linda Shaw (eds.). 2011 (2nd ed.). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-43.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures.* New York: Basic Books, pp. 3-30.

Gershon, Ilana. 2011. "Un-Friend My Heart: Facebook, Promiscuity and Heartbreak in a Neoliberal Age." *Anthropological Quarterly* 84 (4): 865-894.

Greenbaum, Susan, et al. 1998. "Central Avenue Legacies." *Practicing Anthropology* 20 (1): 2-30.

Kiesinger, Christine. 1998. "From Interview to Story: Writing "Abbie's Life." *Qualitative Inquiry* 4 (1): 71-95.

Lovejoy, Tracey and Nelle Steele. 2004. " Engaging Our Audience Through Photo Stories." *Visual Anthropology Review* 20 (1): 70-81.

Lutz, Chatherine A. and Jane Collins. 1993. *Reading National Geographic.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-14, 155-185..

Miller, Daniel. 2001. "Behind Closed Doors." *Home Possessions: Material Culture Behind Closed Doors.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-19.

Murchison, Julian. 2010. "Interviews." *Ethnography Essentials: Designing, Conducting, and Presenting Your Research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, pp. 99-113.

Nader, Laura. 1969. "Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained from Studying Up." In Dell Hymes (ed.), *Reinventing Anthropology.* New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 284-311.

Nanda, Serena. 2004. "South African Museums and the Creation of a New National Identity." *American Anthropologist* 106 (2): 379-384.

Price, David. 2000. "Anthropologists as Spies." *The Nation,* November 2, 2000.

Ruby, Jay. 1980. "Exposing Yourself: Reflexivity, Anthropology and Film." *Semiotica* 30 ½: 153-179.

Silverman, Sydel. 1991. "Writing Grant Proposals for Anthropological Research." *Current Anthropology* 32 (4): 485-489.

Van Maanen, John. "In Pursuit of Culture." In *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography."* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-44.

Wacquant, Loic. 2004. *Body and Soul: Notes of An Apprentice Boxer.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. vii-xii, 3-41.

Wilson, Samuel and Leighton C. Peterson. 2002. "The Anthropology of Online Communities." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 449-467.

The University of Texas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require accommodations are ask to speak with the professor as early in the semester as possible. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability services prior to receiving accommodations in this course.

This class is challenging in that it requires active participation on a weekly basis and that you stay organized and conscientious about assignments. However, it also provides a unique hands-on learning environment that is a lot of fun. Let's have a great semester!

Weekly Course Schedule

Reading Key: DCA = Doing Cultural Anthropology, BB = Article Posted on Blackboard. All readings are to be completed by the week that they appear on the schedule.

Date	**Topic**	**Readings**
Jan. 14	Introduction and Aims of the Course Guidelines for Journals and Fieldnotes	
21	MLK Holiday: No Class	Choose Ethnography BB: Emerson, et al. 2011
28	Participant Observation and Ethnographic Fieldwork Due: First Set of Fieldnotes, and Your Choice of Ethnography In Class-Exercise: Writing Observation	DCA Intro. & Ch. 1 BB: Van Maanen 1988
Feb. 4	Research Proposal Design Due: Research Topic Abstract	DCA Ch. 8 & 9 BB: AAA Code of Ethics, Silverman 1991
11	Interviewing and Collecting Life Histories Due: Second Set of Fieldnotes In Class Exercise: Life History Interview	DCA Ch. 3 BB: Murchison 2010, Kiesinger 1998
18	Ethnography: Writing Culture Due: Life History Interview Transcription In Class Exercise: Thick Description	DCA Ch. 4 BB: Abu-Lughod 2005, Geertz 1973
25	Intersubjectivity, Kinship and Social Location In Class Exercise: Genealogy Interview Due: Third Set of Fieldnotes and Narrative Analysis	DCA Ch. 2 BB: Nader 1969, Ruby 1980
Mar. 4	Museums, Representation and Material Culture Field Trip: Blanton Museum Due: Genealogy Interview Write-Up	DCA Ch. 6 BB: Miller 2001, Nanda 2004
11-17	Spring Break, NO CLASS	DCA Ch. 10 & 11
18	Archival Research Field Trip: Barker History Center Due: Museum Object Analysis	DCA Ch. 5 BB: Greenbaum and Rodriguez 1998
25	Ethical Dilemmas: Controversies and Solutions Due: Fourth Set of Fieldnotes and Ethnographic Monograph Review	DCA Ch. 7 BB: Clifford 1983, Bourgois 1990, Price 2000

Apr. 1	Visual Methods Due: Archival Community Group Project	DCA Ch. 12 BB: Lovejoy and Steele 2004, Lutz and Collins 1993
8	Social Media/Virtual Ethnography Due: Visual Ethnography Project In Class Exercise: Virtual Ethnography	DCA Ch. 13 & 14 BB: Gershon 2011, Wilson and Peterson 2002
15	Reflexivity and Auto-Ethnography Due: Fifth Set of Fieldnotes In Class Exercise: Writing the Self	DCA Ch. 15 BB: Wacquant 2004
22	Student Research Presentations	DCA Ch. 16
29	Student Research Presentations	
May 3	Due: Final Research Project Proposals and Field Journals	