**Seminar in Ethnographic Analysis**

ANTHRO 60500

Wednesday 4:30-7:20

STON 154

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**Course Description**

The ethnography helps to set anthropology apart from other social science approaches. Ethnographic research and ethnographic texts go beyond simply describing a culture, practice, or group of people. Ethnography organizes data and gives voice to the storytellers by drawing readers into the world of the field, be it small villages or the halls of Wall Street. This combination of qualitative data, personal reflection, and context helps social scientists make intellectual, theoretical, and even political arguments. Ethnography and ethnographic research are only part ‘science’, because ethnographic research recognizes that the researcher’s positionality, timing, and methods create unique opportunities to present and collect data.

This course has two goals: (1) students will learn ethnographic research ethics, methods, and design while also (2) exploring the different ways that anthropologists have used ethnography to craft arguments. In this course, students will study and test a variety of qualitative methods including fieldnotes, participant-observation, surveying, interviewing, mapping, coding, and writing, as well as how to pair these methods with other methodologies. They will contextualize these tools within ethnographic theory and contemporary ethnographic writing. By the end of this course, students will have experience with a range of ethnographic methods and theories that will help them collect, interpret, evaluate, and analyze ethnographic data.

This course is designed to be a seminar, meaning that students will be expected to lead each week’s discussion with guidance from the professor. For the first half of each class, the professor will give some guiding context to situate students. In the second half, students will lead discussion and debate the concepts and methodologies of the week. Activities are encouraged. Being a methodology class, this course is also a practical course. We will be practicing what we learn through a number of small field assignments. During class we will alternate between reflections on our own field projects and the ways that those experiences articulate with the ethnographies we read. Because methods are, fundamentally, tools to ask questions and collect data, the last section of the class is geared toward developing the research design of a grant proposal to a scientific or applied funding agency. Ethnography is a reflective exercise, and so students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Bring questions. Bring problems. Bring critiques, gripes, complaints, raves or any other reactions you had to the material. But come ready to engage. This is a seminar course, which means you are expected to be an active participant in each and every class.

**Assignments and Grading**

This class will be run as a seminar, so **participation and attendance are a large part of student grades**. Select students will prepare questions and lead a discussion each Thursday while the rest of us use this time to think critically about our assignments, projects, and course readings (**30% of final grade**). Each student will submit a short (~500 words) reading response each week by **Tuesday** at **5 PM** on their reaction to the week’s readings – What stood out to you? What made sense or was confusing? Why? Do you agree or disagree with the author’s perspective? Can you imagine using these tools yourself? These blackboard posts will guide our discussions.

**Learning Goals:**

1. Student will learn about qualitative and ethnographic research design, ethics and methods.
2. Students will understand when and how to appropriately select qualitative and quantitative methods and identify how and when to blend them.
3. Students will gain an understanding on how anthropologists and other scholars across the subfields use and apply ethnographic methods.
4. Students will gain experience in generating and analyzing qualitative and ethnographic data, including being exposed to common qualitative software packages (such as NVivo, Excel, and ArcMap).
5. Students will achieve qualitative literacy for understanding and working in a mixed methods environment and applying their expertise as part of a team.

**Leading Discussion:**

Each week, one or two students will be responsible for leading class discussion. This does NOT mean a simple review/rehashing of the readings. Rather, your job is to hit some of the highlights of the reading (summarize the main points), but then to STIMULATE DISCUSSION/ DEBATE among the group. Get people talking! Come prepared with good, provocative questions, themes, critiques, or issues you think will make for lively class. The best discussions will also demonstrate how the readings are useful (or not) for assessing the present ethnography.

Please tell the instructor if you will be absent. As participation and engaged learning are central to this class, your absence will be noticed and you will be missed. All students will receive one unexcused absence over the course of the semester. If students know that they must miss a class for a religious, sport, or lifecourse event, they must notify the instructor as soon as possible and arrange to complete makeup work. All other absences will be treated as unexcused and students will lose points.

To gain practical experience, there will be several small assignments that build on the theory and practice that we discuss in class. These small assignments will test student engagement with different methods and give us a chance to reflect on how they work for our particular projects (**45%**). This works best if students develop a consistent project and research focus throughout the semester, and investigate different aspects of it:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mini project title** | **Due date** | **Length** | **Points out of 45** |
| CITI Training | 8/29 | Submit certificate | 10 |
| Positionality and Reflexivity | 9/19 | 3 pages | 5 |
| Participant Observation | 10/3 | 3 pages + notes | 10 |
| Mapping | 10/31 | Map + 2 pages | 10 |
| Open Interview | 11/28 | 3 pages + transcript segment + notes | 10 |

Assignments are subject to change and will all be discussed in class. All written work should be size 12 font, times new roman, double spaced, with 1 inch margins. **All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day for which they are assigned. Late work will be marked down by 1 point (out of 45) per day.** Revisions and resubmissions are a core element in academic and professional writing, and will be discussed in class.

*CITI Training*: Complete CITI training for Social Behavioral Research for Investigators and Key Personnel. Email training certificate to the instructor. [https://www.irb.purdue.edu/required-training.php]

*Positionality and Reflexivity Report:* Ethnographic research will vary depending on the baggage, skillset, and experiences that you personally bring to the table. To interview and work with others, you must be mindful of your own strengths and weaknesses. Consider:

1. What sorts of access do you have because of your race, class, gender, nationality, and other aspects of your identity?
2. What questions or research subjects may be more difficult because of this positionality?
3. What special skills or expertise do you have to assist in social research?
4. What special dangers and cares will you need to be mindful of in your work?
5. Find an example in the news or in anthropological literature where positionality really mattered, and describe why.

*Participant Observation Report:* Assist someone in the kitchen. Find a member of your potential research population and ask them to teach you a special recipe that you do not know. If at all possible, ask someone who aligns with the kinds of people you might meet during your research project – everyone eats and people often like to bond over food and cooking. Have this person work with you to create the dish in question, and pay attention to the ways that they correct or instruct you as you learn this practice. Ask about the history of the recipe and its practice, and confirm that you’re doing well. Stay cognizant as well about the spaces between the action, where people wait, taste, and think. Systematically record your data (photographically, on paper, voice recording, video recording). Ideally, this is related to the previous exercises. Your 3 page paper should include:

1. Why you chose this particular place, at this particular time, these particular people, and how you gained access to the site
2. What you actually did: how you interacted with people, the data you collected, and how you collected it
3. What recipe you made, its history, and what you learned by making it
4. How that data can be put to use to ask an ethnographic question – that is, did the process of learning this recipe teach you anything about identity, knowledge, decision-making, class, gender, decolonial methodology, etc. etc.
5. Reflections on gaining access to your site, awkwardness on your part or on the part of the people at your site, anything that might have influenced your data collection, how you might do things differently if given a second chance
6. Append your notes

*Mapping Exercise*: Use a paper map or GoogleEarth to construct a participant-based map with at least 4 participants. Write a 2 page reflection that details:

1. Your research question
2. Who your interlocutors are
3. How spatial methods enabled you to ask your questions in new and different ways
4. Reflection on your data collection, the strengths/weaknesses of this method, how you might improve your data collection if you had another chance, etc.

You will not have to print photos or color maps for this project but you will have to show these off on the day the assignment is due to walk us through your data. Turn in: the 2 page paper and your media file.

*Open Interview*: Conduct an interview with someone who is either a) much older than you, b) has a unique expertise that you lack, or c) is otherwise an ideal key informant. Sketch out at least five open-ended questions that will guide your interview. Take notes on the interview itself in the moment. Record the interview and transcribe a 5 minute segment. Your transcription should have markers for each minute. Write a 3 page reflection that details:

1. How you developed your interview guide, what questions you asked, and why
2. Why you chose this person to be your informant (selection criteria, why this person was appropriate given your question)
3. What you learned about your research question by speaking with this person.
4. Reflection on your interviewing strengths/weaknesses, how you might improve your questions in the future, etc.
5. Append your notes

Turn in: your 3 page reflection, your 5 minute transcription, your notes on the interview itself, and your digital file of the interview.

Because methods are ultimately tools to help us ask questions and collect information, the last several classes will prepare students for grantwriting by asking them to create a mock research proposal employing several of the methodologies discussed in class. Students will present that proposal during the final class section **(10%)** and the document will be due on the scheduled final date **(15%)**.

*Final*: Present on and submit a prospective research question, design, and methodology that covers:

1. Your research question/hypothesis
2. Site and population selection
3. Methodology and justification
4. Data collection plan
5. Potential obstacles in access or data collection and how you will overcome them

AND

1. Correct citations for all methods used. Ex: I will use walking interviews (De Leon and Cohen 2005) to document and probe the lived experience of people as they walk to school as a way of understanding the optimal routes that students take from parking lots to the cafeteria
2. Works cited, in correct AAA style (Chicago Style) (http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style\_guide.pdf)

Students will present this research plan to the class during the final session and receive constructive criticism from their peers. Hard copies of the final draft are due on the scheduled finals day. The final is based on questions 1, 3, and 5 of the Wenner Gren anthropological grant proposal. It should be 2.5 single spaced pages long and is due during the final exam period.

**Grading summary**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Due date** | **Points out of 100** |
| Discussion and discussion leading | Every week | 15 |
| Reading Responses | Every Tuesday at 5 PM | 15 |
| Mini projects | Various | 45 |
| Grant presentation | 12/6 | 10 |
| Grant | 12/13 | 15 |

**Grades:** A = 91-100

A- = 90-91

B+ = 89

B = 81-88

B- = 80

C+ = 79

C = 71-78

C- = 70

D = 60-69

F = Below 60

**Office Hours and Support**

Office hours for the course are listed above. Students are encouraged to attend office hours, which are a good opportunity to ask questions not addressed in class, seek clarification about readings or further information on a topic, or discuss aspects of the course materials that are especially interesting. Office hours are on a first come, first served basis. If you are unable to attend office hours because of scheduling conflicts, please contact the instructor or the TAs directly to schedule a meeting. In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course: BlackBoard web page, the instructor and TA email addresses, and the instructor office phone: 765-494-2774.

**CAPS Information**: Purdue University and professor Flachs care about your success. We are committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765)494-6995 and http://www.purdue.edu/caps/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

**Disabilities**

Students with disabilities must be registered with Disability Resource Center in the Office of the Dean of Students before classroom accommodations can be provided. If you are eligible for academic accommodations because you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please schedule an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your needs. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247.

**Behavior**

I encourage students to interact with myself and one another at certain times during class; however, free speech does not mean we are not all entitled to express our opinions whenever we see fit without consequence. Purdue University and professor Flachs are committed to providing a safe and secure learning space. Sexist, racist, violent, and otherwise offensive comments will result in me asking you to leave the class for the day. If someone’s behavior does not improve, they will be referred to the Student Conduct Coordinator. My classroom is a safe space for all. Also, please silence your cell phones during class and practice good 21st century manners. Laptops are tools for helping us work better in class. If they become a distraction, then we’ll ban laptops in the classroom.

**Academic Integrity**

Purdue prohibits "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, University Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that "the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest." [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]. All students are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity. In this class especially, that means that all work presented as original must, in fact, be original.

It is your duty to uphold the Purdue honors pledge. As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue. Learn more at: https://www.purdue.edu/provost/teachinglearning/honor-pledge.html

**Required Readings**

* Bernard, Russell. 2018. Research Methods in Anthropology. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. 6th Edition. Sage Publications.
* Holmes, Seth. Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies. 2013. Migrant farmworkers in the United States.
* Tarlo, Emma. 2016. Entanglement: The Secret Lives of Hair. Oneworld Publications.
* Hughey, Matthew. 2012. White Bound: Nationalists, Antiracists, and the Shared Meanings of Race. Stanford University Press.

**Syllabus**

**Week 1, August 22:** Course overview and ethnographic epistemology

Bernard: *Chapter 1-2* (skim)

Tracy: *Qualitative quality*

Becker: *The epistemology of qualitative research*

**In class: Introductions and research framings**

**Week 2, August 29:** Research Ethics

AAA 2012 Ethics Statement

Kraska: *Enjoying Militarism*

De Leon: *Chapter 1*

Bernard: *Chapter 3*

Holmes: *Chapter 4*

**Assignment Due: CITI Training**

**Week 3, September 5:** Research design, sampling strategies, and site selection

Bernard: *Chapter 4, 7*

O’Leary: *Developing your research question*

Hughey: *Chapter 1*, 25-30, 48-54

**In class: Operationalizing and Falsifying**

**Week 4, September 12:** Participant-observation and ethnographic writing 1

Holmes: *Chapters 1-2 from Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*

Pollard: *Field of Screams*

**Week 5, September 19:** Participant-observation and ethnographic writing 2

Bernard: *Chapters 12, 14*

Sutton: *Voices in the Kitchen*

Tarlo: *Strange Gifts, Invisibility, Harvest, Tonsure*

**Assignment Due: Positionality Report**

**Week 6, September 26:** Managing Fieldnotes

Bernard: *Chapter 13*

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw: *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*

MacQueen et al: *Codebook Development for Team-Based Qualitative Analysis*

**In Class:** Excel Basics and other data management tools

**Week 7, October 3:** Participant-observation and ethnographic writing 3

Holmes: *Chapter 6*

Ingold: *Making, Growing, Learning*

Tarlo: *Sheitel, Black Hair, Race, Gift, Animal*

**Assignment due:** Participant Observation Report

**Week 8, October 10:** Maps as ethnography

Tobias: *Chief Kerry’s Moose*, *Chapter 1-4, 7*

**Week 9, October 17:** Telling qualitative stories with quantitative spatial data

Gordon: *Mapping Decline* (interactive website: <http://mappingdecline.lib.uiowa.edu/>)

**In Class**: GIS Basics

**Week 10, October 24:** In Situ Mapping

Aswani and Lauer: *Incorporating fishermen’s local knowledge and behavior*

Sletto: *We Drew What we Imagined*

Smith: *Participatory Mapping of Community Lands and Hunting Yields*

**In Class: Participatory Mapmaking**

**Week 11, October 31:** Visual data

Linne: *Cows on Facebook and Instagram*

Childs and Barkin: *Reproducing identity*

Biehl: *A Zone of Social Abandonment, Brazil, Life of the Mind, Society of Bodies,* from *Vita*

Heller: *Six Beds, Sixty Minutes*

**Assignment Due:** Paper map/participant mapping exercise

**Week 12, November 7:** Interviewing 1

Bernard: *Chapter 8*

Esterberg: *Interviews*

Hughey: *Chapter 4, 5*

**Week 13, November 14:** Interviewing 2 and Data Analysis

Hughey: *Chapter 7, 8*

Wutich et al.: *Comparing Focus Group and Individual Responses on Sensitive Topics*

Driscoll et al.: *Merging qualitative and quantitative data in mixed methods research*

**In Class:** NVivo Basics

**Week 14, November 21:** Thanksgiving Break

**Week 15, November 29:** Grantwriting

Porter: *Crafting a sales pitch for your grant proposal*

Kelsky: Grant Proposals

UNC Writing Center: *Grant Proposals*

**Assignment due:** Interview

**Week 16, December 6:** Final Presentations

**Assignment due:** Project proposal with research design and methods (presented in class, details will be discussed in class). Your revised final grant will be due the following week at 5 PM in Dr. Flachs’ mailbox.